THE ENLIGHTENMENT EPISTEMOLOGY
AND ITS WARNING AGAINST THE INSTRUMENTALISATION OF SCIENCE

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Abstract. The paper is written in order to demonstrate the lack of soundness of the *present* counter-Enlightenment attacks against reason and science. The characterisation of Enlightenment cannot only refer to the logical consequences of the universally manifested reason – (the wishful thoughts about) the humans' education and educability and thus the changing the world for the better – without substantiating them. Kant has substantiated the Enlightenment epistemology that supports even today the human endeavour to live in a better world. As the purpose of the analysis is the epistemological way of comprehension – i.e. the rational all the way, coherent to the end, thus the scientific questioning of the premises of every theory – the paper thus features only a *selection* from among the coryphaei of the Enlightenment movement. It starts from Kant's "Copernican revolution" – a metaphor used by him that may rightfully be employed in order to evaluate his philosophy –which, in the view expressed here, consists in the *interdependence* of the *constructivist* epistemology and the *categorical imperative ethics*.

Actually, and this is the thesis promoted here, this epistemology and this ethics constitute a continuous and unique structure and just this *unitary epistemological-ethical structure*, called here even the Enlightenment *epistemology*, is the basis of the Enlightenment perspective and theory of comprehension. But this perspective and comprehension form a *methodological* pattern for the approach of the world and for the *reason to be* of the human knowledge. Thus, the paper is not a simple reminder of an old page of the history of philosophy. And neither should the history of philosophy be thought of as an evolution of ideas, where there would exist just a simple transmission and taking over of the relay from one paramount theory to another and where at one time or another the respective preponderant theory would exist alone. The Enlightenment pattern was not the only one when it appeared, and so much less today. The epistemological analysis of some contemporary facts emphasizes the contradictory views expressed within the Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment manners. There are presented Enlightenment type arguments and anti-Enlightenment arguments, put face to face. Thus, the paper shows that the Enlightenment perspective and understanding defeat the counter-Enlightenment attacks and they outline a *methodological* framework for the current interpretation of science and technology.

Keywords. Enlightenment, epistemology, Kant, constructivism, categorical imperative, counter-Enlightenment, science, perspective, criteria, epistemological optimism, universals, relativism, holism.

Rezumat. Articolul este scris pentru a demonstra lipsa de soliditate a atacurilor *prezente* de tip contra-iluminism împotriva rațiunii și științei. Caracterizarea Iluminismului nu poate avea în vedere doar urmările logice ale rațiunii manifestate universal – (dorințele despre) educația și educabilitatea oamenilor și astfel schimbarea în bine a lumii – fără să le fundamentăm. Kant a fundamentat epistemologia iluministă care stă și astăzi la baza efortului uman de a trăi într-o lume mai bună. Deoarece scopul analizei este înțelegerea epistemologică – adică rațională și coerentă până la capăt, punând la îndoială premisele fiecărei teorii, deci științifică – textul face, desigur, doar o *selecție* dintre corifeii mișcării iluministe. El începe cu „revoluția coperniciană" a lui Kant – o metaforă folosită de el și care poate fi pe drept întrebuințată pentru a-i evalua filosofia – ce, în perspectiva exprimată aici, constă în *interdependența* dintre *epistemologia constructivistă* și *etica imperativului categoric*.

De fapt, și aceasta este teza promovată aici, ele constituie o unică și continuă structură și tocmai această *structură unitară epistemologică-etică* este baza perspectivei iluministe și a teoriei sale despre *înțelegere*. Dar această perspectivă și această înțelegere formează un *model metodologic* de abordare a lumii și pentru rațiunea de a fi a cunoașterii. Astfel, articolul nu este o simplă reamintire a unei pagini vechi din

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istoria filosofiei. Dar nici istoria filosofiei nu trebuie gândită ca o evoluție a ideilor, în care ar exista o simplă transmitere și preluare a ștafetei de la o teorie de frunte la alta și unde într-un moment sau altul ar exista o singură teorie preponderentă. Modelul iluminist nu a fost singurul atunci când a apărut, și mai puțin astăzi. Analiza epistemologică a unor fapte contemporane evidențiază perspectivele contradictorii exprimate în maniera iluministă și în aceea a contra-Iluminismului. Sunt prezentate argumente de tip iluminist și argumente de tip contra-Iluminism, puse față în față. Se arată că perspectiva și înțelegerea iluministă înfrâng atacurile contra-iluministe și schițează un cadru *metodologic* pentru interpretarea actuală a științei și tehnologiei.

Cuvinte-cheie: iluminism, epistemologie, Kant, constructivism, imperativul categoric, contra-iluminism, știință, perspectivă, criterii, optimism epistemologic, universale, relativism, holism.

Contents

1. Introduction

    The Enlightenment is a key concept for the view about the modern philosophy, social theory and the history of ideas. But *the paper does not deal with this history of modern ideas*: it just points some aspects of the Enlightenment *epistemology* as a mirror/light that can emphasize the origin of the present thinking about the world and the *ends* of science and technology. Indeed, as the great philosophers have shown, the goal of science is to understand the processes constituting the world, and not to legitimise a theory or another, as the purpose of technology is not the gain of some ones as a result of the technological inventiveness, but the general usefulness of the results of the human ingeniousness. The reminder of Enlightenment epistemology is all the more important when we face not only the perverted way that transformed the modern science and technology into instruments of the private profit[2] that translate/mediate/pervert/reduce their availability as such for

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[2] The capitalist logic – based on *private* ownership of the means of production and existence, thus the control of these means always supposes *ownership* relations – consists in obtaining profit from the reduction of *use-values* (human activities and objects) to their *exchange-value*, thus from selling and buying exchange-values on the market. However, although this manner of profit creation from the selling-buying on the market has existed even in Antiquity – Michael I. Rostovtzeff, "The Hellenistic World and its Economic Development", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jan.), 1936, pp. 231-252 showing the existence of "capitalist" relations based on slave or tenants workforce but

producing use-values for markets, thus the continuity of domination-submission pattern also through the circulation process – capitalism is more than this process of circulation. It is the *extortion of surplus-value* – later sold on the market thus presenting itself under the form of commercial profit – *from the legally free, thus waged labour force producing tangible things*. The results of the human labour have a bigger value than that of the elements connected within the productive process (raw materials, labour force etc.). Therefore, regardless of the size of salary, capitalism means *exploitation* of the labour force that in its turn produces and supports the power of the exploitive force, in fact of the capital relations.

When the labour force is not free, the surplus-value is the result of oppression. As Marx said, only when we have the most developed economic system (capitalism) can we better understand the former systems (slavery, feudalism), because we grasp the *distinctive* characteristics and processes of all of them: *oppression* (through the form of property over slaves and serfs) was the basis of *surplus-value* creation in the first systems, while the *wage system* is the basis of capitalism.

Just oppression has led – and letting here aside the level of technology – that in the first systems the circulation was not so developed/better, was *subordinated* to the *direct obtaining of use-values from the forced labour of slaves/serfs*. The direct production of *use-values* was the goal of the owners/dominant stratum of those societies. While in capitalism, the quest for profit leads to the subordination of creation of use-values to their capitalisation as *commodities* (exchange-values): everything is considered a commodity and has value only as a commodity. When the forced labour became rarer and opposed in a dangerous way to oppression, the *wage system* became more profitable for the owners. The former oppressed/forced labour force became legally free, able to enter the selling-buying relation of its own capacity to work. *The capitalist freedom of the labour force was concomitant to/generated its transformation into a commodity*. This transformation allowed the *continuation* of *surplus-value* extortion and then, of its transformation into *profit* through the selling-buying of commodities on the market. Capitalism "is the first mode of production in which the reproduction of the class structure of society and society itself requires the circulation of the products of labor as commodities", John Weeks, *Capital and Exploitation* (1982), Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 95.

Therefore, although a commodity-producing society does not necessarily gives raise to a capitalist society, "the existence of labor power as a commodity implies not only the capital relation but the circulation of capital", idem, p. 173.

For the aspect of "regardless of the size of salary": exploitation increases, certainly, when the wages are lower than the prices of commodities necessary to the labour force for reproducing itself/than inflation. But the wages never can rise "to a fair level", as explained Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, *The Rate of Exploitation (The Case of the iPhone)*, https://www.thetricontinental.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/190928_Notebook-2_EN_Final_Web.pdf. As well as neither relatively decent wages nor the safety conditions for the labour force are assured by the capital without being pressed by the labour force directly and/or indirectly. See Michelle Verdier, *Retail, aviation, pork, viruses and profits*, 7 July 2020, http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6708 and Eric Bonse, *Tönnies or the failure of "social Europe"*, 12/07/2020, http://www.defenddemocracy.press/tonnies-or-the-failure-of-social-europe/. (However, it is not about an accident, mirrored by the pandemic and related mostly to immigrant/casual labourers: not only after the Bolkenstein Directive of 2006 that gave a legal framework to the hiring of temporary workers from outside the Western European countries, but already in the 1990s the new phase of capital – the trans-national one when exploitation regards the world labour force through outsourcing – has imposed the "flexibility" of jobs, the rise of low-paid, temporary, part-time employments of sedentary citizens. See Anne Gray, *Unsocial Europe: Social protection or Flexiploitation*, London, Ann Arbor: Mi., Pluto Press, 2004). We have to add to these employments the internal migration for low-paid low but essential services, of the older – Jessica Bruder, *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2017 – and not only older citizens.

When the state subsidizes the costs of material and immaterial needs of the labour force – therefore, when the distribution of the use-values created by the labour force is not subordinated to the end of private profit/ the private interests of the capital – the creation of surplus-value is no longer subordinated to private interests. Theoretically, this is the first phase of an alternative model to capitalism. But the "really existent socialism" was – letting here aside the problem of technological development etc. – an archipelago within the capitalist world system: accordingly, the above feature (the creation of surplus-value is no longer subordinated to private interests) coexisted with, and obviously in a contradictory way, the quest for profit, though the ownership was collective.

This contradiction is more understandable when we face in the *present* system the subsidizing of private firms, from the usual state contracts and direct and indirect subsidies to companies to the bail out of banks and the super-rich: and at the same time confuting the deficit of the state. (The state subsidizing the private is not tantamount to a "centralised risk control" in firms/organisations allowing the precedence of safety over profit, Andrew Hopkins, *Organising for Safety. How structure creates culture*, Sydney, Wolters Kluwer, 2019; because in capitalism the examples of centralised risk control in firms have no the power to alter the systemic economic logic).

humankind and every human being, but at the same time the theoretical pattern that promotes this way of acting/ in which this promotion takes place. The "fashion" of *counter-Enlightenment* fits into the frame of this theoretical pattern.

It is not about two philosophical points of views that are speculative, distant and unimportant at practical level. The current, assumed or not, counter-Enlightenment is the *organising force and frame not just for the modern and present "science and technology"*/namely, the *organising force and frame* for some intellectual figures in the intellectual sphere of discoveries and conceptions, *but for the world in its whole*. We must not confuse the belief in science, a rationalist and Enlightenment credo, and a general presumption of the entire modern development of society, with that counter-Enlightenment organising frame; although that frame has so much time *coexisted* with the common use of scientific/technological results – and thus with the general beliefs in their absolute necessity – that it seems difficult to distinguish the counter-Enlightenment as a tendency to *subordinate knowledge, science and technology to private interests as opposed to the common, public ones,* and thus, as a pressure to *reduce/minimise the general public representation of the importance of reason, science and technology*. The difficulty arises because the counter-Enlightenment paradigm "translates"/uses/deviates the common belief in science according to its own logic: until the well-known present *coexistence* of science- and techno- *phobia* with science- and techno- *philia*. Both these excessive attitudes towards science and technology reduce and consider science and technology as the only means of solving the social problems: and thus *postpones* them until the Greek calends.

The present times do show that the *contradictory* path of the development of the world according to this counter-Enlightenment pattern is no longer[3] manageable in a way that allows that the good aspects prevail over the bad ones. For this reason, the review of the arguments related to the counter-Enlightenment is part of the present broad concerns related to the emergency of the present worldwide situation.

Thus, it is without saying that we must not confound a capitalist social state – subsidizing costs of needs of the labour force, but in order to increase the private capitals, thus coexisting with the capitalist economy logic within the same country: clearer, subsidizing also the capital, in this way the state being subordinated to the private interests – with the above-mentioned model.

And, for a final note: the reduction of every good to its *exchange-value* manifests also through the form of *insurance-value*, i.e. increased profit by selling-buying the capitalist manners of *externalization* of costs. The insured exchange-values are higher than the uninsured ones, because they protect the investments by throwing the risks on the level of societies.

[3] Actually, the above phrase is not correct, although it may suggest that the present times would be somehow different from the previous ones. The lack of correctness derives from the *imprecision* of the *criterion*/criteria according to which this value judgement may be expressed. If the criterion is the prevalence of good aspects (scientific discoveries, technological achievements, culture, humanist behaviours as less cruelty and violence) over the bad ones (wars, destruction, even of cultures and their memory, violent behaviours, discrimination), we already have to question it: who judge the prevalence, who judge the aspects/the good and the bad, which territory is considered? For example, *does the development of European science and culture in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries balance the trade with slaves, the wars and destruction initiated by the European ruling strata?*

Therefore, even though the intention of the phrase is understandable – the comparison of the present times with (another imprecision) the 1960s, let' say – and thus it may be accepted as a metaphorical expression of the specific emergency of the present times – rather it draws attention at the epistemological requirements and approach.

(Because the scientific approach means that no inquiry remains without at least a sketch of answer, we should understand the above query as only a signal related to the importance of the *perspectives* from which the answers take place. Beside this, *there is no question of balance between the good and the bad aspects of the European or any civilisation and nor of the overwhelming of the good ones by the bad ones and vice versa*. Simply, the interrogation does not require a no matter what partisanship but it is only an ascertainment of *both* types of aspects and thus a warning that *both types of aspects must be included in the analysis of the European civilisation*).

The main characteristic of the Enlightenment epistemology was its *high level rationalism* manifested through the combination of – actually, the interdependence between – the understanding of the *logic of knowledge* and of the *reason to be of the human knowledge*. Kant was the solar model of this epistemology, in this meaning his endeavour being like that of Copernicus' revolution[4], and both the new logic of knowledge and its interdependence with the *maximalist* ethics of categorical imperative may be defined as *paradigmatic*, as the *paradigms of the modern thinking* or rather as the *unitary paradigm* of the modern thinking.

The counter-Enlightenment opposes to all the aspects of this paradigm.

Therefore, *the paper is nor a defence of Enlightenment in general*: for its economy, it is not Enlightenment that is important, but the Enlightenment (type) epistemology and its falsification by confronting it with the counter-Enlightenment epistemology/manner to treat the present societal problems and science. And certainly, no one would claim that the model of Enlightenment epistemology – constructivism + categorical imperative – was applied to the social theories and practices/was the reading and approaching grid for the social phenomena – and science – once it was outlined. Epistemology "and" methodology help us to surpass the ordinary aspect found in cultural studies that deduces the history of the world from concepts/theories. The "dialectic of Enlightenment"[5] does not consist only in revealing the contradictions – of words, theories, slogans – as well as their practical results, but at the same time with the phenomenological face of the contradictions and their results, in *explaining their multi-layer causes*. *Not only the Enlightenment has evinced the reification of words* – within institutions, relations and 'values', thus having more power over humans, no matter how contradictory was – and thus the human and inhuman results of the many types contradictory reification of words can be understood only in an *integrated* dialectical manner, surpassing the tragic or unacceptable picture of a world resulting only from concepts and theories.

The *history of ideas* considers the moment of "critical theorists'" writing the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and just from this standpoint the warnings of the book – about the practical and theoretical distortion of the Enlightenment's *mots d'ordre* 'progress' and 'democracy', and about culture industry, as well as about the organised total propaganda, are important. The "Enlightenment" turned into its own opposite, but the principle of this process, in phenomena and ideas, was signalled already by Hegel and Marx, and suggested by Max Weber. However, since not this is the topic of the article, the epistemological analysis having as a criterion the Enlightenment epistemological paradigm is the explaining factor of the above contradictions and of people's wondering about them. Moreover, since every concept – as 'progress' and 'democracy' – may be used in different ways (meaning that not the use of concepts but their meanings are important), it is not the Enlightenment epistemology that led to the tragic modern phenomena as the Holocaust (as Adorno and, later, Bauman have claimed) which were considered by the contemporary counter-Enlightenment writers as the "argument" against the Enlightenment spirit. On the contrary: it is *just the Enlightenment epistemology that forbids the irrational behaviour* defacing the concepts and transforming the human society into a crowd of consuming beings, *because this epistemology means/includes the categorical imperative*. Both Adorno and Bauman have ignored this feature.

Finally, the arguments developed in the paper are epistemological, but 1) the categorical imperative criterion is thus also epistemological, not only ethical, and 2) the rupture between

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[4] See Noel Colleran, *Immanuel Kant's reference to the 'Copernican Revolution'*, preprint October 2019, ResearchGate, where not the metaphor/metaphorical meaning of the "Copernican revolution" is supposed to be used by Kant, but rather Copernicus' idea of changing the perspective was considered by Kant as a model to put the problem of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

[5] Max Horkheimer and Theodor. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (1947), Translated by Edmund Jephcott, Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, Stanford, Ca., Stanford University Press, 2002.

domains (here, ethics and epistemology) is overcome by deploying epistemological arguments for seemingly only ethical phenomena.

2. The constructivist epistemology

First and foremost, the Enlightenment was, certainly, a Western European originating intellectual and philosophical movement, but here only its epistemology is outlined, and not its social-political ideals (as progress, liberty etc.).

