

UP TO A POINT, THE DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM IS DIALECTICAL IDEALISM, IN HEGEL'S MEANING; BUT THEN IT IS MORE

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Abstract: *The paper investigates the common and different features of Hegel's and Marx's philosophy, thus not the historical and personal aspects of authors are important but the internal articulation of their philosophical methodologies. These features are both the dialectical approach of the knowledge of the world and, somehow deriving from the dialectical method, the understanding of objectivity. The beauty and limits of the dialectical pattern of Hegel is shown in his treatment of the finites. The analysis is rather a dialogue between the dialectical idealism and the dialectical materialism. The conclusion is not a synthesis seen dogmatically - as a final state, apotheosis of philosophy - but as an inherent development of thought, therefore even as its division into the never-completed dialectical materialist methodology and the eternally necessary convergence of philosophical interrogations and science.*

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1. Dialectic

1.1. In Hegel

So, both philosophies announced in the title are *dialectical*, showing the development from within the existence and things. The ancient Aristotelian *entelechy* became decomposed dialectically through *negation*.

Formally, or at the first, analytical level of understanding, negation is an absolute difference and concealment, and destruction of a state of a thing. (A state of a thing means that in a definite moment, the thing has definite properties). $A \neq B$; the larva stage of the metamorphosis of butterfly annuls the egg stage, as the pupa stage annuls the larva stage, and the adult stage annuls the pupa stage; rationalism is not empiricism.

However, the most important and specific feature of the Being is movement, development.

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Accordingly, *philosophically* – i.e., here in the *dialectic philosophy* of Hegel – negation is interconnected with *identity*, and this means with the *whole* of the object as thing we focus on. Reason with its synthetic manner is that which connects the parts, the opposite aspects, the different stages, into the whole that comprises them, both by deploying their negations and uniting them, and keeping something from the distinctions, oppositions and negations².

Let's remain in Hegel's philosophy. Formally, there is about an accurate description of a single fact – as in mathematics, the formalisation of a function, of a specific property of the elements of a set – and only in an affirmation establishing it. But when the fact is considered in the whole of the object, it is related to other facts of the object. Only by doing this we can see the origin, the causes, of the fact and of the facts, their relationships, their interdependence and the relative independence³, their unity and how relative is this one. We continue the example of mathematics: it describes the succession of states/processes of a set/system, and all types of possible and impossible successions. Thus we know the evolution of the system and its states. But we do not know why and how, except the presence or absence of properties in different moments of the system. In this respect, mathematics is an indispensable tool for reason, but only a tool through which we better understand the different lines of successions of states. And since the problems (the inquired perceived existence as complex and contradictory, and as changing, developing) are so complex and they involve many tools of thinking and solving, the interconnections of successions must also be approached with other tools than mathematics.

² G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (1812-1816). Edited and translated by George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 453: "The whole and the parts thus fall indifferently apart; each side refers only to itself. But, as so held apart, they destroy themselves. The whole which is indifferent towards the parts is *abstract identity*, undifferentiated in itself. Identity is a whole only inasmuch as it is *differentiated in itself*, so differentiated indeed that the manifold determinations are reflected into themselves and have immediate self-subsistence".

³ Yes, the parts of a considered system can righteously be considered a system in itself. The complexity of the existence is also due to this both mosaic and embedded, implanted (as well as inclusion, intersection and union) characteristics of the appurtenance and membership of systems. Also, the complexity is due to the definition of a system by its context (called sometimes, by its universe of discourse).