As we know, Kant was the *modern*[6] founder of the *constructivist* theory of *human* knowing: this never meaning that the knowledge would not be related to the external world and to the *sine qua non* role of sense organs and empirical experiences, but demonstrating[7] that the *ideas* (which are/constitute the human knowledge) do form within the human mind[8], the mind itself being the whole bunch of processes of ideas, of ideas themselves and of relations between ideas, and the mind itself being the *function* of the brain[9]; and that the mind *integrates* the mechanism of perceptive processes from reality/the external world towards the central processing, obviously including imagination, and thus that it integrates the *reflective/representing/copy* aspect of knowledge. The ideas do form from the human sensorial-mental *experience*, i.e. *relations* with a broad exterior to the ideas themselves. The ultimate basis of ideas is external[10]: the mind is a bee, not a spider, if we want to remind Bacon's comparison. But the *ontogenetically first ideas* – which are always copies that, in their turn, mediate the knowledge of things copied by those ideas, i.e. *actualise* them – are thus the *objects* (more or less corresponding to reality) which are further related and interpreted according to the intentions of the human being's consciousness and exterior stimuli. Letting aside here the process of (always social) practice – that invalidates the speculative wondering about the access to the "real world" if one has this access through ideas – the humans only know through the medium of ideas. The ideas are the "objects" manipulated *directly*, namely known. Once the knowing process started, the ideas of objects (the direct objects corresponding to the real – indirect – objects) are *pre- actual /pre- present* in the human mind, and they do become *actual/present* only through/with the intentions.

Therefore and letting aside the formation as such[11], knowledge as a result of the knowing process, and at the same time being its direct determinant, is not only reflective but *at the same time and always* "interpretive", i.e. a complex and rather rapid *analysis* (defalcation of aspects,

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[6] Much earlier, in a similar epistemological-ethical perspective, Plato, *Republic*, 10, 619b-c: "that in his folly and greed he chose it without sufficient examination… he did not blame himself for his woes, but fortune and the gods and anything except himself" (*Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 & 6 translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1969).

[7] The present text that does not analyse Kant's philosophy; it deduces only its novel epistemological-ethical system, and does not refer to the technical aspects inherently translating historical solutions.

[8] They form through a system of *double* steps/paths: that of the concepts of understanding (the categories) and that of their mediation between the sense data and the unity of apperception of the self-consciousness.

[9] Hermann G. W. Burchard, "The Neural Basis of Human Conscious Existence", *Philosophy Study*, January 2020, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 44-93, doi: 10.17265/2159-5313/2020.01.006.

[10] The objects focused on by the subjects, i.e. the ideas about the "real" objects, have certainly an objective basis; but they cannot be thought as being independent from the knowing subjects. (Between the philosophical schools, phenomenology was insisting on the dependence of objects on the subjects).

[11] Ruth Garrett Millikan, "Deflating Socially Constructed Objects: What Thoughts Do to the World" (pp. 27-40), in Mattia Gallotti and John Michael (eds.), *Perspectives on Social Ontology and Social Cognition*, Dordrecht Springer Science+Business Media, 2015: p. 39, "social construction turns out to be merely causal on the one hand and merely semantic on the other"; Kristian Tylén, Riccardo Fusaroli, Peer F. Bundgaard and Svend Řstergaard, "Making sense together: A dynamical account of linguistic meaning-making", *Semiotica*, 2013, Issue 194, pp. 39-62: the possibility for sharing meanings is motivated by four sources of structural stability: 1) the physical constraints and affordances of our surrounding material environment, 2) biological constraints of our human bodies, 3) social normative constraints of culture and society, and 4) the local history of social interactions.

evaluation, combination) *leading to* generally *consistent ideas*. These (consistent) *ideas are the knowledge*; and more: knowledge is the *conscious* understanding of *meanings* of and within ideas.

The meanings are the "*reason to be*" of ideas[12], of their importance and of the importance of their inferences (for the humans performing these inferences): clearer, the conscious *doubling* of information with its "usefulness" for action/its usefulness for the subject's efficient reaction towards the environment/information about the environment. The constructivist paradigm of knowledge is that one which emphasises the *difference* between *information* "as a piece of knowledge"[13], reflecting/reproducing/representing the objects even in their absence, and, on the other hand, the *meaning*, the synthetic idea of the *intention* of the focus/selection/logic of the informative ideas. And certainly, the constructivist paradigm is that one which explains the *interdependence* and *overlapping* of information and meaning, both being signs, as well as structures of reactions towards and according to the signs.

Between the reasons to be and the origin of ideas there are also the *sentiments*. The high level rationalism of Enlightenment does not consist at all in the narrow meaning of knowledge as being only determined by reason, or being only the cold pursuit of accuracy of inferences based just on already defined ideas, but it consists in conceiving knowledge as an expression of the *unity between reason and sentiments*, worked out *in a superior way*. But in this paper we deal only with the ideas, and not with their psychological results (sentiments/feelings) and nor with the mental/psychological substrate of ideas that doubles or accompanies their formation. As it was mentioned and will be further elaborated, the *high level rationalism of Enlightenment is due to the intertwining of the constructivist theory with (the maximalist) ethics*: and ethics always involves sentiments. (For example – for our topic – in the 18th century[14], *compassion* was not at all the main sentiment in the official ethics, and in the European religions it was overwhelmed by merciless sentiments as submission, fear, revenge; these sentiments have legitimated the ruthless sentiments from the human relations. The importance of Kant's maximalist ethics of the categorical imperative, and generally the importance of Enlightenment ethically doubled rationalism, appears once more immense).

The constructivist theory of knowing is the *methodological* basis of all the scientific research concerning the history of knowledge formation[15], the (history of) biological formation of knowledge, the (history of the) composition of knowledge, the (history of) trans- human species and trans- and infra- living beings knowledge. The *continuity* and the *discontinuity* governing all the forms of knowledge, as well as the *multiple levels* where this process is taking place *simultaneously* in the complex living beings, and thus being impossible to explain knowledge from one level only, no matter what level this could be, have been and are further "disclosed". But this entire endeavour is the result of the "disenchantment" of the human knowledge, as either its reductive image of copy of the world through the sensorial transportation way, or as a mysterious property or aura (perhaps created by deities). The constructivist paradigm lies at the basis of the scientific demonstrations of

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[12] The *meanings* are the *references /objects which are intended through words and propositions/ideas*. They result from the *intentionality* of mind, intentionality that represents/symbolises the objects. (We do grasp continuity between Brentano and Husserl (and phenomenology as such) and the analytic philosophy of mind, John Searle, Ruth Millikan, do we?). But the meanings are not only the result of intentionality, but also – and perhaps first of all – of the processing of ideas/their meanings.

[13] Georges Chapouthier, *L'Homme, ce singe en mosaïque*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2001, p. 28.

[14] And: not only in the 18th century (and before, obviously). Neither the 19th century was compassion the value ruling the human affairs. This was the basis of Schopenhauer's focus on compassion. For a new/different interpretation of Schopenhauer's criticism of Kant, see Ana Bazac, "Arthur Schopenhauer's mirror: the will, the suffering, the compassion as philosophical challenges", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Philosophia*, Vol. 64, No. 3, December 2019, pp. 195-225.

[15] See Greg Jensen, Claire Miller, Allen Neuringer, "Truly Random Operant Responding", in Thomas R. Zentall, Edward A. Wasserman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Cognition*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 652-673.

holism, namely of the development and functioning of all the elements, properties and relations step by step, tackled by science as a result of the experience of the whole/unitary human being: subordinated to the whole/unitary human being, but at the same time having their relative autonomies.

For example, the holistic approach explains, in accurate scientific studies, that a species, let's say the human one, is influenced both by other species, and by the non-living environment; and at the same time a species, let's say the human one, influences other species and the non-living environment. And this influence regards not only the species, but also the individual living being; thus, the living beings – only as species, and even as many species together, and in a long time – have influenced the non-living environment: but only as a whole, and not at the level of individual physical-chemical reactions of individual non-living components. Why is this? Because: the non-living physical-chemical material components and relations are arranged and adjusted according to the *physical and chemical forces* and once for all. While the living beings/entities find, as both wholes and in their smallest components, *permanent adaptive responses* to their environments, both at the level of individuals and of species: the elements of their environments are *signs* which they respond to, they *learn* (to *recognise* the sign and to *select* the best answer according to biological rules – ultimately, the survival of the biological entity and its reproduction – thus to create a model of "the best action"), therefore they *adapt*[16] (in a positive or negative sense, clearer, according to the *telos* of the whole organism or only to the *telos* of the biological entity, once more, in order to survive and to reproduce)[17]. Therefore, *knowledge* is *learning* and *re-making*/conceiving of the "programmes" and thus the algorithms necessary for future actions (re-actions). In this respect, knowledge is certainly produced by the material (meaning also energetic and informational) process of the brain which is, in its turn, subordinated to the process of knowing[18] and, as Monod said[19], is and depends on *uncertainty*, internal and external *random events*, and is complex until including the quantum movements. But at the same time, knowledge is a (complex, multi-strata) structure of useful programmes for inherently including *repetitions*.

The inherent result of the constructivist theory was the impulse to transform the human *attitudes* towards both the external world and the human ideas and decisions. Certainly, the *reality* is over there, it is objective, but *at the same time* our *knowledge* about the world is not a simple copy of reality, but a *processing* of the signals biologically transported from the external world into the human mind. Obviously, the "external world" is that world which is external to the ideas the humans are aware of in a certain moment: thus the external world includes also the internal, biological and psychological facts. Anyway, *according to the constructivist paradigm, the humans can no longer consider that their conceptions would be neutral copies of an implacable reality and that their ideas and behaviours would be devoid of the responsibility of deliberation and choice*:

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[16] David J Depew, "Adaptation as Process: The Future of Darwinism and the Legacy of Theodosius Dobzhansky", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 42, 2011, pp. 89–98.

[17] Brian Goodwin, **"**A Cognitive View of Biological Process", *Journal of Social and Biological Structure*, 1, 1978, pp.117-125; Ladislav Kovàc, "Conceiving life as knowledge embodied in sentient chemical systems might provide new insights into the nature of cognition", *Embo Reports*, 2006, June, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp. 562-566.

[18] This subordination is visible in the (history of) neuroplasticity. See André Petitat, "Towards a trans-epistemic society", *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, Vol. 4, March 2020, pp. 107-120, (p. 109: "It is made apparent, at both the meso and micro levels, by the production of new neurons, the modification of neural networks, the variation of neural activity within networks, the number and activity of synapses, the creation and destruction of synaptic connections, the modulation of synaptic receptors, the modification of DNA expression in neurons, etc. In short, the brain is a dynamic organ in permanent transformation".

[19] Jacques Monod, *Le Hasard et la Nécessité: Essai sur la philosophie naturelle de la biologie moderne*, Paris, Seuil, 1970.

they can no longer burden (only) "the facts" and nor can they show their innocence as (only) "representing these facts".

Actually, just constructivism has substantiated the inherent *anthropocentric* perspective of humans: the importance/criterion of human beings when they relate to the whole world was legitimated by the constructivist theory; because the importance/criterion was demonstrated "within the limits of reason alone", and not by addressing the authority of God.

And for this reason, constructivism was no longer metaphysics – irrespective of the appearance of Kant's theory – for it was not a search for the first ontological principles, and has outlined *a view further developed by the sciences* which have never refuted constructivism but proved it in depth. (So, the criterion to distinguish a speculative metaphysical philosophy from a non-speculative and non-metaphysical one is its position towards science: in the second, *the philosophy-science continuity* exists).

Then what was constructivism, if it was not metaphysics (and was not considered metaphysics by Kant)? It was a *methodology*, clearer, a demonstration of the *conditions* of knowledge: these conditions were *transcendental*, i.e. an object of knowing that was not the external world on which cognition is focused, but, transcending that world, that which outlined the *possibility itself to know/to experience*. Through this methodological approach Kant attested the *epistemological* concerns from the history of philosophy – from the Socratic turn to the modern inquiries of senses and reason – which were insidious refusals of metaphysics, and then he consciously refuted the traditional, old metaphysics. His approach was considered by him as preceding the new possible position of metaphysics as a general commentary of sciences and their both empirical proofs and general laws.

Constructivism has an important and interesting consequence – highlighting in a specific manner its anthropocentrism –: for constructivism is belief in knowing, people raise their *expectations* of knowledge in front of the problems of the world and concretely, of their own socially generated problems. Or, put differently, one of the criteria of expectations is just the level/development of knowledge. The other criterion is the conscience of human dignity, beyond any assumptions of metaphysical extra-mundane principles.

3. The maximalist ethics of the categorical imperative

The constructivist theory has opened the path toward an *integrated* understanding of all the elements which exist and are parts of the knowledge of the world. And this integrated understanding once more raises the issue of the human *responsibility* towards all of these elements. Kant's *ethical theory of the categorical imperative*[20] was not a simple concern for morals, near the concern for epistemology and separated from it. On the contrary, it was its *logical result, supplementary explanation and thus is a part (as the constructivist epistemology was a part, at least the preamble of the ethical theory)*. Since the human beings process in their minds the ideas about themselves and their fellows – and this human singularity of idea construction is even more universal than the coherent thinking[21] – it depends on them what they do speak of, how they do behave, which values they are subordinated to. Since the human knowledge involves (re-)action, it depends on the *values* and *stances* the humans construct on. Values and stances bring about predictability of re-actions.

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[20] See Ana Bazac, "The philosophy of the *raison d'être*: Aristotle's *telos* and Kant's categorical imperative", *Biocosmology – Neo-Aristotelism*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2016, pp. 286-304.
[21] Heraclitus, *The Complete Fragments*, Translation and Commentary and The Greek text – William Harris (1926-2009), http://wayback.archive-it.org/6670/20161201175137/http://community.middlebury.edu/~harris/Philosophy/heraclitus.pdf: "…2. We should let ourselves be guided by what is common to all. Yet, although the Logos is common to all, most men live as if each of them had a private intelligence of his own".

The real responsibility arises from the possibility to reasonably conduct one's own reason, but if the humans arrive to think reasonably about the fulfilment of their desires and at the same time unreasonably treat their fellows, a deep and absurd antagonism arrives to mark both the reasonability of the human ideas and of their behaviours. The *ethical categorical imperative*[22] *theory* is not a pure concept of understanding, here, a special concept describing the universality of the human wish; its theory is thoroughly logically demonstrated, i.e. deduced from different logical figures: it is an abstract form, a formal standard concerning the *content* of human attitudes towards their fellows. *This content is constructed through the means-ends structure of the social human beings*. Without expressing the formal standard/criterion (in fact generating rules), the human behaviour seems chaotic.

Ethics is possible only if it transcends the rules of human habits aiming at the pursuit of happiness (no matter if this happiness may consist in the adoration of God): according to Kant, this is possible only when the moral goals are internal within the ethical human realm, rationally sanctioned as human duty. The categorical imperative theory is as revolutionary as the epistemological constructivist theory, they both constituting together the paradigmatic framework of the entire modern philosophical thinking. The *reason to be* of the human knowledge cannot be its unreasonable manifestation, since the humans themselves can control the development of thinking. The reason to be always concerns the *content*, and not just the forms which may preserve the reduction of humans to means. (And as we shall see, this reduction concerns also the means of the human means: science and technology. If we retain that the class and group ends must not infringe upon the ends of every individual and thus of the human species, we understand that neither the immaterial nor the material means – science and technology being both immaterial and material – must be considered from the standpoint of restrictive, private ends).

Obviously, the human reason's control is not absolute, but would this be the reason to allow whatever decisions and behaviours? *To treat the humans always as ends, and not only as means*: the imperative was not only demonstrated as *necessary*, but also as *possible*, since all the human beings think, can be taught, learn, integrate and assume new levels of knowledge and responsibility. Certainly, the Enlightenment thinking – being the reflex of modernising forces on the basis of science and the industrial revolution – could remain only at this super-structural level of education and educability; the fact that this level was/is not enough was not only proved by reality but also, and here this aspect is highlighted, theoretically demonstrated, and at the same time helped by the demonstrations of the *possibility and necessity* of alternatives/completions.

The maximalist ethics added to constructivism gives the *holistic* character to the Enlightenment epistemology.

4. Two epistemological concepts/consequences of the Kantian constructivism: the necessary methodical *critical* approach and the concrete *ideological* manifestation of the human *perspectives*

The advent of modern relations was surrounded by a halo of ideas, where the undisputable character of all types of traditions – which certainly endorsed prestigious institutions which at their turn conferred to the traditional ideas indisputable truth-value – was taken for granted. From time to time there were aversions against these ideas but the argument of traditionalists was stronger: the ideas promoted by prestigious institutions had the *authority* of their creators, i.e. the institutions representing "trans-world wisdom". Thus even if the institutions and their representatives might have behaved in a lower tonality than that of their position, their fundamental messages were unquestionable.

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[22] The categorical imperative is *a priori* valid.

By demonstrating that the *ideas* are constructed in the natural processing within the human mind, the Enlightenment epistemology has transformed the narrow, restricted origin of knowledge, concretely, it has cancelled the *authority* principle: and has conferred the *responsibility* to know and to have and move ideas to *every* human being, as a *universal* burden (of *all* humans). The new epistemology was one of philosophy's most important contributions to *democracy*: yes, every human being thinks – as many previous philosophers have asserted – but since they receive the ideas about the world from their predecessors and from institutions, they only copy them and have no nuisance for them; but since the humans construct their ideas, they must be aware of this fact, and they must be responsible for them: and first, by *learning* and accumulating cognizance in order to construct more reliable ideas.

The Enlightenment epistemology has substantiated the rationalists' old idea of the *universal* burden of thinking, showing *what is universalizable* and *why*.

The fact that all the humans have reason is a *quality* (whose natural source cannot be annulled by the intertwined artificial/cultural/social origin: they are certainly interdependent and develop together). This quality was known and assumed by all, common people and philosophers: being, at the same time, neglected. But the demonstration of the natural constitution of *ideas* has strengthened not only the awareness of that quality, but also, and especially, of the *behaviours* according to that quality. The *quality* is *universal*, the *logic* of *treating* the humans always as ends and not only as means – therefore, according to the *categorical imperative* – is only cultural/social and only thus *universalizable*.

The old *golden rule* – treat others as you would like others to treat you – *has preceded the categorical imperative but was only an urge/inducement*; and people always knew the difference between urges and reality. Put in a philosophical way, people always knew that the most benevolent urges have only an individual/psychological/random basis. Kant's ethical paradigm – i.e. a translation of the constructivist burden into ethical language – was a *demonstration* of the intrinsic *social* and *necessary* logic to surpass the morals based on urges and disjunction between urges and reality. When showing that people are each other's means but that there is their common humanity that gives each of them the human quality, and at the same time *the value beyond their values as means*, thus by using the most modern concepts of *functionalism*, the most modern methodological paradigm in ontology, Kant brought about the demonstration, the *reason to be* of a new type of social relations. This new type was not only desirable, but also necessary: thus, *universalizable*.

The slogan of Enlightenment is Kant's *sapere aude*. Which are the meanings of this slogan? To know (*sapere*[23]) – that is, to learn and assimilate in a critical and creative manner, to discern and judge – suggests the universal ability of the humans. The verb that urges – *aude*[24] – is used in both its significance of dare and of might. People must want to learn and to know, but at the same time the must and can behave in a human manner, treating the others also as ends, and not only as means. The categorical imperative is *possible*, it is not fantasy. With it, Kant has opened up the path toward possible and necessary changes of the social relations: in order to assure the categorical imperative.

Almost until Kant, ethics was about desirable features per se, and the origin of the deciphering of morality was the *individual*. But the Enlightenment ethics-epistemology unity has surpassed the moralising urges by introducing two concepts specific only to *social relations*. Through the categorical imperative (the *means-ends* equation), Kant has suggested that the *origin of the decoding of morality is the whole of social relations*. People are each other's *means* and treat each other accordingly. But, as human beings, they are/and must be considered also as *ends*: the other's and the others' humanity is my own humanity, it is certified by my own humanity, while my own humanity resides in my treatment of others always as ends.

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[23] The Latin verb *săpĭo, -ĕre, -ŭi/īvi/ĭi* – to have taste, to judge, to be wise, to know, to prefer.

[24] *Audĕo, -ēre, -sus sum* – to dare, to have the will/the strength to.

The Enlightenment epistemology has founded a *social human ontology*: the (interest for) the principles and concepts constituting the world and its understanding became transfigured by this new ontology. On this line, the entire subsequent development of philosophical thinking follows from the Enlightenment: the getting to the bottom of the "social" (the Marx paradigm), but even the obstinate starting from the individual (Heidegger) had to take from the Enlightenment *the care* that is for more than the individual's death.

And certainly, as a result of the Enlightenment epistemology, the *social facts* are no longer considered given, similarly to the plants, the viruses or the chemical components of different materials but, although objective as existent and as objects we deal with, as following the social recognition/acceptance transposed into propositional attitudes[25] reflecting our intentions. (Intentions not as a manner of focusing on something in order to delimitate, decompose and classify it – thus to know it – but as a manner of creation of this something[26], according to its functionality developed historically in the social relations). Therefore, the social facts are *historically* created institutions (relations and signs having social functions and thus being criteria of other relations[27] etc.), symbols, relations, norms, conventions, having functions in the social relations and communities.

A. Criticism

Concretely, one of the main democratic and universal attitudes – and ideas – was that of *critique*. Until the Enlightenment constructivist theory – and also after, because this theory is uncomfortable for many – criticism was exercised in a "republic of letters" of some intellectuals, those able to do it in a close circle. But since all men think just by constructing their ideas, and thus the ideas confront each other, as well as the ideas and the world – since the construction is the result of experience – *every one can and must critically think about the ideas and the world*.

In the second half of the 18th century, the general conscience already could grasp that "our age" is objectionable, criticisable. But what was important was that *the humans could and ought to see all the existing ideas and institutions through the lens of critique*: "Our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit". (And continues: "Religion through its holiness and legislation through its majesty commonly seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim to that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination"[28]).

Accordingly, *criticism* means not a simple partisanship and critique of opposed ideas[29] and institutions, but the ability to bring to light – through that "free and public examination" – the *contradictions* and their *causes*. Criticism means explanation – of the antagonisms and also of the alternative ways and solving – and this involves, as Aristotle had already warned, the search for causes.

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[25] John Searle, "Are There Social Objects?" (pp. 17-26), in Matia Gallotti, John Michael (Eds.), *Perspectives on Social Ontology and Social Cognition*, Dordrecht, Springer Science + Business Media, 2015, p. 17 (Abstract): "representations that have the logical form of the Status Function Declarations…Because Institutional Facts have a propositional structure, they and their representations can function in human rationality in a way that objects cannot".

[26] Idem, p. 18: "A Social Fact is any fact involving collective intentionality of two or more animals".

[27] Ibidem: "An important subset of Social Facts are those involving the creation and maintenance of what I call Status Functions, functions that can only exist because there is a collective acceptance on the part of sufficient members of the community that a status exists and with the status a function that can only be performed because there is such a collective acceptance of the status".

[28] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Preface <A>, pp. 100-101.

[29] A counter-Enlightenment manner to avoid criticism – and the comparison between opposed ideas – is their indistinct characterisation as "both are the same". See *Trump says both sides to blame amid Charlottesville backlash*, August 16, 2017, https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/15/politics/trump-charlottesville-delay/index.html.

B. Class perspective and ideology

If so, an inevitable outcome of the Enlightenment epistemology was the understanding of *class*[30]/*social perspectives*[31] through which people think *society* and all the *social and socially related ideas and facts*. This class/social perspective was *demonstrated* by Marx and is called *ideology/ideological*[32]. Every ideology reflects, ultimately, a class perspective, no matter if it is that of the persons supporting/promoting that ideology, and *every class perspective reflects, ultimately, the positions within the structural economic relations, i.e. the interests of preservation or change of the existing structural economic relations*. Every human being has and commits many functions and statuses at the same time and this situation allows them to differentiate into *groups* according to the different statuses and functions and, certainly, to assume different groups ideologies. But *no membership in any group cancels class membership* and, discussing the concept of ideology, the *class ideology behind the group ideologies*, whether people are aware, or not, of that class ideology. This means that the class membership and the class ideology *and* the membrship to different groups (with their ideologies) *do not substitute each other*. For example, as one cannot discuss a person only from the standpoint of his/her class position and class ideology he/she assumes (or not), because the person is at the same time member of professional groups, of gender groups, of nationality groups etc., so one cannot see that person only as a member of a group, or of more, for ultimately the groups are within the classes and their ideologies reflect different class perspectives.

Only ultimately, the ideology reflects class (and groups) interests, because these interests are translated into ideas which *originate* from many and even different from the class/group interests and ideas; as well as these interests/ideas transpose into a complex *field* of conceptions/ideology that may stand *before* certain class/groups interests, or *behind*[33]. What is important is to see how and why this complex field/its aspects correspond to class/groups interests and fuel their social movement.

People think almost everything ideologically, directly and indirectly, no matter if they think according to their own social perspective or according to another one, even opposed to their own social position. Obviously, *the ideas develop from ideas*, they are not simple copies of the existence

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[30] Although here it is only about the class perspective, the social class and the division in social classes were already discussed by the French historians of Restoration, as Marx has mentioned, and substantiated in the economic relations by the latter. Philosophically, Sartre has developed Marx's explanation about the original condition of *rarity* (*Critique de la raison dialectique I, Théorie des ensembles pratiques précédé de Questions de méthode*, Paris, Gallimard, 1960); see also Ana Bazac: „În jurul problemei cauzelor structurante: ontologia gramsciană a forțelor de producție și teoria rarității la Sartre", in *Gramsci și Sartre. Mari gânditori ai secolului XX*, București, Editura Institutului de științe politice și relații internaționale, 2007, pp. 97-113 and „Sartre și aventura conceptului de raritate", Adriana Neacșu (coordonator), *Sartre în gândirea contemporană*, Craiova, Editura Universitaria, 2008, pp. 105-162 ["Around the problem of structuring causes: the Gramscian ontology of the forces of production and Sartre's theory of rarity", in *Gramsci and Sartre. Great thinkers of the twentieth century*; "Sartre and the adventure of the concept of rarity", in *Sartre in the contemporary thought*].

Nowadays there are researches which support this explanation of classes by recourse to comparative psychology. See, Sagar A. Prandit, Gauri R. Pradhan & Carel P. van Schaik, **"Why Class Formation Occurs in Humans but Not among Other Primates"**, *Human Nature*, volume 31, 2020, pp.155–173.

[31] The book Ana-Maria Crețu, Michela Massimi (Eds.), *Knowledge from a Human Point of View*, Springer, 2020 does not deal with social perspectives – lesser with ideology – but with the epistemological representations of the human vantage point in Kant, Nietzsche, American pragmatism, some authors, and with epistemological problems as the inquirer's perspective shaping the questions and thus the answers (which have truth-value only if they correspond to relevant questions, i.e. perspectives; or as the relationships between the quantitative aspect of truth and error and, on the other hand, the criterion of perspective; or as the relationships between a meta/second-order assuring perspective on the first one, simply reflective, and the problem of values (here, of virtue).

[32] The first Marxian meaning of the concept of ideology was "false ideas". Then, the concept gained the second Marxian meaning, as above.

[33] See Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Enlarged edition, Cambridge, Ma., Belknap Press, 1967.

(that is so complex that an idea selects and mixes different real aspects and also ideas in its structure), but this complex translation/transposition of the existence into *ideas generating ideas* should not make us ignore their substantiation. And because the Enlightenment epistemology has as a starting point the awareness/necessity of awareness of the entire process of thinking and the resulted ideas which, certainly, must be considered in a critical/analytic manner (because they are not objective as the trees from the forest, they exist but they are forged in the human mind), an Enlightenment type message is the *conscious assuming of the ideological positions*.

Epistemologically, this message includes the understanding of the *reification* process of social facts: "Reification occurs when a social entity is taken to be a natural one. That is, the social nature of the entity, including its mind-dependent mode of existence, is not recognized"[34]. But if reification is recognised – and here we see the importance of critical deconstructions of the reified facts – the attitudes of people towards the social institutions change. For example, they leave behind the old *essentialist* approach of kinds (for example, nation, race, culture etc.) and their membership, retaining not only the natural basis but understanding both the *historical* construction of these social institutions and the *dependence of social roles on the social relations and attitudes*. But simpler (yet at the level of an ethical synthesis): the transparent declaration of the assuming of an ideology means to transparently declare the *assumed values as subordinated*, or not, *to the criterion of the categorical imperative*. In this respect, the manipulation of gender appartenance is not an up-to-date rejection of the essentialist approach, because no artificial construction is legitimated if it is, and is following from the reduction of humans to means.

The idea of class/social *perspective* draws attention on a series of significant aspects:

 - that the different class/social perspectives exist (they are objective), but are social, not natural phenomena, and that the ideological ideas of classes/social groups are the *meanings* these classes/groups emit from the standpoint of social positions in the frame of social relationships;

 - that the values and meanings people are used to are not neutral ascertaining of knowledge but *perspectives* from social positions, and that the stronger values and meanings are those emanating from the dominating position; thus that in a society based on   *power relations/domination-submission relations*, there is even a strange aporia: that a big part of the powerless think after the models of those who dominate them; the *dominant* values are those *usual* in a society as a result of the ideological hegemony of the dominant social class[35]: therefore, to question the values does not mean a relativistic dissolving of everything into a world lacking of criteria but only to suspect (the dominant, but not only the dominant) values, to exercise criticism; and thus to offer criteria giving them substance;

  - that there is a difference between the intentionality of the consciousness in principle, including the intentionality toward and the social acceptance of social institutions and, on the other hand, the class character of pressure for social acceptance and for institutions: neither the social acceptance and nor the institutions are socially neutral, they are the result of *social oppositions* and especially of the perspective of *class decision-makers*; the evolution of institutions and attitudes towards them illustrate this *social* character of intentionality;

  - that the social perspectives are also those which generate *ideals* as social goals towards which people are consciously guiding themselves; the social mark of Enlightenment outlines that the ideals *transcend* the class/groups narrow purposes: until where? Until: the goals and condition of the *human species* are reached. Both the Enlightenment epistemology and ethics *send* to the

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[34] Edouard Machery, "Social Ontology and the Objection from Reification" (87-100), in Mattia Galotti and John Michael (Eds.), *Perspectives on Social Ontology and Social Cognition*, Dordrecht, Springer Science+Business Media, 2015, p. 89.

[35] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, London, ElecBook, 1999, pp. 437, 435..

understanding that *if the particular class/groups goals oppose to those of the species – and thus to those of any individual – they are not humanly worth*;

   - thus, the social perspectives put the problem of the human *universal/what is universally valuable in and by humans*. Since we are used to the universal value of *social equality*[36], let's see what it means as *universal*: the social equality is the equality of all members of the human species *qua* humans; irrespective of their particularities, but only *qua* humans. Meaning that *the different particular identities are given by the group and individual experiences*. But: 1) No particular identity allows the treatment of others only as means; accordingly, *no particular value/purpose is morally justified if it is opposed to the universal values*: because by realising it other particular values can be infringed, and thus the universal values – are erased; 2) The huge responsibility for the group and individual experiences: marked by *education* and (education of) *the categorical imperative*. Clearer: the responsibility for the group and individual experiences is social, too[37], not only individual, and education and the respect of categorical imperative cannot be processes generated only by individual good wills. And: no historical rupture would legitimise the infringement of ideals concerning the human species/ of respect of the categorical imperative in the name of loss of former "central" particular fulcrums, because *no fulcrum is more humanly valuable than the human values as universals*. Hence, both the Enlightenment epistemology and the class perspective involve *activism*: the waiting for – a nebulous future, an absurd hope for the returning of old values/ "central" support points thought to be better than those predominant today – is *à rebours* to both. For both, the experience of waiting is integrated within/subordinated to activism. For this reason, the future is not an empty space, fit to be filled with anything that would re-turn the old "central" support points, nor is it an empty hope, occupied only by the slogan of the coming of the future. Activism is opposed to the restiveness to stop the end, as it is not a postponement of the end, it is its preparation: as transfigured in *creation*. Consequently, the time involved within the Enlightenment epistemology and the class perspective is more than the time that inexorably flows: it is the *time* of *decisions*[38]. The delays – the differences between the objective and the subjective conditions of the changes – can be brakes, but they do not annul the logic of activism. The future does not sacrifice the past and the present: it is their result.

   Repeating the example of class and group membership, we must conclude that *the class is not the single cause of oppression* – and the "cumulative disadvantages"[39] generated by the class division and submission *add* to the cumulative disadvantages of different groups and *whose cumulative disadvantages are in addition to the class ones*[40] – as the economic structural relations are not their only determinant: hence the class and ideology paradigm is not a monism opposed to the monism of group membership. The class and ideology paradigm explains the *class divisions within groups* (for instance, not all the whites are oppressors and not all people of colour are oppressed; or not all women are oppressed and not all men are oppressors; or not all the LGBTI

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[36] Freedom is a universal, too, and as such it is defined as freedom of all members of the human species *according to the same considered criterion*. But as we know, there are many criteria. They must not be reduced to one criterion, and their contents must not clash with the universality requirement. Thus, the freedom of modern enterprise is not tantamount to the freedom of the labour force.

[37] How could we explain – by using no matter what concepts – that during the pandemic the reduction and even disappearance of incomes at a large part of society coexisted with the rise of some private fortunes?

[38] See Ana Bazac, analysis of the *kairos*, in « Le temps d'agir », *Analele Universităţii din Craiova. Seria Filosofie*, 44, 2, 2019, pp. 73-97.

[39] Brian Barry, *Why Social Justice Matters?*, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 2005 used the theory of cumulative disadvantage from both the well-known economic and sociological research and from the medical ones.

   But the theory was developed also in a specific branch of sociology, that of science. See Robert K. Merton, "The Mathew Effect in Science", *Science*, 159, 1968, pp. 56-63.

[40] See also Sam Marcy, *High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class* (1986), https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/marcy/hightech/index.html.

persons have the same social status); and the *degrees of oppression within classes* (people of colour *within the exploited class* are more oppressed than the whites[41], and the environmental racism is intertwined with class "racism"/social oppression[42]). The class and ideology paradigm explains why and how *racism and the gender discrimination do not explicate why there is (trans-group) exploitation*, while the *economic/class theory accounts for the degrees of oppression*[43]. Racism and gender discrimination do not explain why and how the same ideology can exist within different races/nationalities, and why and how there can be social change with the related ideology in a racially homogenous society; and why and how this social change and ideology are assumed by both men and women. The class/economic paradigm explains also the supplementary oppressions, but these supplementary oppressions do not explain the logic of classes (slaves were both men and women, but the gender division and oppression do not explain slavery).

5. Continuity of Enlightenment philosophical attitudes

Therefore, the history of philosophy is a collection of pages where the philosophers have *insisted* on one aspect or another[44]. Sometimes an aspect did not absolutely cover the other ones; other times, it seemed that the aspect was the only explanation and solution in that page; but always the aspects were "something new"/seen in a fresh manner, contributing to better explaining the world. And this occurred because the philosophers used the power of logic the best they could. This fact motivated the image of the history of philosophy as a series of moments and paradigmatic gains added gradually. Hence it's no wonder that all these aspects were analysed, corroborated, cleaned, and used in the paradigmatic synthesis made by *Kant's epistemological-ethical theory with two facets*. Anyway, in the history of knowledge, even though the theses are wrong, they have a big epistemological importance because the successors better grasp the inadvertences and, through unbiased confrontation of opposed theories, succeed to offer more reliable alternatives. (For example, if we consider Leibniz – who was the rationalist "extreme", confronted by Kant with the empiricist "extreme", namely with the Englishmen Locke and Hobbes[45] – he was a metaphysician

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[41] See here Tim Wise, *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity*, City Lights Publishers, 2010, and also the many present (2020) proofs of present racial discrimination.