Consequently, only if we remain at this level we do surround us with a “limit that limits”. In contradistinction, the dialectical thinking helps to arrive to “limits which do not limit”⁴, namely, concepts and reasoning which allow the thinking of the *integrity* of a system, with all its contradictions and transformations, when the internal and external causes – transformations generated in outside systems – are composing both strict/deterministic states and tendency states of the discussed system. The antithesis – or negation *in se*, the common model of negation and its result – is both a new, different state that becomes the basis (as a point of contrast) of a new, different development (new, different argument)⁵, and a stimulus for the synthesis, the unity of this negation and the entity/moment/figure it negated. In other words, in the formal or “external” thinking, one “keeps

⁴ I use Constantin Noica’s formulae: “there are limitations that limit and limitations that do not limit. Dogma or 'absolute truths' are basically limitations that limit. The open truths, therefore relative, of the knowledge of today are limitations that do not limit. Knowledge in general tends to transform the limitations that limit (this stone, this real) in meanings and laws, which are at least limitations of higher order. The moral condition defeats evil, which has always been understood as a limitation, and it replaces the good, as a limitation that does not limit. Beauty itself is a limitation concretely, but one that does not limit. All human culture tends to transform limitations that limit into ones that do not limit”, Constantin Noica, *Devenirea întru ființă*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1981, p. 232 [The becoming within being].

⁵ As the negative versions of syllogisms (see the reference to Jean Buridan in Stephen Read, *Aristotle’s Theory of the Assertoric Syllogism*, 2017, <https://philarchive.org/rec/REAATO-5>, p. 13); or the affirmative variants where the premises are not of the same kind (see Aristotle, *Sophistical refutations*, 168b), but the result of the confusion of different kinds is not only a paralogism, actually an error because we cannot differentiate the same kind *per necessitatem* from the kind given *per accidens*, so from the diverse (169b), but also a stimulus of new reasoning, but also a stimulus to think to both the logical forms as such and to the contents – the meanings of terms – in arguments; or the assertoric *imperfect* syllogisms, requiring more elements than in premises, where there is about more than one logical relation and thus there is no transitivity allowed by the middle term; see Theodor Ebert, “What is a Perfect Syllogism in Aristotelian Syllogistic?”, *Ancient Philosophy*, 35, 2015, pp. 351-374, where the author shows that transitivity is possible in every syllogism if negations are separated from the middle terms and the minor premises and the other are written with the formula ‘being-contained-as-in-a-whole’ in the middle term.

separate and independent each of two aspects of a single complete idea. In point of fact, neither aspect, if separated from the other, is able to measure the idea, and present it in its truth"⁶. In a dialectical image, this is... negated.

The dialectical thinking has a flexible view on the dynamic *places* and *functions* in the hierarchy of the system: the concept of *mediation* – as necessary intermediary moments/stages – sends to the function of mediation of elements and processes in which lower elements, or let's say here, deep, are taken over but integrated into higher levels and transformed, that is, processed in such a way that they are no longer fundamental but only constitutive elements, the higher forms becoming fundamental⁷. The function of mediation can be fulfilled with both traditional "catalyst" elements and processes and *ad hoc* ones, other elements and processes.

The humans think *both* formally and dialectically, because both ways are necessary. The big problem appears when these two ways restrict each other: although no major formal system can be complete, thus cannot be completely formalised and cannot be explained completely by formal means (we remember Gödel), some people are rigid and do this; while oth-

⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Translated by S.W. Dyde, Kitchener, Ontario, Ca.: Batoche Books, 2001, 57, p. 66.

⁷ Cement, sand and water do not appear in their identity in a construction, but as concrete, also used as a base material for certain parts of the construction. This is not a translation of water etc., of concrete and of bricks in it, but the construction depends on new and superior aspects and not directly related to clinker, etc.: on design, and this according to the objectives of the building, etc., on architecture, on the environment.

But see Hegel's example – still construction, as the model of the construction of the human society based on Right and Order *against* what the individual wills tend – G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Lectures of Philosophy of History), With Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the Translator, J. Sibree, Kitchener, Ontario, Ca.: Batoche Books, 2001, p. 41: "The stones and beams obey the law of gravity, – press downwards, – and so high walls are carried up. Thus the elements are made use of in accordance with their nature, and yet to co-operate for a product, by which their operation is limited. Thus the passions of men are gratified; they develop themselves and their aims in accordance with their natural tendencies, and build up the edifice of human society; thus fortifying a position for Right and Order *against themselves*".

er ones are negligent and do not take into account the meaning of words and the logic of inferences.