[42] Samuel Chalom, Dominique Vidal, *Portraits d'une France à deux vitesses*, Préface de Thomas Porcher, Paris, L'Aube, 2020.

[43] Ramzig Keucheyan**,** *La nature est un champ de bataille. Essai d'écologie politique* (2014), Paris, La Découverte/Poche, 2018: starting from worldwide phenomena, the hypothesis of an *environmental racism* resulting from the *reinforcement of social inequalities* by the capitalist manner to treat the ecological crisis, is demonstrated by the capitalist underlying processes of 1) financializing the risks arising from the deterioration of the environment, namely, creating insurance products in order to protect the prrivate investments from the ecological costs which are transposed as states and citizens' tasks, and 2) militarising the ecological crisis.

See also Quôc Anh, *Le racisme environnemental à travers le prisme des rapports de dominations*, 18 août 2020, https://blogs.mediapart.fr/qu-c-anh/blog.

[44] See the insistence of the *rationalists* on the active man/active thinking – towards the *empiricists*' passive mind reproducing the data collected by senses –. From the standpoint of man's active position, Kant was not original. He was so only from the standpoint of methodological synthesis and demonstration.

[45] Leibniz too has criticised Hobbes. "I am delighted to see you removed from the feeling of Mr. Hobbes, who did not agree that man was made for society, realizing that we were only forced there by the necessity and by the wickedness of those of his kind", *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704/1765), Ernest Flammarion, Paris, 1921, Livre troisième, Chapitre 1, § 1. And continues emphasising the continuity between the animal and human society: "men, free from all wickedness, would unite to better obtain their goal, as the birds flock to better travel in company, and as the beavers join by the hundreds to make large dikes, where a small number of these animals could not succeed; and these dikes are necessary for them, to make by these means, reservoirs of water or small lakes, in which they build their huts and catch fish, which they feed on. This is the basis of the society of animals which are proper to it, and in no way the fear of their fellow men, which is hardly found in animals". (Leibniz has preceded by almost three centuries the contemporary studies about altruism, even in animal societies, and by 150 years the Marxian demonstration of the constitution of the human sociability).

because he could not be otherwise in his time. Through his synthesis, Kant was the first European who tried to rarefy metaphysics in order to give room to a durable philosophy. Leibniz considered that moral is related to the humans' rational capacity to pursue happiness by making slaloms between external and internal obstacles; but happiness meant joy to pursue perfection, and this ability pertained, obviously, to the intellectuals[46]).

Then through the ethical theory of categorical imperative, Kant has once more refuted metaphysics: because it was falsified – in fact, the falsification itself is part of the theory, including through the many pages devoted to the practical philosophy – and both corresponding to the positively and negatively taken empirical examples/deployment of facts and resulting from logically consistent theoretical demonstrations. The categorical imperative is not a founding principle of everything human, coming from nowhere, but a *solution in mirror to the human decisions*. And like all concepts, the categorical imperative is the result of the human understanding, i.e. the mental processing of a long history of rather moral failures.

However, we must not ignore that the *content* of the Enlightenment ethics was preceded by enlightening theories. For example, Leibniz's theory that everything was created by God, rationally, and that the humans have their place in this world, being able to adapt to and to behave rationally according to the rational determinism (as if creation would include the progress of the human understanding and facts) was an *optimist* theory. It was based on the rationalist tenet and ideal. Voltaire (*Candide*, 1759) has ridiculed "the best of all possible worlds", but Leibniz's theory was rather a challenge for further elaborations of both rationalism and the rationalist ideal. Kant has criticised Leibniz's difficult matching of the human free will to the predetermined coherence of the created world, but he did not annul the optimism, he has strengthened it: *just because people construct the ideas and are able to criticise them, therefore are able to improve them and their own ability to understand, criticise and self-improve, there are reasons of optimism*. However, Kant's optimism is temperate: it is open, since it is based on constructivism, the more so sensibility and not only understanding is a source of cognitive content, therefore sensibility is opening the space of outer experience and of understanding the inner one, thus both opening the space of spontaneity. But again, just due to constructivism, people are able to arrive to *universal* and *necessary* contents of ideas. Thus, Enlightenment epistemology is not pessimistic, and neither is it illogical or cynical: it just promotes the importance of logical inferences.

Also, the Enlightenment manner of thinking was only a tendency, the main one for some thinkers and scientists who supported it, but the counter-Enlightenment was[47] – and still is – dominant. And this took place even though many or even all the important scientific and philosophical writings were imbued with the optimistic Enlightenment spirit. *The official message was always that of counter-Enlightenment.* It was only during the few years of the 18th century bourgeois revolutions that the counter-Enlightenment voice was weak.

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[46] Leibniz, *On Wisdom* (1690), translated by Anita Gallagher in *Fidelio* Vol III, No. 2, Summer 1994, https://archive.schillerinstitute.com/transl/trans_leibniz.html#wisdom; however, love would have allowing a certain generalisation: *Nouveaux essais…*, Ch, XX, § 4, 5 "to love is to be carried to take pleasure in the perfection, good or happiness of the loved object".

[47] For example, the erection of Giordano Bruno's statue in Rome in 1889 was considered by the Catholic Church and many politicians as a blasphemy, even though the inauguration was attended by leading European intellectuals. This happened after the Risorgimento (Resurgence) period, but if we consider the spirit of Risorgimento devoted not only to the unification of Italy but also to the revival of the dynamic and critical spirit of Renaissance, this spirit had to continue even after 1861. But it did not. The counter-Enlightenment manifests just through this reduction of larger goals to the narrow ones which do not clash with the dominant ideology, but "help" it to put in oblivion the larger goals.

For interesting elements about Giordano Bruno, see Denis Collin, *La statue de Giordano Bruno*, Dimanche 08/12/2013, http://denis-collin.viabloga.com/news/la-statue-de-giordano-bruno.

6. The methodology in the Enlightenment epistemology

1) The first, already mentioned, aspect of the Enlightenment epistemology was the interdependence and intertwining of epistemology and ethics. The Enlightenment method/approach means just the analysis of things from the standpoint of the *epistemology-ethics interdependence*.

2) The second aspect is the *harmony of the information from the external world with its rational analysis*. The Enlightenment method has surpassed the exaggerations of empiricism and rationalism: but this means it has surpassed the contempt towards both the data of sensibility, thus sentiments, and reason[48]. But since it is about "harmony", the Enlightenment approach involves the mutual vigilance of data and logic: the latter is the one which helps to distinguish relevant data for the discussed problem from irrelevant ones *for that problem*. For example, the falsification of a scientific theory does not need data about the personal affairs of the researchers, but only related to the theory as such; the data about the personal events are interesting only for the *history* of (scientific) ideas, history that is always sociological and psychological; when *the correctness of the theory as such depends on its own logic and data*, it is not explained by the history of the theory, while this *history explains the ways to and the circumstances of its creation*.

3) The Enlightenment method was the *formalising* of the *necessity* of both the *logical fathoming of things in scientific researches* and the *logical public approach of the common social problems*. This method allowed and imposed the becoming of eccentric concerns for rhetoric as *ordinary attention for the arguments and their analysis*, in the direction of the substitution of opinions – if we use the ancient distinction between opinion and truth – with truthful and proved ideas, or the substitution of insinuation with analysis caring for proofs. [In this respect, the Enlightenment method does not reduce the richness of language to truth statements – on the contrary, it allows the deployment of this richness, not as separate forms, intentions and meanings, but just as *integrated* under the sign of both constative speech-acts (having truth-value) and performativity or capacity to consummate an action. Nevertheless, in other words, the truth-value never disappears and doubles the relationships of meanings and contexts: the more so these relationships manifest *concomitantly* at the level of surface/formal/direct/per se meanings (the *locutionary* ones), the level of *intended* meaning derived within the context, even though the speaker wants to cover or uncover it and although this meaning is true or false (the *illocutionary*, that many times "masquerades"[49] the speaker's intentions, or uncover them), and the level of *perlocutionary* meaning, that which is the (may be unintended) *effect* on the listener, thus the action external to the utterance[50]].

4) Therefore, the Enlightenment method consisted not only in the concern for logical accuracy, but at the same time for the *awareness* of the necessity of a general logical position: actually, for the awareness of every human attitude in thinking and action.

Kant was thus not only a founding father of the Enlightenment, but also of the subsequent development of thinking. One of the main concepts and problems resulting from the constructivist

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[48] The Enlightenment method of analysis did not forget previous remarks against exaggerations. See Leibniz's observation of some mainstream representatives of anti-rationalism: "There are people today who believe that it is of *bel esprit* to declaim against reason and to call it a pedantic inconvenience. I see little booklets of speech of nothing, which celebrate it, and even I sometimes see rhymes too good to be used for such false thoughts. Indeed, if those who laugh at reason spoke all the good, it would be an extravagance of a new species unknown in past centuries. To speak against reason is to speak against the truth, because reason is a chain of truths. It is speaking against oneself, against one's good, since the main point of reason consists in knowing and following it", Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704/1765), Ernest Flammarion, Paris, 1921, § 50, p.154.
     This observation fits largely into the current period.
[49] J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (1962), Second Edition, J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisā editors, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 4.
[50] Ana Bazac, "The big words: a philosophical research", *Noema*, volumul IX, 2010, p. 44-66.

approach to the so many aspects of the world was the *perspective*: the *criterion* according to which one can understand their *coexistence* and only in this whole their specific importance.

Gödel has worked not only on the problem of change of perspective, but also has arrived to the demonstration of the theory that *the perspective as such creates the system*, the constructed representation that must be understood: and the better understanding, the "last" one, is always outside the system[51]. Hence of course, as a result of the process of understanding, the initial constructed representation – whether common or scientific – becomes finer/arrives to be changed.

The epistemological problem of perspective unifies the world *as we see it*, and concretely shows what unites in all of sciences/studies: the epistemological similarity.

5) The importance and awareness of perspectives *does not lead to relativism* in the *ahistorical* meaning of moral relativism. It does lead only to the, already banal, assumption of the *historicity* of things and, more, of the *historicity* of the human attitudes, concepts, judgements and values. Things are not relative *as if* there were no criteria *and* moral criteria to evaluate them. Things are relative just because no understanding/concept/judgement of them is ahistorical, eternal, sacrosanct, because *all the understandings/concepts/judgements are historically and socially created in different conjunctures*. All of these understandings/concepts/judgements reflect specific historical and social (implicitly cultural) positions. This certainly means that we should not erase the historical and social determinism of the old judgements and concepts when we consider them according to our present values. But at the same time, *we must conceive neither the old judgements and concepts nor the present values in a pattern* which is *relativistic* from a moral standpoint, *as if* all the old and new values would be equal. We certainly *assess* the old judgements and concepts from the standpoint of our *present* general understanding of things, thus from the standpoint of our present values, but at the same time just this present position allows the better understanding of the old determinism of deeds and ideas; if all of these are seen in the manner of criticism.

6) This feature of historicity (that is not tantamount to moral relativism) has allowed the Enlightenment epistemology to deploy both the theories developed in the shadow of the logical exactness of the Vienna circle (logical positivism, analytic philosophy) and the theories related to the endeavour of deconstructions of narratives.

7) Just by insisting on the formal framework of the human thinking, the Enlightenment epistemology has suggested the importance of the intertwining of the two cardinal methodological concepts: *form* and *content*. Kant gave the idea of possible coherence of the so many standpoints and criteria in the human history and behaviours: through the *methodological* principle/criterion of *universalizability* of the behaviours and criteria. The principle of universalizability was/is the *form* in which we put the so many standpoints and behaviours. This principle is the categorical imperative. But the *form* was/is mixing with the *content* of what is/may be universalizable. The content is not simply happiness, but the substance of happiness (freedom, said Leibniz, while John Stuart Mill considered as being the principle of content, the reduction of social suffering for the greatest possible number).

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[51] Mathematics is a logical method, said Wittgenstein, and sometimes still the only one, but if "In life it is never a mathematical proposition which we need, but we use mathematical propositions only in order to infer from propositions which do not belong to mathematics to others which equally do not belong to mathematics", Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (Translator C. K. Ogden, Edimburgh, Edimburgh Press,1921), 6.211, then we understand that not only is mathematics outside of life but especially that it grasps the outside of things, the *logic that* "organises" the sensible concrete structuring of life.

Psychology, too, has shown that it is more difficult to grasp the trends of a system/process when being part and parcel of that system/process.

For an application to society, see Ana Bazac, "The Last Stage Explanation within the Study of Society", *Noesis*, XXXIV, 2009, pp. 81-91.

   In this way, the substance of happiness is understandable as both form and content: the human moral values are *historical*, of course, but this doesn't mean that the choice of some values, and not of other ones, would not be of any importance; because there are *criteria* for judging the moral values and the choices. The first criterion is the *importance of every human being, the impossibility to dissolve this importance through particular declarations about the particular importance of the speakers/those in the name of whom the speakers are speaking.* This importance is a question of *content*: how important we do consider the existence of every human being. Hence, the second criterion arises: *the attitude to treat it/humans not only as means, but always as ends of our actions*. This criterion creates the form of the moral judgements. (Not only this last criterion is from Kant, obviously, but if we assume these criteria, we understand in an easy way *why* did people treat their fellow humans only as means, and whose/which interests are promoted by those who avoid the above criteria).

   8) By uniting the understanding of the process of knowing with the maximalist ethics, the Enlightenment epistemology has opened up the *holistic* approach of the world. The assessment of knowledge concerns, thus, the all-inclusive system beyond the analysed particular systems. Knowledge includes the professional/ "technical" knowledge of the particular systems considered by researchers – the *what for* of this knowledge is within these systems – but it implies also the linking of the many particular systems of knowledge. The question about the *consequences* of these systems follows from the creation of new and new systems of relations and facts as objects of research and thus, from the creation of new, more comprising "particular" systems of knowledge. For example, the present ecological theories are the result of gradual developments in all the natural sciences, including in the interdisciplinary and multi- disciplinary research in these sciences, connecting more and more elements/factors/knowledge and thus creating new perspectives on them.

   9) And this holistic approach of the world supposes the relations between all of these systems of knowledge and the human beings as a whole. For the Enlightenment epistemology,
the world is the result of objective-subjective unity at the level of both the model of individual cognition and the model of social formation of knowledge, in their overlapping.

   10) The Enlightenment epistemology involves *epistemological optimism*. Since the ideas are constructed by humans, the limits of this construction are given only by the knowledge of the world, namely by the information that are processed in the human mind. Consequently, what is necessary is *education*: the taking over of both more and more, and more reliable information, and also of the logical manner of thinking. Two more aspects highlight the Enlightenment epistemological optimism. *One* regards the *subject* of education and, since the knowledge of the world involves more and more information and models of relating and connecting its pieces, it results that the subject of education has two faces: the one of educators who must permanently learn[52] and the one of people who is educated. And who are these people? Do they belong only to some specific classes/groups? Of course, not: *all the members of the humankind can and must learn and know*, as Comenius has explained in the same Enlightenment spirit but 150 years before. The *other* aspect is the *fruitfulness of education*: it consists in the understanding of the possibility of *alternative* models of selection of information and of their interpretations and thus, of the reasons behind these alternative models. Thus, education is and generates *rational thinking all the way*: and the ability to *choose* arguments and alternatives.

   In this way, the Enlightenment optimism is not given only by the infinite accumulation of information and models of interpretation. The humans can and must know, they can think about everything, but the space of knowing is "limited" by or rather arranged according to the direction of

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[52] See Gernot Böhme, "Self-cultivation according to Immanuel Kant", *Dialogue and Universalism*, 4, 2018, pp. 95-108. Kant's human as *animal rationabile* – and not the historical frame and limitation of Kant is important here – suggests the overlapping of the educators and their students.

the ethical criteria and, clearer, of the categorical imperative as *maximalist ethical standard*. The concept of optimism and, obviously, the concept of epistemological optimism is/are so important because it/they involves the *reason to be* of the human capacity, i.e. the *reason to be* of the human deeds. Certainly, the humans can and must know but what for? Which are the results of their thoughts and competency? The distinctiveness of the Enlightenment method is just *the constitutive/permanent connection between knowledge, education and their reason to be, their results*. From which an enlightened rule arises: *one cannot, and must not, separate knowledge from its results*, because the *reason to be of knowledge is not the accumulation of information and interpretive models*, but the transposition of this accumulation in the human life; in order to develop the *reason to be* of the human life.

11) In the 18th and 19th centuries, the modern sciences have been developed in the spirit of the Enlightenment: the opening and the emancipation of the space of knowing have generated the trust in science/rational knowledge. This trust arose from the systematic, *disciplined* development of sciences, i.e. the disciplined *focus* on circumscribed problems and domains, and thus from the epochal achievements of the modern sciences.

The disciplined focus on problems and domains seemed to be tantamount to the separation of sciences, domains, problems. Every scientific analysis of a problem or domain implies *specific criteria*, and this seemed to some ones as an opposition between criteria, as their separation, anyway outlining a tiring and discouraging image of a too difficult puzzle. This separation seemed to support the theory of an absolute incommensurability of problems/domains/theories, *as if* the truth of criteria would not be outside the domains/problems/theories and thus *as if* the domains/problems/theories could not be integrated, viewed from the point of view of external criteria and *as if* the criteria of domains and problems would not change.

However, the focus on problems and domains is not tantamount to their separation or absolute distinction. The Enlightenment epistemology shows the *historical* evolution of knowledge, sciences, criteria, and at the same time the *possibility and necessity of their integration through the process of* Aufhebung*, surpassing the past knowledge, sciences, criteria but at the same time retaining elements from them when processing them*. If this integration is nevertheless instrumented – practice is based on knowledge – the Enlightenment epistemology has suggested that integration is the result of the reason to be of sciences: the focus on the *reasons to be* of sciences explains and accomplishes the reason to be of that respective integration.

With this foundation of Enlightenment, the thinkers (and people in general, since they are taught how to think) have opened up the path to no longer separate and oppose their preoccupations for the general, and, respectively, for the empirical particular.

The concepts are constructed and thus, the Enlightenment epistemology has warned against the idea – cherished rather by intellectuals – that there would be not only a correspondence between concepts and existence, but also that the existence would be like the concepts. Hence: how important it is to be aware of what kinds of concepts we create and what kinds of representations of the world we do pursue when we do create them[53].

Science is socially constructed, of course. It makes us discern between its *epistemological* assessments and, on the other hand, its *ontological* status. Epistemologically, science generates theories which were constructed in a transparent way according to all the steps and procedures: and thus the truth value of theories can be evaluated by the entire scientific community in the same transparency; epistemologically, science is objective. Ontologically, a strong tradition has separated the hard, natural and formal sciences – which have *criteria* of demonstration, comparison, and

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[53] An example is the idea of the unity of the world, and the concepts and their relations used for expressing this idea: the presumption that this idea corresponds to the unity of the real is not enough. The understanding of the importance of *what kinds* of real unity and *which perspectives* are followed by the concepts and their structuring is cardinal.

assessment, thus having an objective ontological status – different from the social sciences which would not have such criteria and thus would be rather value judgements, hence ontologically subjective. In fact, the social sciences have criteria[54], too: more important, the value judgements are made according to criteria – which must be transparent – and thus the value judgements are not taste judgements.

7. Intermezzo about "open debate"

The Enlightenment critical spirit has demonstrated the necessity of transparent collective debates of the common/public problems and was a vocal supporter of such debates. We thus may understand the opposition of the institutions and relations making and benefiting from the domination-submission pattern.

But it's important again to note the unity between "form" – rather the *condition of a transparent open debate* – and the *content* of discourses from these debates. The Enlightenment spirit concerned just the free critical debate of social institutions and relations. The Enlightenment personalities have insisted, obviously, on the aspects of freely writing and reading controversial texts, in a culture freed from censorship. But the *contents* of this culture were critical beyond individual or particular aspects: it was not the cultural experimentation the main requirement promoted by Enlightenment, but the social critique, as deep as it could be.

The model of democratic society cherished nowadays in the counter-Enlightenment pattern has led, on the one hand, to consider the Enlightenment demands as already historical. On the other hand, from an Enlightenment standpoint, the infringements of that model seem to revive those demands.

A recent example[55] helps us to better understand the specific Enlightenment idea of open debate. There are two aspects which it involves: the *free expression* of the personal opinions, and the *right* and *necessity* to rationally discuss the expressed values. These two aspects are not independent of each other: if the expressing of the debated opinion is not followed by the critical discussion of the expressed values and reasoning, and remains as at the beginning of the debate, the debate as such has no reason and meaning. The right to express one's own opinion in a debate does not mean the right to keep one's own opinion irrespective of the debate as such/of the stronger arguments of the opposed opinion and which annuls or changes the first opinion. And the right to express one's own values is not tantamount to the values expressed: it is only the *formal* frame of the debate. This right remains even after the change of the values expressed by the first debater[56].

7.1. *Intermezzo about statues*

The statues are symbols of the pattern organising the human space and thus symbols of the degree the humans appropriate that space, i.e. organise it according to their (present) values. Therefore, there are not the cultural aspects[57] that we discuss here but the epistemology of human attitudes.

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[54] See Ana Bazac, "Epistemological background of the present debate concerning the natural and social sciences", *Noema*, XIV, 2015, pp. 107-130.

[55] *A Letter on Justice and Open Debate*, July 7, 2020,
   https://harpers.org/a-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/?fbclid=IwAR0_1Ptrfxo5WfNhz2Ilz-bS3wcKFgFM3_jeP-
                                  aM3mNjiMekKasn_dKDB_U,
signed by many writers and artists.

[56] See the entire development of the features of the free debate at Karl R. Popper, *The Myth of the Framework. In Defence of Science and Rationality*, Edited by M.A. Notturno, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, pp. 3, 33-64.

[57] Related to the symbols of Hagia Sophia, a paper written from a religious standpoint emphasises the negative meanings of the transformation of the museum into a mosque, Omar Ramahi, *Hagia Sophia and the Catastrophe of Symbolism*, July 15, 2020, https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/07/15/hagia-sophia-and-the-catastrophe-of-symbolism/.

The racist conceptions were generally spread (especially at the level of upper strata/of those aspiring to enter the upper strata) in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries Europe and America, *the old racist personalities cannot be/should not be removed from the history*, but does this mean that we must *honour* them on the basis that "people were racist yesteryear"? Clearer: must we erect statues for those personalities, or keep their statues which in this way would be the *signs of their honouring today*? Is the erection/keeping of those statues tantamount to the presence in history of those characters and the proof of the open-minded analysis of history we would perform? People do not give to a statue of Nero the *meanings* they would give to a hypothetical statue of the commander of Auschwitz: *the meanings are given according to the present values/discernment between evil and good*, and a statue of Nero, although people know that he was an incendiary of Rome etc., is evaluated simply as *historical* fact (that in ancient Rome there were erected statues of emperors etc., although people knew their bad deeds etc.), *aesthetical* fact and *didactical* fact; no one thinks nowadays that Nero's statue would be the sign of his being honoured by *today's* folks; while a hypothetical statue of Hitler or of the commander of Auschwitz would be considered a sign of the *present* honour given to those personages; no one thinks to remove Hitler and fascism from history, they were certified facts, but no "aesthetic" reason would overwhelm the meanings of fascism and thus give a reason to be for those hypothetical statues. The same is with the statues of racists who calmed their conscience by doing philanthropy[58] or of political figures who were considered heroes for having done big events[59], or of mythical founders like Columbus[60].

The capital importance of (the transparent recognition of) *criteria* – an element of the Enlightenment epistemology – forbids the mixing and substitution of arguments related to different and unexplained criteria, as well as the neglecting of the criteria of the Enlightenment epistemology.

To continue the above example, the *counter-Enlightenment* argument, the argument of those who want to keep the statues of racists – "there are 771 standing monuments of anti-abolitionists across the US"[61], some ones huge and towering – is that they remind the past[62], irrespective of the deeds of the personages they represent. But concomitantly, the mainstream ideology has constructed the myths of a heroic origin, covering any "unpleasant" fact from the past. Anyway, the argument illustrates that which logic calls a *category mistake*, i.e. to remind accurately the past is one thing and to honour evil facts (as well as to cover them) is another one and they cannot be substituted; the substitution is a category mistake.

Another argument of the supporters of the above *category mistake* is that of mixing the pulling down of racists' statues with the reactions of one of the mainstream group and tendency, for example, to remove the movie *Gone with the Wind* from a TV channel. The mixture reveals

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[58] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodes_Must_Fall; *Oxford college backs removal of Cecil Rhodes statue*, 17 June 2020,
      https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jun/17/end-of-the-rhodes-cecil-oxford-college-ditches-controversial-statue.
[59] *George Washington and genocide*, https://mronline.org/2020/07/04/george-washington-and-genocide/; *As Teddy Roosevelt's Statue Falls, Let's Remember How Truly Dark His History Was*, June 22 2020,
   https://theintercept.com/2020/06/22/as-teddy-roosevelts-statue-falls-lets-remember-how-truly-dark-his-history-was/.
[60] Edward Burmila, *The Invention of Christopher Columbus, American Hero*, 10/10/2017,
         http://www.defenddemocracy.press/the-invention-of-christopher-columbus-american-hero/.
We'll see that Columbus traded slaves, something that is hidden by those who oppose the analysis of history from the standpoint of always the most modern present thinking. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Indian Freedom: The Cause of Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1484-1566: a Reader*, Translation and notes by Francis Patrick Sullivan, Kansas City, Sheed and Ward, 1995, p. 17 passim.
[61] Mohammed Haddad, Usaid Siddiqui, *Mapping the hundreds of Confederate statues across the US*, 11 Jun 2020,
https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2020/06/mapping-hundreds-confederate-statues-200610103154036.html.
[62] But at the same time, remnants of old cultures that remind them are dislocated, see *Border wall threatens Kumeyaay Nation burial sites*, July 16, 2020, https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2020/07/16/border-wall-threatens-kumeyaay-nation-burial-sites/.

dishonesty, because *there were not the Black Lives Matter protesters the ones who required the removal of the film*, since they simply analyse different creations and grasp the racist elements, but just the mainstream neo-liberal group. It could not occur to them to ban this movie as well as other cultural works but only to *ask to be accompanied by critical analyzes*. Criticism is an Enlightenment requirement, and *history cannot be sanctified* – as in the attitude "to remove a statue is tantamount to the war on the past" – but *analysed from the standpoint of the latest information and critical capacity to forge values*.

On the contrary, excessive measures were taken and inability to distinguish between facts was proven by *non-protesters*, in fact in a move intended to discredit the protesters[63]; as well as, as we saw above, by those who want to annul the class relations and to substitute them as cause of exploitation, discrimination and oppression, with the race (and nationality) and gender relations: see (the criticism of) a perverted "political correctness" at those who had the absurd idea to substitute the blind auditions for orchestral positions with "taking race and gender into account"[64]. This idea is as absurd as if the scientific papers would not be published after a blind peer review, but on the basis of data about the race and gender of the authors. Therefore, instead of attacking the poverty of the working people irrespective of race, but generating much lower conditions of education, and instead of attacking the *racial* discrimination at the same level, namely, instead of attacking the *previous* cause of the situation in which there are fewer symphony orchestra colour musicians – or fewer scientific papers colour authors –, they mimic the correction of the situation by a movement both counter-productive, impossible in fact and not solving anything.

Another argument is that the removal of the statues representing racist and cruel treatment of a part of the population would equate with the interdiction of Aristotle who has considered slavery a necessary phenomenon. It's a fake argument: we *honour* Aristotle for his vast and founding philosophy, logic and methodology and science, and *at the same time* we normally tackle in a critical manner his writings. Thus Aristotle is honoured for what he did (write), while the Confederate generals were only slave owners fighting for the keeping of slavery: can a sound logical person equate them with Aristotle?

No one intended to destroy the (inexistent) statues of Margaret Mitchell, she was an author of a well-known novel, that was further the basis of the famous movie; her work is not tantamount to that of Confederate slave-owners and generals.

Another counter-Enlightenment argument is again to equate the writers and the racist modern politicians (like Churchill) and the old ones, *as if they all would have left the same type of "immortal works and visions of the world"*.

Still another "argument" is the supposed illiteracy of protesters who, "instead of peacefully demand some improvements", demolish history and statues: therefore, "peaceful demands"…. *as if until now there would have never been demands of dignity for all*. This standpoint indicates an absolute lack of empathy towards those who suffered the old slavery as well as the modern and present social discrimination, i.e. inequality[65]. The statues are hated as *symbols* of the sufferings and

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[63] *Hands off Lincoln and the Emancipation Memorial! Defend the legacy of the Civil War!*, 3 July 2020, https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/07/03/linc-j03.html.
But see Martin Schoots-McAlpine, "Anatomy of a counter-insurgency", Jul 03, 2020, *Monthy Review*, https://mronline.org/2020/07/03/anatomy-of-a-counter-insurgency/: combined and coordinated efforts by: police forces, the military, dominant media, NGOs, the Democrats, far-right groups, and liberal establishment figures to undermine the George Floyd Uprising, and "Thus far these efforts seem to have been rather successful".
[64] *Fred Mazelis,* New York Times calls for de facto racial quotas in classical music*, 5 August 2020,*
https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/08/05/nytc-a05.html.
[65] Because this social inequality is not addressed at the fundamental economic levels – and in present these ones consist of unemployment, lack or insufficiency of the unemployment benefits, impossibility to pay the monthly rent, so evictions – some of the protesters looted (see *Chicago erupts with violence and looting after police shooting*,

infringement of the dignity of so many humans; but the statues are once more hated because they and the personages and practices they represent were and are kept as benign, as "historical", *as if when understanding history one could not distinguish between bad and good*[66]; and *as if preserving the memory of the entire history, with good and evil facts, would be tantamount to honour (judge) the evil ones as one judges and honour the benign facts*.

Another "argument" is the call for "education 'based on values' as the only means" to eradicate the savage questioning of statues: what a difference from the Enlightenment that has *specified* the values, and thus has distinguished the *values related to the possibility of humans to be treated also as ends* from the *values which justify the treatment of others only as means*. It must be said clearly even here: *the counter-Enlightenment never specifies the values, and neglects the values related to the treatment of humans as ends*.

Another "argument" is the defining of the removal of statues of those who infringed the dignity of human persons with an anarchical taking justice into one's own hands, *as if the discussion about racist statues and the request of removal would have occurred for the first time and as if the protesters did not demand the (legal) prosecution of police* etc.

Another "argument" is that the call for the removing of racist statues would be tantamount to the call for any type of statues demolition, no longer being in function the criterion to keep the past as it was. But the criterion to *judge* the past surpasses the criterion to keep the past as it was: it keeps the past – it does not mean re-writing the past though the pulling out of unpleasant facts from the present standpoint – but at the same time it evaluates its phenomena according not to simply present values (this suggesting that all the (present) values would be equal and equally entitled), but according to the highest (present) ethical value. Hence *in present/in the present judgement* the categorical imperative forbids racism because it reduces the human beings only to means. For this reason, *the present demolition of an antiracist statue*[67] *is not a "response" to the removal of racist statues*: it shows only the distance between the thinking of those who vandalised the antiracist

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https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/aug/10/chicago-looting-violence-police-shooting-protests).   However, "Events since January are all about engineering an unprecedented transfer of wealth from ordinary Americans to corporate favorites and high-net-worth individuals. It's part of a scheme to further transform America and other Western states into ruler-serf societies — militarized, thirdworldized and controlled by police state rule. It's also about enabling corporate America to consolidate to greater size and market dominance by eliminating competition in the nation and abroad", Stephen Lendman, *Mass Looting in Chicago, My Neighborhood Under Siege*, August 12, 2020, https://www.globalresearch.ca/mass-looting-chicago-neighborhood-under-siege/5720847. And a manner to jugulate the protests is the intervention of federal armies, because the police does not restore order (John W. Whitehead, *This Is America: Where Fascism, Totalitarianism and Militarism Go Hand in Hand*, August 12, 2020, https://www.globalresearch.ca/amerika-fascism-totalitarianism-militarism-go-hand-hand/5720869). While there are even other diversions legitimising the state violence (Daisy Luther, *#WhiteHouseSiege – This Group Plans to "Lay Siege to" and "Occupy" the White House Next Month*, August 12, 2020,
https://www.globalresearch.ca/whitehousesiege-group-plans-lay-siege-occupy-white-house-next-month/5720797).

[66] From the standpoint of the ideology of domination, the figures in the Memorial of Mount Rushmore (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt) should be considered as equally benign; however, the differences between the conceptions of the four are grasped not only by historians but also by those who question the ideology of domination.

   The "illiterate" protesters do not want to demolish the Memorial: it is, indeed, a symbol of a past understanding of history. But they insist that the present education must include the information that the place of the Memorial is a stolen land from the Native Americans (it was not ceded according to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and acknowledged by a 1980 Supreme Court ruling in the United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians, according to *Treaty defenders block road leading to Mount Rushmore*, 3 July 2020, https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/treaty-defenders-block-road-leading-to-mount-rushmore-ctPNfZ1W0UiABOWreb-srA).

[67] *Frederick Douglass statue vandalized on anniversary of his famous Fourth of July Rochester speech*, Jul 6, 2020, https://eu.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2020/07/05/frederick-douglass-statue-rochester-ny-removed-defaced-anniversary-july-4th-speech/5380432002/.

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statue and the judgement of facts according to their results concerning the dignity of human persons.

Another "argument" is the necessity to value all the creations of history: *as if all of them would have the same meanings. And as if this time would be the first time when people ask and think history according to the present most advanced values.*

These aspects were mentioned here because they were put in the present debate concerning, ultimately, the Enlightenment epistemology and that one antagonistic to it.

7.2. *Kant, racism and the Enlightenment spirit*

What is this aspect looking for in the paper? It is related just to the Enlightenment epistemology: i.e. an *attack* against the Enlightenment consisted just in showing that from the concomitance of the positive and negative aspects (according to present values) that characterised the Enlightenment would derive that this *concomitance*/the positive aspects should not be taken into account as *methodological principles* in the approach of human knowledge and society.

But according to the Enlightenment epistemology, they must be taken into account and without them one cannot understand not only the coexistence of opposed aspects, but also that the thinking beings – here, the philosophers – experience their lives according to the ideas they receive and these ideas, which could represent opposed values, are a basis of the construction of new ideas: and letting aside the formation of ideas as life experiences, including experiences of institutions which, at their turn, represent values (according to social, including class, interests), we can grasp the possibility of *parallel lines of ideas formation*. Concretely, yes, *in Kant there are racist ideas* and we may presume, remaining within the epistemological approach, that the coexistence of racist ideas and the universalistic ethical ideas lied on the basis of the received *philosophical idea of separation between the construction of theories and the real facts*; therefore, from a standpoint, the (racist) political ideas, usual in those times, were assumed as the inherent mixture of violence and ability of the enlightened leaders to compensate this violence through gradual political advancements; hence the political ideas were assumed with the hope that the power of reason will overwhelm violence. Kant – and not only Kant – was/were interested to give models of and for those advancements.

For epistemology, it is important not only how the human ideas are built, but at the same time *which* ideas are connected in the process of idea construction[68]. This is an additional reason to not veil the uncomfortable ideas (as Kant's racism). For epistemology it is thus important to comprehend the external/real life context of ideas, including the existent ideas in the time of the problem (here, Kant's racism)[69].

But for the Enlightenment epistemology it is important to read not only about the coexistence of Kant's racism with the moral universalism of the categorical imperative, but also to see *if there is a logical connection between these two opposite ideas/theories*. For, first of all, we cannot consider a hierarchy of the importance of these ideas: we cannot consider that Kant's racism would be a superficial mistake towards his original theories; just because they are so opposed, we must consider them as equally important theories for us: not only for our scientific scrutiny but also for their paradigmatic force over the ulterior results/the ulterior profane and scholarly thinking. And, as in the real world Kant supported both ideas, so our inquiry must concern both of them.