Formally, one cannot deduce from premises but the conclusions these premises support. Dialectically, it's possible. Why? Because: methodologically, the dialectic (Hegelian and Marxian) negation is always *Aufhebung*, both negation and preservation, though in a new manner, of the old system or of something of its contradictions in the new higher unity; these ones cannot be eliminated totally or from all standpoints; and thus, because the system is so complex that it involves many types of negation which, they themselves compose in negations and thus in different *Aufhebungen*. Only the formal logic does not support contradictions – Freud said that “logic” in general – but dialectics involves a multi-value logic, multi-level contradictions, and thus the critique of the coexistence of contraries and of contradictions. But this critique is/must be ordered. Thus, only together the formal and the dialectical logic allow the development of the *critical thinking*: because the formal and the dialectical thinking are intertwined.

Hegel added another aspect: *the formal is abstract*, but this “Formal possibility is immanent reflection only as abstract identity, the absence of contradiction in a something... This real possibility is itself *immediate concrete existence*, but no longer because possibility as such, as a formal moment, is immediately its opposite, a non-reflected actuality, but because this determination pertains to it by the very fact of being *real* possibility. The real possibility of a fact is therefore the immediately existent manifoldness of circumstances that refer to it”. And “The relativity of real possibility is manifested in the *content* by the fact that the latter is at first only the identity indifferent to form, is therefore distinct from it and a *determinate content* in general. A necessary reality is for this reason any limited actuality which, because of its limitation, is in some other respect also only something *contingent*”; “they are indifferent to *form*, are a *content* and consequently *different* actualities and a *determinate* content. This content is the *mark* that necessity impressed upon them by letting them go free as absolutely actual”. And „the reality that the concept gives itself is the next stage, namely the said identity in diversity as such, an identity that equally is, therefore, still *inner*, and only necessity”⁸.

Therefore, *both the formal and the content are necessary*, and *both the abstract and the concrete*. But if people consider the strict but *relative* value of

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 482, 485, 488, 707.

the formal and abstract, and think much more from a formal syllogism than it describes, they consider the fruitfulness of the concrete content, too. In this respect, they know that not everything is possible/or impossible, but always depends on the *concrete content and context*. The dialectical thinking shows and makes us aware of the limits of rigid forms, and at the same time is careful to treat orderly, thus logically, thus with the instruments of formal logic, the richness of the concrete. Because otherwise neither the contradictions – with their negations – do appear in their possibility, limits and understanding, and nor the critique of all of these.

1.1.1. Hegel's concept of *experience*

Marx took over the Hegelian idea of dialectics⁹ and its development. But, because *dialectics always applies to the concrete*, the Marxian social analysis posited it “right side up”¹⁰. It's not the place to detail, but it would be useful to contrast Hegel's focus on the concept of *experience* and Marx's centre on the concept of *praxis*.

Hegel considered the *experience*¹¹ as the main “catalytic” concept of his system, because it mediated the development of reason and the treasury

⁹ Karl Marx, *Afterword to the Second German Edition*, 1873, of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1867), in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Volume Two, Moscow, Progress Publishers (1966), 1973, pp. 91-99;

The second German edition was considered by Marx “the basic original text” of the *Capital*, after he revised it by reading the French translation of the book (see <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/p4.htm>).

The *Afterword to the Second German Edition* is an important analysis of the historical conditions of the science of political economy in England, France and Germany, and of the dialectical method used in the *Capital*. This method was presented in “its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner” by Hegel, and Marx “openly avowed himself (myself) the pupil of that mighty thinker”. However, the dialectical method was “mystified” by Hegel who considered “the real world as (is) only the external, phenomenal form of ‘the Idea’”. Therefore, with Hegel, dialectic “is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell”.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ The words – their meanings – were lived before they were constituted as such, so they transmitted human experiences.