Therefore, the emphasis of the negative aspects of philosophers situated in the pattern of Enlightenment is not a counter-Enlightenment type manifestation. On the contrary: *it is just from*

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[68] For the role of ideas/ideologies in the historical processes, see David Brion Davis, "Slavery and the Idea of Progress", *The Bulletin of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 2, June 1979, pp. 1-9.
[69] Here, only Robert Bernasconi, "Will the real Kant please stand up: The challenge of Enlightenment racism to the study of the history of philosophy", *Radical Philosophy*, 117, January / February 2003, pp. 13-22.

the Enlightenment methodology that the critical spirit results, namely, the rationalism "all the way": the promotion of new criteria, the discrimination of criteria and the dialectical approach of the whole taken in view. For this reason, the disclosure of racism and Eurocentrism of both the founding fathers of Enlightenment and the famous figures of the European 20th century philosophy, long time neglected and even covered, is salutary.

In this respect, the papers of Robert Bernasconi and commentators[70] about the racist ideas in Kant, Hegel (and Levinas and Heidegger) are of utmost importance as critical disclosure of contradictory fundamental ideas. Dialectically, one may think the "rival positions as nevertheless mutually supporting each other, insofar as they both work to sustain the space that makes possible their opposition"[71]. However, the *coexistence* of racism and the ethical universalism in Kant, demonstrated in his works, is a different question from that of their logical inference from one another. The works demonstrate their *dialectical* coexistence, but *logically* neither racism would generate the categorical imperative and nor this one would lead to racism[72].

This aspect is all the more important when we try to see in the Enlightenment spirit that the concepts are *historical* and thus the *meanings* of the concepts of democracy, human rights, humanity, universalism are different/change not only over time but also according to the class interests the thinker represents consciously or not. Consequently, the Enlightenment *epistemology* contains *both* the *dialectical* understanding of the same writer's opposite ideas in historical contexts, including intellectual contexts[73], and the *logical* analysis of the mutual deductibility of his opposite ideas. These two approaches do not compete with each other: they complete themselves mutually. Actually, only in this way they are helpful for the present practice.

Since, again: if epistemology is limited only to the intertwining of ideas, their logic – that is always a question of both form and content – and their complex and historical ideational determinisms, and excludes the relationships between ideas and the world external to them, although in fact *these relationships constitute and contribute to both* and nothing can be explained without them, then we cannot devise *how the evolution and change of both ideas and external reality takes place*. Thus, to understand Kant's racism helps us to address the present infringements of universalism[74]. At the same time, if we realize that the historically forged meanings of the same concepts do not necessarily superpose, and thus a concept may lead to different, even opposed, meanings and uses, then we are more careful when assuming concepts and discourses, and we feel

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[70] See Lucy Allais, "Kant's Racism", *Philosophical Papers*, 2016, pp. 1-36, https://doi.org/10.1080/05568641.2016.1199170; Zeynep Direk, "Critical Philosophy of Race as Political Phenomenology: Questions for Robert Bernasconi", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, Volume 9, Issue 2, May 2017, pp. 130-139; Bret W. Davis, "Gadfly of Continental Philosophy: On Robert Bernasconi's Critique of Philosophical Eurocentrism", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, Volume 9, Issue 2, May 2017, pp.119-129; Charles W. Mills, "An Englishman Abroad: Robert Bernasconi's Work on Race", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, Volume 9, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 140-150**;** Robert Bernasconi, "Facing up to the Eurocentrism and Racism of Academic Philosophy in the West: A Response to Davis, Direk, and Mills", *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, Volume 9, Issue 2, 2017, pp. 151-161.

[71] Robert Bernasconi, "Will the real Kant please stand up: The challenge of Enlightenment racism to the study of the history of philosophy", p. 18.

[72] For this reason, no anti-racist movement would destroy Kant's statues. Because: Kant is honoured for his epistemological and ethical theories of paramount importance; while the racist philanthropists have done nothing good and important for mankind. Thus, once more, to mixing creators like Kant (or Aristotle) with racist philanthropists is immoral both logically and ethically.

Therefore, when it is about persons whose racism or negative behaviours are not bigger than their other deeds, we – in present, according to the present values – have only to re-think the manners of honouring them as such. And this is just according to the critical spirit theorised by Kant.

[73] The existence of different (opposite) ideas about racism during Kant's activity.

[74] Including at the formal level: see Anna Spain Bradley, "Human Rights Racism", *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 32, 2019, pp. 1-58.

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the necessity to question and to show the definition we use for the concepts. The main weakness of the present analysis and practical approach of discourses/communication is just the inexistence or avoidance of the questioning of the meanings of used concepts.

Finally, the Enlightenment spirit – the *possibility and necessity of the universal use of reason*, *of critical spirit*, thus the *possibility and necessity of the universal education and educability*, hence the *possibility and necessity of the human autonomy towards ideas and institutions*, at the same time the *possibility and necessity of conscious creation of ideas and institutions assuring social equality and dignity* – cannot be annulled by "the dark side of knowledge"[75] that generated the destruction of the environment as the other face of the material progress. On the contrary: by speaking in general about knowledge, and without fathoming its subjects in their conditions and following their purposes, one performs only a superficial use of reason, leading only to the exoneration of the decision-makers over the use of knowledge.

8. The counter-Enlightenment

The importance of the industrial revolution, i.e. of the basic economic – and thus, technological and scientific – processes of the social construction had as a reflex the Enlightenment ideas *and* the official general cliché about the modern thinking that these ideas would be the shape of the new modern West-European era from the 18th century to the First World War. Actually, though these ideas were both used as their specific slogan by all the modern European governments and were assumed by the European masses, they have *coexisted* with opposed ideas, called counter-Enlightenment ideas by some scholars, and just *this coexistence has shaped the development of modernity*. For this reason, those who reduce the characterisation of the *modern ideas* to Enlightenment have and give a perfunctory image about history. And the fact that the counter-Enlightenment ideas have constituted "the other modernity"[76] is not "the proof" of the emptiness of the Enlightenment epistemology but shows only the *coexistence of opposed ideas*, each of them generated from different grounds and revealing different reasons of their assumption by thinkers; but just because of their opposition, they can be understood by putting them face to face.

1) Therefore, although the opposed ideas coexist because they reflect, ultimately, different class interests, thus they are ideologies, they do not have the same ethical legitimacy from the standpoint of each human being/the species. We can understand this aspect because the ideologies influence the ideas of *permissibility of infringement*, or not, *of some values* – which thus become/are ideological – and legitimate and prepare these values. What can be said now is only that the counter-Enlightenment is and legitimates i) the *permissibility of anti-rationalism*: outside the human logic, no matter how cleverly it proposes the doubts concerning reason and values; because it always depends on what values is scepticism exercised, with what finality; and ii) the *permissibility* (the continuity and amplification) *of the domination-submission relations*, irrespective of the covering of this permissibility by the slogan of anti-discrimination; and iii) that the weaknesses of counter-Enlightenment ideas *result* from this counter-Enlightenment *epistemology*: while no weakness of Enlightenment ideas or of Enlightenment representatives results from the Enlightenment *epistemology*; and iv) the historical representatives of both Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment have mutually supported ideas from the other camp: because, ultimately, they supported the domination-submission relations, even though the Enlightenment conceived of the future of social relations in term of an idealistic liberalism, while the counter-Enlightenment has promoted not only conservative ideas but also an economic and political liberalism. The first could

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[75] Graeme Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 1.
[76] Zeev Sternhell, *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition* (2006), Translated by David Maisel, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010.

not lead the human emancipation all the way to the end, while the second ought to subordinate the idea of the limits of the democratic reason to the liberalism of the supremacy of the political representative form over the content of democracy.

2) This paper is not interested about the history of opposition to the principles of Enlightenment from already the 18th century. But certainly, the features of a manner of thinking, and of an ideology, are constituted during the historical processes of complex experiences and determinisms. Here, it is *a contemporary counter-Enlightenment offensive that is important*. Thus, it must not be equated with the Romanticism that has challenged the Enlightenment's propensity toward reason[77]. For there are different types of Romanticism, not only the diving into the unconscious and the circumscribing of criteria and hopes only to the individual, thus unwillingly showing its impotence towards society, but also the theory of the individual's dependence on society, hence of the individual's revolutionary activism to change society toward a human, compassionate and devoid of violence system.

Romanticism took over the European explaining pattern of *society as tantamount to individual + individual + individual*, but the manners of using this pattern were different. Indeed, some romantics promoted – and not only reflected – the split between exceptionally endowed characters and the mass of worker bees[78]. And at the same time neither the romantics could imagine the society of *species beings* but the tribal society of *beings of the parts* of society. However, this double facets pattern – of atomised society and tribal divisions – *pertained not only to romantics, but also to those praising the modern, i.e. capitalist type progress*. This pattern was taken over by the "Cold War anti-Enlightenment"[79] when an up-to-date *counter-Enlightenment epistemology* was constituted. This epistemology did continue not only this general pattern but it also highlighted specific marks, especially of the Romanticism of "revolt on his knees" and less of the revolutionary Romanticism of Byron. In other words, starting from the Cold War counter-Enlightenment, two main ideas have been developed: that the only criticism accepted was that one which does not disturb in a decisive manner the social division of labour and classes, and that the only revolution admitted was that one initiated from above[80]; and as a kind of preventive and diverting revolution against a real revolution from below, the counter-Enlightenment has proposed the "coloured revolutions" or the "civilian-based defence"[81]

3) As the old pattern conceived of the egocentric attitude of exceptional artists and the rejection of universal values – Romanticism being the criticism of the results of these values in the

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[77] Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution*, New York, Modern Library/Random House, 2010.

[78] A critique of Romanticism, Nietzsche, has described this mass as being represented by its part of philistine pretentious petty-bourgeois, namely suggesting that the only modernisation of this mass would (have) led only to a petty-bourgeois culture. Nietzsche has opposed to this level of man not the heroes but the model of creative and human "new" man. But he is important not for this proposition, but for the above suggestion that is a premonition of the capitalist mass culture and one-dimensional man.
   Thus, Nietzsche was not a representative of counter-Enlightenment.

[79] Zeev Sternhell, the chapter The Anti-Enlightenment of the Cold War, in *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition*.

[80] The revolution from above – a modernising trend in economy and/politics while appeasing and controlling the revolutionary tendency from bellow originated in the French revolution of 1789 – was theorised by Antonio Gramsci as *passive revolution*, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 59, 116.

[81] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politic*, Hachette UK, 2004; Gene Sharp, with the assistance of Bruce Jenkins, *Civilian-based Defence: A Post-military Weapons System*, Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 6; Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation* (1993), Fourth U.S. Edition, The Albert Einstein Institution, 2010; Steven R. Mann, "The Reaction to Chaos" (pp. 62-68), in *Complexity, Global Politics, and National Security*, Edited by David S. Alberts and Thomas J. Czerwinski, Washington, D.C., National Defense University, 1997 (p. 68: we need to be open to ways to accelerate and exploit criticality if it serves our national interest, for example, by destroying the Iraqi military and the Saddam state. The key is national interest, not international stability. Indeed, we already push a number of policies that accelerate chaos, whether we realize that or not: promoting democracy, pushing market reform, and spreading, through private sector means, mass communication".

form of modern freedom and generalisation of wage labour – the present counter-Enlightenment, originated in the Cold War era, considers the *causes as well as the solutions of the social problems as situated only/mainly at the level of the individual*. But if the old Romantic pattern rejected the industrial revolution – including because of its violent separation between society/the artificial and nature/the natural – the present counter-Enlightenment promotes *both* technophobia and the contempt of science and the unlimited use of technological artefacts. The simple criticism of alienation because of technology or the excessive use of devices is meaningless without the analysis of the causes of the phenomena, as the evasion in nature is powerless in front of the ecological crises, denoting only individualism, and they do not outline a reasonable image of the nature-society system.

4) Romanticism has opposed the idealised mediaeval age to the despised modern secularisation process; so the counter-Enlightenment opposed and opposes to the democratisation of education[82] – while John Dewey wrote from within the Enlightenment epistemology[83] – and promotes even today mysticism and the power of religion in and over the state.

5) Both the Enlightenment and the counter-Enlightenment epistemological patterns were and are explanations about society and thus are *ideological* currents: *legitimating* different social forces and models. But while the Enlightenment promoted *universalism* – even though this universalism was mostly interpreted outside the Kantian system as simply representing the idealised view of the new particular dominant class – the counter-Enlightenment promotes *the particular* that consists in parallel societies impermeable to each other. The present criticism of globalisation – as promoting a levelling cultural universalism that would destroy the unique national cultures, something that is simply not true – is the present form to oppose both the universalistic values of, ultimately, the categorical imperative and the search for the renewal of the social organisation, by changing just the structural causes of the present force of counter-Enlightenment.

6) The necessity to see the modern history as *more* than a progressive series generated by science and technologies does not consist in the revealing of only bad facts that would be the proofs of the counter-Enlightenment – as the counter-Enlightenment does – but in the revealing of *both* and thus, in the emphasising of the *causes* of the *coexistence* of progress and regress. No meta-narrative – progress or regress[84] – is better without transcending the manner to connect it only to the examples justifying it. While the separation of nature from society through focused research can be transgressed only with the adding of a *holistic view seen by the instrumentality of the analysis of causes*.

7) Therefore, one of the main features of the counter-Enlightenment type approach is the *separation* of facts/phenomena/systems, each of them seen according to narrow ideological and technical "from within the system" criteria.

8) Another feature is the *simplistic* and *burlesque* description of the opposed ideas and theories: but the result is not the theoretical superiority of the counter-Enlightenment ideas, because a caricature still calls forth a caricature. Even the official cliché of description of the counter-Enlightenment simply as a reaction against the excessive rationalism of the Enlightenment

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[82] Nicolas Berdiaeff, *Destin de l'homme dans le monde actuel (Pour comprendre notre temps)*, Paris, Librairie Stock, 1936.

[83] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 1916.

[84] First, Antonio Gramsci, op. cit., pp. 437, 435: "The unity of history (what the idealists call unity of the spirit) is not a presupposition, but a continuously developing process"…" The 'spontaneous' movements of the broader popular strata make possible the coming to power of the most progressive subaltern class as a result of the objective weakening of the State. This is still a 'progressive' example; but, in the modern world, the regressive examples are more frequent…".

  Then, see the review of the contemporary definition of the regress as until the catastrophic era of "the new Middle Age", Laurent Broche, « « Nouveau Moyen Âge » et « apocalypses sans royaume » : investigation sur des scénarios catastrophistes (1870-XXIe siècle) », *revue ¿ Interrogations ?*, N° 26, 2018.

epistemology is a caricature: because just this Enlightenment epistemology was the philosophical basis of the 19th and 20th centuries scientific study of the *complexity* of life, psychology and knowledge, and society, and we could contend that just the counter-Enlightenment has led to exaggerations in the thinking of the human psyche etc.

The present counter-Enlightenment is clearly directed against the use of reason according to the Enlightenment epistemology: this use of reason is *caricatured* by equating the endeavours of analysing society from the standpoints of both the historicity and complexity of objective relations and concepts *and* the ethical Kantian reason to be of the objective relations and concepts, with some fake "modern", "humanistic", in fact liberal ideas. For example, in the spirit of *Enlightenment epistemology*, both racism and anti-racism are historical ideas, generated by historical social relations. At the same time, their assessment today is made according to the *present* level of knowledge and ethics. Over time, racism could have been considered normal, natural and metaphysically legitimated, but according to the *present* knowledge and values it is no longer considered normal, natural and metaphysically legitimated. The old racism was not considered wrong from the viewpoint of the old dominant strata, but today that old racism is considered wrong, however historically/ideologically legitimated.

But the counter-Enlightenment ideology has a multi-level contradictory attitude towards racism. On the one hand, the counter-Enlightenment presses by providing "the argument" of the free speech for the presence of racism in the public space[85], and by stopping the rationalist education and debates over arguments in the name of the same freedom of opinion[86]. As we saw, the argument of the free speech is the main one of the *conservative* pressure. It consists in "the right to exist of racism" as proof of freedom and free speech. On the other hand, the present *neo-liberal* anti-racism is an ideology[87] that caricatures anti-racism, equating it only with the liberal standpoint, i.e. with the aberrant reduction of racism to identity, diversity as "living together but separated" and demands of moving away even statues which are not signs of racism and whose moving would not strengthen the antiracist feelings of the Americans; therefore, the other argument is that racism and the non-recognition of the race (and sexual) differences would be the only causes of the social inequality and problems.

9) Both the conservative counter-Enlightenment and the neo-liberal one (which share many common ends and values) *isolate* the phenomena – and the theories about them – occurring in different spaces: the internal ones and the international one. For example, because they are afraid of the significances following from the linking of phenomena, the internal racism is deplored but that from outside is overlooked[88]. As well as both forms of counter-Enlightenment ignore the inconvenient aspects[89] because they delegitimise/destroy the mythology of domination and its credibility and drive their criticism.

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[85] See the addresses and "arguments" of this offensive counter-Enlightenment standpoint in (their defence) https://reason.com/2020/06/11/cornell-dean-eduardo-m-penalver-on-the-jacobson-controversy/, and (moderate criticism) *Statement on Prof. William Jacobson and Academic Freedom*,
https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/spotlights/Statement-on-Prof-William-Jacobson-and-Academic-Freedom.cfm?fbclid=IwAR08WSl38PAc3skN0VikdBOtvAJQKG92YTGNAqtkZtCu8TO9VMdm08_MflE.

[86] See p. 43 in *National Tracking Poll #2006105, June 19-24, 2020, Crosstabulation Results*, where the police considers the white supremacists in 'very favourable' or 'somehow favourable' views.