First, the radical $\pi\epsilon\Omega$ suggests the idea of advancing toward a final point, a limit, so the trajectory as such. Thus, $\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\alpha\varsigma/\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\alpha\Omega$, $\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\alpha\Omega\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ meant term, limit, end,

of reason, the impersonal Spirit¹². Phenomenology was just the description of the experience of the human consciousness and awareness of the existence. Everything is experience, not only physical but also mental, spiritual. But experience is judged by man in his head and thus, and letting aside that the humans can have the experience of contemplation of things, experience is the subjective means to arrive to the understanding of the world.

Experience was a gate to the world, or a window, a bull's eye as the one of an old deep sea metallic diving suit, through which the man saw the water surrounding him. But his vision was limited and he could see more

goal, the extreme point of a thing, the essential part of a thing, which gives it perfection. From where – πείρασις, attempt, trial, effort; the verb to try, to tempt, to force oneself, to make an experience of someone, i.e. to put him to the test, even to try to corrupt him, to seduce him – as Plato used in *Phaidros*, 227b –: πειρά-ω; and πειρασμός – proof, trial, experience; It is interesting that this idea of limit – beyond which something else appears, of a different essence – also led to the word piracy, πειρατεία; while πειρατήριον was not only experience – as a life test (with spectacular results, such as successful colonization, thus building new human spaces, or the punishment of the daring) and evidence, but also a den of thieves, a gang of pirates; πειρατής being a thief, a captor.

Then, in Latin the root is *pererro* – *are*, to traverse, to survey, to go from one to another, to wander; the tests of life, its experiences are after the journeys, the wanderings in which you go through the places. But do you stop? Yes, because *peritia-ae* means knowledge, skill, talent, and this means a break to think, to turn all on all the faces and, of course, to deal with things, so to act; *peritus- a- um* being the knower, the skilled;

So, *experior- iri- itus sum*, to try, to put on the test, to prove, to endure; *experimentum- i*, trial, experience, test, proof, skill; *experientia- ae*, attempt, test, effort, practice, skill, result, effect, success. Very dialectical evolution, isn't it?

¹² G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Translated by A. V. Miller with Analysis of the Text and Foreword by J. N. Findlay, Oxford University Press, 1977, § 86, p. 55: "Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it, this dialectical movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called experience [*Erfahrung*]. Consciousness knows something; this object is the essence or the in-itself; but it is also for consciousness the in-itself; § 802, p 591: "Everything we know must come before us in a living phase of experience (*Erfahrung*). The substantial, the solidly out there, must slowly be transmuted into the notional, the subjective. Time simply is the form of this self-realizing process. Until Spirit reaches the end of the requisite temporal process, it cannot achieve complete self-consciousness".

only when he moved, turned, twisted. This was another experience and other, new experiences. Thus the main element in experience was the subject who has thrown his “vision”, i.e. his ideas, on the world he perceived. In this, experience seemed to give the same narrow image of the world as the device of Plato’s allegory of the cave¹³: only *fragments*; and only a simple or foolish mind can equate fragments with the whole.

However, if experience is understood as a *flux*, and as a both sensorial and rational moment in the clash of the human with the world, then it is the provider of the objective world¹⁴. In fragments: but always possible to unite them by reason, by the special and, in principle, ever accompanying intellectual experience of thinking upon the ocean of experience. Therefore, from Kant onwards philosophy could no longer think the knowledge of the world as its copy in the human mind. It is – so, the world is – the result of the human thinking upon it, of the processing of the congeries of sense data and ideas, concepts, logic, and of the power of concepts over experience, thus over the chaotic sense data. From Kant on, this power of concepts, transformed into a transcendental purity, was that which in fact gave us the world as it is seen. The real sensible experiences became external to their transcendental conditions. For this reason, to understand how the world is known – not as a physiological and psychological process, but as a philosophical one – giving the account of what is the world as a result of the processing in the human consciousness, and of what is the subject as a result of this processing, therefore, of the development of ideas, the concept of experience seemed the most appropriate. But the experience of the consciousness – revealed by phenomenology highlighting how the appearance of the world is shown and how this appearance transforms the subject/the consciousness –: once more, the external world of experiences became determined by the ideas and consciousness. And the phenomenology of the consciousness became the most important philosophical knowledge, and seemed to defeat the old metaphysics that treated the world as a given

¹³ Plato, *The Republic*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 & 6 translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1969. 514a-520a.