[87] See the criticism of neo-liberal "antiracism" as "a cry for full recognition within the established terms of liberal democratic capitalism" in Cedric Johnson, *The Triumph of Black Lives Matter and Neoliberal Redemption*, https://nonsite.org/editorial/the-triumph-of-black-lives-matter-and-neoliberal-redemption.

[88] *Racism, Sexism, Classism: Incoherence of 'Mainstream' Ethical Debate. Obfuscating Crimes against Humanity*, 30 July 2020, https://www.medialens.org/2020/racism-sexism-classism-the-necessary-incoherence-of-mainstream-ethical-debate/.

[89] Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression*, London, Verso, 2011.

10) In this respect, we once more have to surpass the idea that the question of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment epistemology would be "only a cultural" one, and the preoccupation for them – a pedantic one. The present *official* standpoint about the world and human structural interdependencies consists in the legitimising of the huge inequality and poverty as impelling people to hard working and taking risks, and as a well-deserved rewarding of those who did it[90]. But the myth of elite's talent[91] promoted in the frame of narrow private profit cannot confront the whole of social and society-nature relations.

At present, those remaining in the counter-Enlightenment thinking discuss the lost freedom because of the measures against the pandemic and the symbolism of masks as a reminder that the measures would be "objective" (not as necessary but as immovable stakes marking the possible beginning of an era of authoritarianism destroying the neo-liberal freedom): a criticism of the governments in power, but not of the power relations as such.

11) On the one hand, for the counter-Enlightenment epistemology the *contrasting/contrary* phenomena are always *contradictory* (in an irreversible way): for example, the individual is inexorably opposed to society, as well as it is opposed to the state. The solution is thus unilateral, leaning toward one of the elements; and because epistemology is never isolated and immune from ideology, the counter-Enlightenment – opposed to the Enlightenment epistemology leading to holism – promotes the right of the mighty individual to impose its interests opposed to society and state[92].

On the other hand, in the same counter-Enlightenment epistemology the *contradictory* phenomena are only *contrary*: for instance, the promotion of aggressive wars destroying the systems of drinking water etc. is acceptable from the standpoint of human rights, as the blockades stopping the access to medicines and food and thus assassinating indirectly thousands of children and adults is suitable to the human rights.

12) The counter-Enlightenment epistemology promotes the "science-religion unity" thesis, without taking into account their opposite epistemological models: while science questions the premises of its theories, religion does not do this.

13) The above aspect denotes a *minimalist* ethics, subordinated ultimately to the preservation of domination-submission relations. In front of the ethical contradictions, the counter-Enlightenment promotes *relativism* as "pluralism". But this "pluralism" is not epistemologically sound because it stops in front of the review of arguments, of the clear declaration of used criteria, of the clear declaration of the limits of the reasoning and in front of criticism; refusing an integrative critical perspective, "pluralism" rejects the rational analysis "all the way". Pluralism does not mean parallel theories for parallel publics and proselytising with extra rational means, but dialogue, argumentation and obviously the taking over of the most viable standpoints emphasised during the dialogue. Otherwise the dialogue is not efficient.

14) The counter-Enlightenment epistemology – separating *logic* from *ethics* in the analysis of society, and the *form* from the *content* – has promoted the idea that from the abstract and reductive tableau of concepts one may derive valid conclusions both for empirical processes and their theories. An interesting example is Isaiah Berlin's technocratic suggestion made as a *captatio*

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[90] Harry Binswanger, *Give Back? Yes, It's Time For The 99% To Give Back To The 1%*, Sep 17, 2013, https://www.forbes.com/sites/harrybinswanger/2013/09/17/give-back-yes-its-time-for-the-99-to-give-back-to-the-1/#15e2ecd770c5.

[91] This myth was deconstructed by Tim Wise, Of Gods and Monsters: Valorizing the Rich in a Culture of Cruelty, November 28, 2014, *http://www.timwise.org/2014/11/of-gods-and-monsters-valorizing-the-rich-in-a-culture-of-cruelty/.*

[92] A ridiculous but didactic example is that the EU has announced the free access to the anti-Covid drugs. But what about the drugs for other diseases? The examples from society are given here not only for their topicality, but also because they are topics of present articles and researches.

benevolentiae for the statement of modern political freedom – but do not neglect: the concept of technocracy does not denote a simple reduction of governance to the technical competence of neutral managers (and the simple fact that, indeed, any management has also a neutral technical aspect), but also, or even first, the legitimization of power relations on the basis of the supposed technical competency of the rulers (and the corresponding lack of competence of the ruled) –. "Where *ends* are agreed, the only questions left are those of *means*, and these are not political but technical, that is to say, capable of being settled by experts or machines, like arguments between engineers or doctors. That is why those who put their faith in some immense, world-transforming phenomenon, like the final triumph of reason or the proletarian revolution, must believe that all political and moral problems can thereby be turned into technological ones"[93].

What is the subtext? That if people agree that the best political regime is democracy, logically they must agree that the more efficient democracy is that when the most appropriate management is the one justified by its technical managerial competence. However – and reminding here James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution*, wrote in 1941 – when it is about *power relations*, because both democracy and technocracy are within the pattern of the *private* control of the means of production, it is not sure that the *ends*, i.e. the *contents* of ends, are assumed by all and neither that the means chosen by the competent leadership are agreed by all. Therefore, to speak about the agreement about ends *in abstracto* does serve only to blur the contents of both the ends and the means. And the contents – and its dialectical relation with the form – is/are dependent on criteria. *When these criteria are missing, the general conclusion can be but relativistic.*

As the future or the solution for the structural problems of the present world are not given only by the development of science and technology – because this development is not neutral towards the ends promoted by the ruling strata – so they are not solved through formal representative democracy and technocracy. Epistemologically, these solutions move within a pattern combining relativism, parochialism[94] and a rejection of dialectical analysis of opposites. Briefly, this is a *depreciation of reason* – because of its defacement –. And, paradoxically since it pretends speaking in the name of empirical facts, the counter-Enlightenment despises the contents of life, i.e. of the material aspects, "in the name of" the superiority of ideas.

Epistemologically, we could conclude that the counter-Enlightenment epistemology – letting aside the counter-Enlightenment representations about social facts – is a "minimalist" one, remaining at the level of partial suggestions, no matter how correct are they for partial aspects, thus at the level of a *palliative* epistemology. Because this epistemology never questions the complex *what for* of the theories; and the *what for*-s are never solved in the manner in which the logic of a system that is part of the more comprising system gives the logic of this comprising system. However, to surpass the palliative epistemology we have to take into account the dialectic of both logics, that of sub-systems and that of their integrating system.

9. Science and technology in times of counter-Enlightenment dominance

Science is a *universal*, but if it is used privately, it is reduced to a particular. Science is the highest manifestation of knowledge by the fact that all its elements – purposes, means, methods, information, concepts – fulfil according to free and disinterested, transparent and collective

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[93] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958) in I. Berlin *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 118-172 (p. 118). (I underlined, AB).

[94] Parochialism: feature of conceptions focusing on local spaces, communities and problems and considering these problems as the origin of, as more important than and generating the characteristics and problems of larger spaces and communities. Parochialism is the circumscribing of interests within narrow confines and the ignorance/contempt of problems outside them.

activities[95]. In other words, science is a universal *if* and *when* it develops only according to its own logic/the logic of knowing alone. And certainly, this following of the logic of science does not mean a distancing from society/its needs, but just their highest consideration. In principle, the normative model of science does not oppose to the "context dependent"/functionalist model, namely to the model of external demands for science.

However, these conditions of science are not thoroughly met because of the power *relations* that transfigure them from the standpoint of *private* interests and competition. Therefore, not the two models (the normative and the functionalist) compete – as it was said from the standpoint of counter-Enlightenment epistemology – but the private views on the social contexts oppose to a planned development of the correspondence between science and society.

Most of both the scientists and the philosophers have accepted this contradiction and even legitimised it as superior towards the idealistic normative view. The ultimate cause of this obedient position being not only the exterior, private determinism of the material well-being of scientists and philosophers, but also that they assumed the ideology of private structural relations. The transformation of science and technology into a private instrument is not all that surprising. Thus, we can infer from this subordination of science to power relations that *science cannot become a "public good"*[96] *without the predominance of public interests and the humanistic values*[97]. The power of the legitimising ideology of private interests results from the predominance of these private interests.

The counter-Enlightenment dominance over science consists in both the *funding of science according to private interests* and the *ideological messages attacking the rationalist points of view, including science as such*. Letting aside the well-known aspects of private funding[98], or of biased funding[99], the first aspect was revealed during the pandemic when the funding of vaccines was assured to hurry their research in order to earn from their exclusivity. (But in the meanwhile the funds for the military-industrial complex were not reduced and the funds for a preventive approach

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[95] See Robert K. Merton, "The Normative Structure of Science", (1942), in *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973, pp. 267-278.

[96] As Joseph Stiglitz, "Knowledge as a Global Public Good" (pp. 308-325), in Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg, Marc A. Stern (editors). *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21th Century*. (New York: United Nations Development Programme, Oxford University Press, 1999) – quoted by Constantin Stoenescu, „Criza Covid-19 și societatea bazată pe cunoaștere", *Revista de Filosofie Aplicată*, vol. 3, Supplementary Issue (Summer 2020): 118-135 – said. ["Covid-19 Crisis and the Knowledge Based Society", Journal of Applied Philosophy]. (But Stiglitz did not come up with the idea of transforming private structural relations to this day).

[97] As both Michael Gibbons, "Science's new social contract with society", *Nature*, 402, 1999, pp. 81-84 – quoted by Constantin Stoenescu, ibidem – and Constantin Stoenescu think.

[98] Thomas Bodenheimer, "Uneasy alliance: Clinical investigators and the pharmaceutical industry", *New England Journal of Medicine*, 342 (20), 2000, pp. 1539-1544; Bodil Als-Nielson, Wendong Chen, Christian Gluud, and Lise L. Kjaergard, "Association of funding and conclusions in randomized drug trails: A reflection of treatment effect or adverse events?", *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 290, 2003, pp. 921-928; Marion Nestle, "Food company sponsorship of nutrition research and professional activities: a conflict of interest?", *Public Health Nutrition*, 4(5), 2001, pp. 1015-1022; Lenard I. Lesser, Cara B. Ebbeling, Merrill Goozner, David Wypij, and David S. Ludwig, "Relationship between funding source and conclusion among nutrition-related scientific articles", *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 4, 2007, pp. 41-46; Naomi Oreskes, Eric M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt, How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*, New York, Bloomsbury Press, 2010; see also the warning of editors of medical journals: Frank Davidoff, Catherine D. DeAngelis, Jeffrey M. Drazen, M. Gary Nicholls, John Hoey, Liselotte Højgaard, Richard Horton, Sheldon Kotzin, Magne Nylenna, A. John P.M. Overbeke, Harold C. Sox, Martin B. Van Der Weyden, Michael S. Wilkes, "Sponsorship, authorship and accountability", *JAMC*, 18 Sept. 2001, 165 (6), pp. 786-788.

[99] Wayne P. Wahls, "High cost of bias: Diminishing marginal returns on NIH grant funding to institutions", bioRxiv preprint, July 13, 2018, doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/367847.

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to illnesses were not raised). The second aspect gathers all the aspects of irrationalism in mass media and institutions.

Also, the counter-Enlightenment dominance over science consists in the framework of *secrecy* – versus the *transparency* required and promoted by the Enlightenment epistemology – that is inherent to the private relations. The pandemic has disclosed the harmful *secrecy* as private constraint over science, just opposed to its logic.

There is a close connection between the *separation*, *autonomisation* and *substitution* of aspects of life (as, for example, holiday from work, sex from love, family from rich social relationships, national community from human species community) – in order to better transform them into sources of private profit – and the *separation* of technological researches; clearer, of the particular technological systems from the holistic view over them. Also, the separation between the professional intellectuals – and the development of the profession of scientists and engineers – and their sensitivity towards the social results of knowledge[100] must not be overlooked. *The opacity towards holistic consequences of the fragmented phenomena and their fragmented research* is related to a dominant theory in the counter-Enlightenment type social sciences about the external causes inciting disturbance within a social system[101] (therefore ignoring the constitutive contradictions of the system). As a result, the same counter-Enlightenment type social sciences do not discuss these contradictions but, transforming the abstract model of liberal capitalism into a fetish and apart from deflecting the topic toward the writers/supporters of these counter-arguments, suppress any counter-argument and consider any opposite analysis as adversary/ not respectable/ "fake"/ "conspirationist".

The counter-Enlightenment epistemology supposes a *private* view about the world and legitimates the subordination of science and technology to this private view. For instance, the research is fragmented and focused on *lucrative* topics. Also, the material environment – within the frame of objects-mind relationship, the objects being other humans, artefacts and material and symbolic/virtual representations – is essential for all the (different) cognitive processes[102]. In this material environment, the artefacts are specific because their functions result from the intentions people have in order to have objects with those functions. Thus each artefact has a causal history of the intentions related to the functions of that artefact. Unlike artefacts, the natural objects have only a history of their names/definitions/understanding. But both natural and artificial objects are seen by the counter-Enlightenment epistemology in the same *fragmented* view, considering each of them

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[100] Only few have protested against the WWI (see Einstein) and only few have protested against the nuclear weapons, against the WWII and the following wars etc. In other words, either the protests were repressed in a way or another or the possible structures of civic gatherings of scientists (as the Pugwash movement) became simple forms without real function.

[101] See the current description of this theory at Richard Kreitner and Rick Perlstein, *A Brief History of Dangerous Others, 27 July 2020,*

https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/07/27/a-brief-history-of-dangerous-others/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NYR%20Walcott&utm_content=NYR%20Walcott+CID_32b89005cce7c6faffd72d52d773a868&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_term=A%20Brief%20History%20of%20Dangerous%20Others.

[102] Johanne Stege Bjørndahl, Riccardo Fusaroli, Svend Østergaard and Kristian Tylén, "Thinking together with material representations: Joint epistemic actions in creative problem solving", *Cognitive Semiotics* 2014; 7(1),1 pp. 103-123; Kristian Tylén and John J. McGraw, "Materializing Mind: The Role of Objects in Cognition and Culture" (135-148), Matia Gallotti, John Michael (Eds.), *Perspectives on Social Ontology and Social Cognition*, Dordrecht, Springer Science + Business Media, 2015: the objects employed in everyday and cultural practices scaffold the memory, alter cognitive complexity, facilitate epistemological experimentation, enable the division of cognitive labour, promote confidence and trust, consolidate social structure, and support dialogical coupling; Kristian Tylén, Johanne Stege Bjørndahl, Andreas Roepstorff, Riccardo Fusaroli, "Constructing meaning: Material products of a creative activity engage the social brain", *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*. ed. / D. C. Noelle; R Dale; A. S Warlaumont; J Yoshimi; T Matlock; C. D Jennings; P. P Maglio. Vol. 37 Austin: Cognitive Science Society, 2015, pp. 2446-2451.

only as an economic *resource* for the private economy. The inadvertence in this view is that although just the type of history of natural objects is considered to be the argument of the exteriority of natural objects towards the human economic endeavours and responsibility, the artificial objects, too, are seen as natural objects determining the humans with the implacability of a storm or deluge.

The rule of *private* domination ideology over science and technology manifests at least through three aspects:

- *One* is that if something can be done, it will be done. Certainly, science must freely scrutinise everything, but *not everything should be applied/made according to the criteria of consequences*. Nevertheless, the private domination ideology confounds the freedom of science – that is strait-laced by the private priorities[103] – with the freedom of production/enterprise irrespective of its direct and indirect results.

- The *other* is the triumphal description of the last technical accomplishment as solving all the problems generated by former devices, in this way stopping the fathoming of the last achievement. A recent example is that of electric cars: in the dominant ideology, they are considered as the new souce of economic boom, at the same time being eco-friendly by reducing the consumption of fossil fuels. But the exploitation of raw materials needed for the batteries as well as the fossil fuels used for their production question the ecological efficiency of electric cars[104]. What is to be done in front of this fact? The solving is structurally different from the official ideology: to consider the nature-society, the sectoral/domain concrete research and solutions, the sectoral cost-benefits and results within a global and integrative framework; therefore, to not externalise the costs of sectoral/domain concrete undertakings or, clearer, to *start* from the global and concrete problems toward the concrete projects; and to substitute the market logic of the individual cars with the proactive ecological logic of public transport.

- The *other one* is the ban of non-convenient research investigating the consequences of the profitable projects. The scientific surveys are labelled as "conspirationist", discredited and covered with silence[105], so as the profitable projects be considered as the only solutions. This aspect definitely opposes to the scientific spirit, because *science advances through criticism and questioning the tenets*. It is possible that the non-convenient research proves to be unsubstantiated, but this must be demonstrated through free and careful scientific scrutiny.

The counter-Enlightenment epistemology means the subordination of the endeavours of science and technology to the ideology of preservation of capitalism. This ideology is a clear dominant class ideology, but why would this fact be so important? It is because it alters/disfigures/annuls the *criticism* specific to the intellectual approach of things. Science always questions the premises of its theories and this not for barren curiosity but for *reconstructing* the theories as such. The model of scientific approach of the world – criticism and reconstruction –

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[103] This private constraint has led to less (state and private) funding of health care than of state and private military spending. But the state behaves according to the same private ideology.

[104] UNCTAD, *Commodities at a Glance: Special Issue on Strategic Battery Raw Materials*, Geneva, 2020; also *UN highlights urgent need to tackle impact of likely electric car battery production boom*, 28 June 2020, https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1067272.

Anyway, if the heavy vehicles – especially from the army and military structures – will continue to use internal combustion engines with liquefied fuel in the near future, their malignant nature is once more revealed.