¹⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III (Locke), Translated by E. S. Haldane, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, p. 303: experience “is the form of objectivity”.

which one has either to follow or to imagine. The empirical and the transcendental became definitely opposed.

For Hegel, what is the true essence of man – demonstrated not only by biology but also by philosophy – was the thinking, so the consciousness. It would be strange to reduce the essence, but the consciousness gave birth to the realm of ideas, to Reason, to the Spirit¹⁵, and: 1) dialectically, the Spirit was both inserted in the humans since they acted according to it, obviously in particular historical ways manifesting only the ideas suitable to their social conditions, and 2) the Spirit had its own autonomy or autonomous life, logically consistent and uniting the opposite ideas of general, particular and individual, of finite and infinity, of personal and collective, of abstract and concrete, of quantity and quality, of freedom and slavery, of interests and inclinations, of independence in thoughts and acts and dependence.

The Spirit – equated with Reason, with the Idea and ultimately with the Divine Being, external to the world – thus the realm of ideas was the direct *mover* of men, of their consciousness and, thus, the direct determining factor of actions: the “middle term” in all the relations and actions. In this sense, to understand the phenomenology of Spirit, its manifestation in the concrete historical development of ideas, i.e. of the human consciousness, was the main task of philosophy. Every concrete experience of men was first of all the experience of their consciousness, *as if* they were moved from outside, thus by ideas. And obviously this experience of consciousness gave/transposed into different practical experiences. We cannot start to understand the humans, what they are, from their different practical exploits, because – Hegel thought – just the ideas and consciousness miss from this picture. And the ideas can separate from the ordinary particular practical life that is finite and transient: but the ideas remain; and develop. Actually, just in their life can we see dialectic throbbing: their separation

¹⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 10: “negative and *dialectical*, because it resolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it is positive because it generates the universal and comprehends the particular therein... But reason in its truth is *spirit* which is higher than either merely positive reason, or merely intuitive understanding”; and p. 469: (even the Spirit is) “The absolute is absolute only because it is not abstract identity but is the identity of being and essence, or the identity of the inner and the outer”.

and opposition, their reciprocal criticism and unity. Are we not inclined to consider history the achievement of the Spirit, of the Reason? And is this clear subordination of the human actions not a form of opposition between the empirical and the transcendental?

1.2. In Marx

1.2.1. Marx's concept of *praxis*

The core concept of Marx's theory was *praxis*. Πρᾶξις is *action* in order to execute, to make, to accomplish. The experience, the learning from the relationship of the human consciousness with the world, takes place in the human mind, it is *interior* to his consciousness: it involves θεωρία, examination. The synonym of experience is knowledge: "we gained experience" means that we learned something and now know it. Praxis is deploying in the *exterior* of the consciousness, although it includes it as everything that is human. The exteriority and thus the (relative) autonomy of both the process of praxis and its results make praxis similar to the Spirit. But the main relationship in praxis is that between men and the things they are making, or between their consciousness and their activity and these things. The peculiarity of experience is the relationships between the human ideas occurring in every moment of their life.

There are many types of experience, including the actions to make something, but praxis is more than experience, it is its achievement beyond the ideas which were its basis, it is the return of the consciousness outwards it¹⁶, it is the *objectification* of the experience. We can plan something, but if we do not transpose the plan into reality, there is no praxis: there are no things, an augmented reality, but only us with our ideas. The practical knowledge, that which is the transposition of ideas in reality, πρακτική, is different from the speculative knowledge, γνωστική ου θεωρητική¹⁷.