[105] See the example of exposures of bodies to radiation. *A Rationale for a Biologically-based Public Exposure Standards for Low-Intensity Electromagnetic Radiation*, 2012, https://bioinitiative.org/. Report updated in 2014 and 2017; National Institute of Health, Public Health Service, US Department of Health and Human Services, *NTP Technical Report on the Toxicology and Carcinogenesis Studies in Hsd: Sprague Dowley SD Rats Exposed to Whole-Body Radio Frequency Radiation (900 MHz) and Modulations (GSM and CDMA) Used by Cell Phones*, November 2018. And Manlio Dinucci, *L'utilisation militaire cachée de la technologie 5G*, 10 décembre 2019, https://www.mondialisation.ca/lutilisation-militaire-cachee-de-la-technologie-5g/5639604.

once more seemed to be denied in these times of pandemic. While for many scientists and ordinary people the pandemic has revealed the aberrant feature of the established organisation of the world – from direct aspects as food, housing, occupations, health care, space and time, to concepts indirectly showing the attitudes and manners considering them, as purposes, priorities, stimuli and worth, and hence the necessity to *re-think* all of these, to *reconstruct* the establishment of the world (for yes, people think instinctively according to the categorical imperative[106]) – the promoters of the power relations impose the continuity of this establishment, including its corrupt relationships: including in science[107]. And they are legitimised by the counter-Enlightenment ideology.

However, the point of this chapter is not the description of the exterior determinism over science and technology. What is important is that the result of these determinisms is related to and at the same time generates a *capitalist consumerist model of life*. The reason to be of the privately conceived funding[108] of science and technology is the development of this consumerist model of life, because *otherwise the private profit and the power relations cannot be realised and maintained*. But the consumerist model of life is not ecologically sustainable. What was the solution? The dominant solution was – and still is – the research of renewable energy and the transformation of all the direct means of work according to the new types of energy: a huge process that maintains consumerism, not only because the end of production was not changed but also because the renewable energy makes the products cheaper than before and that means the possibility to consume more. The solution comprised also larger automation, as well as robotics, and these were linked not only to the process of doing more through science and technology, but also to the need of reducing the cost and the pressure of the labour force.

Anyway, as it is seen, neither the renewable energy and the eco-friendly production and nor automation and robotics did transform the consumerist model of economy: actually, they were – as before the renewal of technology has led only to capitalist profits at a higher scale – sources of *stability* of capitalism thorough the amplification of the consumerist model[109]. This is the reason of the technophile ideology that expects from science and technology the solving of societal problems.

The renewable energy – as automation and robotics – can be useful for ecology only if they work within the logic of a *non-consumerist* economy. Clearer: though there were in the last decade some positive results of the renewable energy at local level and the level of productive units/firms, at global level the positive results do not cover at all the negative results[110] of the consumerist model (within which we certainly include weaponry production, testing and use). Consequently, the technophile ideology claiming that it would be possible to make an ecological revolution at the

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[106] That they are also – and always – ends, and not only means.

[107] Daniel Espinosa, *Lancetgate: Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) to Treat Covid-19 Patients. Why Was this "Monumental Fraud" Not a Huge Scandal?,* August 21, 2020, https://www.globalresearch.ca/lancetgate-why-monumental-fraud-not-huge-scandal/5721761.

[108] Therefore, the capitalist states fund science and technology according to the same privately conceived reason to be.

[109] It is relevant that neither the lockdowns because of the pandemic did considerable positive changes in the present demands of economy towards the Earth capacity to regenerate its resources: the 2020 Earth Overshoot Day was later than the same Day in 2019 only by three weeks, the waste being at the same high level, Global Footprint Network (Advancing the science of sustainability), *Calculating Earth Overshoot Day 2020: Estimates Point to August 22nd*, June 5 2020, pdf.

[110] Though the capitalist economy focusing only on the firm's costs-profits relations does not account the costs of raw materials excavation and transport, neither the ecological damages of these processes, and nor the garbage, including toxic waste after the firm's production process, and its ecological damages (this is the famous model of firm efficiency through externalisation of everything outside the input price-output price productive process as such), all the phenomena upstream and downstream the firm exist and have those negative results.

same time keeping *more production and consumption*/the infinite *growth* – and at the same time assuring the well-being of all[111] – is false.

The criticism specific to the Enlightenment epistemology allows the alternative model not of scarcity[112], not of less, but of *different* production and consumption. Not a "sustainable economy" producing and consuming more, thus based on the consumerist model valuing the exchange-value, but a *sustainable economy based on a non-consumerist model*. The logic starts not from innovation[113] of new gadgets in order to permanently buy new gadgets, including new types of weaponry – with IT and aiming their more useable capacity –, but from the *non-consumerist model that is based on use-value*[114], thus on human needs. In this new frame science and technology can freely develop.

10. Instead of conclusion: Enlightenment epistemology and counter-Enlightenment epistemology in front of the present *Kairos*

With all its features, the Enlightenment epistemology was and is sensitive to the turning points in the human history and society. Concretely, it was and is able to grasp both the revolutionary moments in the human endeavour – for example, the social revolution, but also the industrial revolution were theorised – and the cataclysmic moments. It theorised them assuming the changes if these ones were consonant – irrespective of the idealising images – with material and spiritual advance in the light of the maximalist ethics at the level of its historical understanding. The counter-Enlightenment has opposed to the revolutionary changes and, when these ones proved to be too strong to stop them, has endeavoured to subordinate them. The preferred counter-Enlightenment model is that of continuous *patching*[115] as a result of different pressures: but this means also elusion when the pressures are weaker than before[116]. Even in a time of *cataclysm*[117]/ *catastrophe*[118]. The

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[111] Anand Giridharadas, *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, New York, Alfred. A. Knopf, 2018, has demolished this theory.

[112] See a foresight of a post-scarcity world, but resulting only from the development of science and technology within private confines and remaining within these confines, Stephen Aguilar-Millan, Ann Feeney, Amy Oberg, and Elizabeth Rudd, "The Post-Scarcity World of 2050-2075" (pp. 281-301), *Innovation and Creativity in a Complex World* (Ed. Cynthia C. Wagner), World Future Society, 2009.

[113] As the present model of the 4th Industrial Revolution that promotes a permanent private profit generating growth on the basis of innovation according to IT and ecology.

[114] See a suggestion of this model in the history of ideas, in Ana Bazac, "Voices of Philosophy in Front of the Present Exceptional Times, *Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria Filosofie*, 45 (1), 2020, pp. 170-206.

We can link the opposition between the models of economy based on use-value *or* on exchange-value to the opposition that appeared during the first moments of the pandemic between the necessary and the un-necessary activities. But the link is only a limited comparison, because although people opened the eyes and could grasp that, for example, the work in weaponry factories was non-necessary, after a while this non-necessary work resumed, because it is lucrative within the economy based on exchange-value.

In fact, every thing has two uses: that according to its direct use and that according to the possibility to exchange it for another thing (through the mediation of calculation, with or without money, but only of the time used in their production). The economy based on use-value is, however, that which has as its end the needs accomplished through the direct use of objects; the economy based on exchange-value is that which has as its end the acquisition of wealth using only the exchange-value of objects. (For the two uses of things see Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, 1257a, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 21, translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1944).

[115] An example of patching is the whole strategy during the pandemic, because the health care was under-funded, unaffordable in most of countries and the entire medical system with the upstream industries subordinated to the logic of private profit.

[116] Other example is the neo-liberal/conservative politics since the 70s.

[117] It would be useful to remind, beyond any historical approach, the original (modern) meanings of this last word: cataclysm. They obviously derived from the (Greek) literal one – deluge – but since a ravage is a highly dangerous phenomenon, a *calamity*, it is at the same time a *limit*, causing a moment of *hesitation in the making of a decision*.

counter-Enlightenment attitudes today balance between seeking to keep the present hegemony and to impose the legitimization of this "*Ancien Régime*" and on the other hand, to accustoming people with the idea of an inevitable apocalyptic fate if they do not obey/ are not on "the good side".

However, the global contradictions of the present times call for *decisive changes* of almost every human activity. These times are times of *kairos*, of decisive decisions. But these decisions are postponed because of the *beneficiaries of the domination-submission relations* and because of the *inertia of general thinking within the counter-Enlightenment pattern*. Letting aside the first cause, perhaps the most difficult is the change of this inertia, i.e. the *learning* of the "new" Enlightenment type perspective about the *reason to be* of the individual, his activities and the structural interdependencies – showing how counter-productive and harmful is the fragmentary image about "the world" reduced to the individual/local endeavours and its imaginary change for good as a result of these endeavours starting from exclusive individual/local and private interests.

The Enlightenment epistemology considers the pandemic a time of *kairos* as an opportunity for global coherent transformations starting just from the world problems, and not from the localised market interests. But the counter-Enlightenment epistemology seeks to transform the present time of *kairos* into an opportunity of fuelling new private gains, thus of economic "creative destruction" (in Schumpeter's meaning)[119] and the strengthening of domination-submission structural relations. The revolutionary potentiality is dissolved, including by manipulating the opposition of the bottom.

From the standpoint of science and technology – concretely, bioeconomy – and even outside this opposition, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen gave the theoretical starting point for *sine qua non* cardinal decisions[120]. These decisions were not taken, because the governing private interests have imposed the fragmentation of the logic of the world. The counter-Enlightenment is the ideological pattern within which that fragmentation took and takes place. It consists in the promotion of the idea of the capitalist relations' internal propensity for endlessness self-regulation (a self-regulation

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[118] An overturning. We remember the ancient Roman feast, Saturnalia, when for three days the slaves were masters, being served by their masters, and no difference between the rich and the poor was permitted. See Lucian of Samosata (2nd century CE), *Saturnalian Letters*,

    http://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=home:texts_and_library:dialogues:saturnalian-letters#section36,
for the arguments of both poor and rich.

[119] As we saw: the replacing of old cars with the new, electrical ones, as well as the implementation of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

   While some representative writers for the establishment have praised the present opportunity to re-industrialise the countries, including with the claim that innovation must be stimulated, they did not discuss why was this standpoint not supported until now?

[120] Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen. "Energy and Economic Myths." *Southern Economic Journal* 41, no. 3 (January), 1975, pp. 347-381 https://www.uvm.edu/~jfarley/EEseminar/readings/energy%20myths.pdf: (pp. 377-78) "First, the production of all instruments of war, not only of war itself, should be prohibited completely… Discontinuing the production of all instruments of war will not only do away at least with the mass killings by ingenious weapons but will also release some tremendous productive forces for international aid without lowering the standard of living in the corresponding countries… mankind should gradually lower its population to a level that could be adequately fed only by organic agriculture… until either the direct use of solar energy becomes a general convenience or controlled fusion is achieved, all waste of energy - by overheating, overcooling, over-speeding, over-lighting, etc. - should be carefully avoided, and if necessary, strictly regu-lated… we must cure ourselves of the morbid craving for extravagant gadgetry… goods be manufactured in such a way as to be more durable… But it is even more important that consumers should re-educate themselves to despise fashion. Manufacturers will then have to focus on durability… the necessity that durable goods be made still more durable by being designed so as to be repairable… we should cure ourselves of what I have been calling "the circumdrome of the shaving machine," which is to shave oneself faster so as to have more time to work on a machine that shaves faster so as to have more time to work on a machine that shaves still faster, and so on *ad infinitum*. This change will call for a great deal of recanting on the part of all those professions which have lured man into this empty infinite regress. We must come to realize that an important prerequisite for a good life is a substantial amount of leisure spent in an intelligent manner".

that integrates in itself the novelty created by science and technology). This pattern starts from the abstract model of a system feeding on input elements and generating output results.

But this model is not appropriate: actually, it is only a didactic first approximation in the system theory. In order to understand the societal systems, we need concrete models constituted from their structural relations, including their relations with nature. And capitalism, irrespective of the forms of its actors – for capitalism means capitalist *relations* not capitalists/bourgeois/oligarchs – proves to be *ontologically* incapable[121] to manage the use of matter, energy and information in the benefit of the whole society and nature[122]. How we do construct the models, with which concepts, how we do unite elements and choose relations depends on the *criteria* we choose[123]. And these criteria are *both* technical and ethically maximalist.

The ethical maximalism is not a utopian dream. It is the *criterion*, intertwined with the constructivist epistemological framework – that summarises *why* the consequences of the present structural social relations are malignant for humanity[124]. Once more, while for many scientists and ordinary people the pandemic has revealed the aberrant features of the established organisation of the world – from direct aspects as food, housing, occupations, health care, space and time, to concepts indirectly showing the attitudes and manners considering them, as purposes, priorities, stimuli and worth, and hence the necessity to *re-think* all of these, to *reconstruct* the establishment

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[121] István Mészáros, *Beyond Capital*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1995, pp. 39–71 (the concept of *social metabolic reproduction*); István Mészáros, *The Necessity of Social Control*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 2015; István Mészáros, *From Primitive to Substantive Equality—via Slavery*, Sep 01, 2016, https://monthlyreview.org/2016/09/01/from-primitive-to-substantive-equality-via-slavery/; István Mészáros, *The Only Viable Economy*, 16 January 2018, http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5332; Maria Cristina Soares Paniago, *Les impératives d'expansion du capital et l'impossibilité ontologique du contrôle sur le système du capital, selon István Mészáros*, https://actuelmarx.parisnanterre.fr/m4panag.htm; *The Dialectic of Social and Ecological Metabolism: Marx, Meszaros, and the Absolute Limits of Capital": Brett Clark and John Bellamy Foster*, 03/10/2012, http://marxismocritico.com/2012/10/03/the-dialectic-of-social-and-ecological-metabolism/.

[122] An example is the antagonism between the necessity to have a global, mandatory and preventive system of tacking the waste in all the domains, including in that of electronic devices. See Garvin A. Heath, Timothy J. Silverman, Michael Kempe, Michael Deceglie, Dwarakanath Ravikumar, Timothy Remo, Hao Cui, Parikhit Sinha, Cara Libby, Stephanie Shaw, Keiichi Komoto, Karsten Wambach, Evelyn Butler, Teresa Barnes and Andreas Wade, "Research and development priorities for silicon photovoltaic module recycling to support a circular economy", *Nature Energy*, Published Online 13 July 2020, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-020-0645-2.

See also the work of the Turkish economist Fikret Başkaya (here, only some ideas in *Başkaya'dan yeni kitap: Yeryüzünün lanetlilerine büyük iş düşüyor*, 13 Haziran 2020, http://mezopotamyaajansi22.com/tum-haberler/content/view/100026, Interview on the occasion of the release of his new book *Discussing with young people the climate crisis and the ecological crisis* (translation with google): because of the dominant ideological education, the average person thinks that capitalism can continue; but the overlapping critical situations show the structural contradictions – nature-society-economy (subordination of society and nature to the private economy), alienation of production from needs (through the dominant mechanism of exchange-value), unlimited growth, expansion and expansion dynamics – impede the reproduction of nature; the error of the traditional ecological movement was based on the illusion that capitalism was a reformable system; but if the economic logic of a system clashes contradictorily with the systems it involves, it ceases to be a system; so, it is not "man" that has generated the ecological crisis, but capitalism, because for example the richest 10 percent in the world creates 17 times more carbon gas [CO_2] emissions than the poorest 50 percent. There is an urgent need for a mental revolution. And two conclusive epistemological ideas: the possibility of transformation depends, first of all, on the capacity to think in this holistic way. If you are able to climb high enough to ask questions, the solution to the problem becomes a potential possibility; the system does not disappear by itself, there is a need for a will to transform it, voluntary intervention of those who suffer the most from this trend.

[123] This is constructivism.

[124] In front of this criterion, the behaviours of governments which neither during the pandemic did not reduce the instruments of war – not to mention that they did not abolish them before – once more appears as irrational. Thus should we still be surprised that the measures taken have always been subordinated to the economy related to these irrational behaviours?

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of the world (because yes, people think instinctively according to the categorical imperative[125]) – the promoters of the power relations impose the continuity of this establishment[126]. And they are legitimised by the counter-Enlightenment ideology.

The counter-Enlightenment ideology separates the epistemological technicalities from *ethics* and thus from the *reason to be* of human knowledge and activities. But according to this separation we faced during the pandemic the contradiction between the claim towards physicians and the medical staff to work more than hard, and at the same time the (continuous) facts of private gains from different financial and non-financial speculations without any effort. In a consistent Enlightenment key that contradiction and the un-affordability of health care by all – and of a health care at the highest standards – can be surpassed by annulling the use of health care according to the logic of private gains; and at the same time – since one cannot require this only from the medical domain – by annulling the use of human activities according to the logic of private gains. The above reasoning explains the attitude of the counter-Enlightenment towards reason/rationalism.

Finally, universalism/the value of every human being cannot be identified with a particular national/racial/gender identity and culture, and certainly it is opposed to both a global and national economy reducing everything to private gains. When the pandemic has emphasised the contradictions generated from the delocalisation of production as a means of private gains by using the differences between the wages and taxes in high and low developed countries, some representatives of the counter-Enlightenment ideology have announced the globalisation is over, i.e. the long supply chains proved to not be good; or globalisation means more solutions for the supply chains, but it consists not only of these solutions but also – and first and foremost – of the *interdependence* of science and technology as *common goods* at the basis of non-restrictive, non-private use of the resources of the human life. Therefore, the Enlightenment epistemology *integrates* within a unitary understanding the different "epistemic logics" of both different parts, and the whole human-nature system in a kind of "trans-epistemic society"[127], thus not just a simple plurality of logics which coexist side by side, but their integration through the criticism of their reason to be.

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[125] That they are also – and always – ends, and not only means.

[126] See only, R. Haas, "The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It", *Foreign Affairs*, 2020, April 7. But see also the establishment's propositions for reforms in order to avoid dangerous attacks against it (IMF, 2019; 2020): increasing of incomes, property and wealth taxes, modelled as a "solidarity surcharge", the protection of public services, creation of less insecure labour markets, provision of a basic income, brakes put to multinationals rushing to tax heavens. While this tactic is understandable, it is difficult not to see the contradictions between the above-propositions and the capitalist logic.

[127] Petitat, p. 116.

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