Actually, without the exhibition of the consciousness, without the *presentation* of ideas, thus without praxis, there is no consciousness and there are no ideas at all. For this reason, there is no experience of the consciousness without the *contents* of the experience, thus of ideas: without

¹⁶ Perhaps this is the reason than the goddess of revenge was Πραξιδίκη.

¹⁷ The term *speculative*, in the traditional and Hegelian philosophy, designates the research of the autonomy of *logos*, not as psychological process of thinking but of the articulation of thoughts, of their logic and place and of their significance: that is of the understanding as it appears in the concept and its evolution.

praxis. All the struggle of ideas, for instance between Kant's moral of categorical imperative and its critiques, can certainly be explained through the logic of ideas and of their criticism, but ultimately it reflects the practical conditions of the social development. Men do not become free and do not embrace the public values only because the spiritual wealth of humankind is transposing into their head, but because the complex historical and social conditions are fitting with some ideas and generate some ideas. Even the command of Reason for the human progress is an idea whose concrete contents could not have appeared without concrete and changing historical conditions.

There are spiritual/cognitive experiences and practical experiences. But as the latter are *sine qua non* for the spiritual ones, the former are the same for the practical ones. Yes, a time for contemplation, for deduction, for construction of ideas is absolutely necessary. Without this interval the praxis itself is weak¹⁸.

Like Hegel, Marx was the heir of Kant. He knew and agreed with the construction of the human knowledge as a mental confrontation of concepts/ideas with sense data. He was at the same time the pupil of Hegel, assuming not only the dialectical methodology but also the idea that the ideas form a realm of existence, the spiritual one, that is objective and influence the humans. (Later on Karl Popper formulated this as "world 3", but he put in this "products of the human mind, such as languages; tales and stories and religious myths; scientific conjectures or theories, and

¹⁸ As in Hegel's image of slavery's "compensation" with the development of democracy and the intellectual life: "was a necessary condition of an aesthetic democracy, where it was the right and duty of every citizen to deliver or to listen to orations respecting the management of the State in the place of public assembly, to take part in the exercise of the Gymnasia, and to join in the celebration of festivals. It was a necessary condition of such occupations, that the citizens should be freed from handicraft occupations; consequently, that what among us is performed by free citizens – the work of daily life – should be done by slaves", G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (Lectures of Philosophy of History) (1837), With Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the Translator, J. Sibree, Kitchener, Ontario, Ca.: Batoche Books, 2001, p. 273; and p. 32: "The Greeks, therefore, had slaves; and their whole life and the maintenance of their splendid liberty, was implicated with the institution of slavery: a fact moreover, which made that liberty on the one hand only an accidental, transient and limited growth; on the other hand, constituted it a rigorous thralldom of our common nature – of the Human".

mathematical constructions; songs and symphonies; paintings and sculptures. But also aeroplanes and airports and other feats of engineering"¹⁹; Popper insisted not only on the interdependence of the physical world (world 1), the world of mental states as events (world 2) and world 3, but also on the feedback relations between them). Just because of this assumption has Marx developed his theory of *ideology*: ideas about society, existent outside people and influencing decisively, determining their thinking about society.

But ideas generate only ideas. In order to exist, to have things, people must act.

The ideas are constructed in the human mind – obviously, in relation with the sense data. Once emitted, this *subjective* spirit becomes *objective*²⁰: namely, it is the driving force of the subjective spirits who behave according to it and transpose it, by their actions, in reality. Do we not see that Hegel developed Kant's theory? (And, once more, this aspect of objective knowledge influencing and explaining the subjective ones was taken over and developed by Marx's theory of ideology, and, later on by Popper²¹). However, as objective as it is, the world of ideas is transient and thus powerless to move the world if it is only transmitted orally. In order the ideas to decisively determine the humans' behaviour and actions they need to be materialised: not only in material things but also in immaterial ones.

Yes, we can mentally see that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony – Popper's example – exists as an immaterial entity influencing us (usually we call this type of entities, "values", as the moral ones; or we call it "abstract objects"). But: we really acknowledge it when we hear it, thus when the minds of interpreters processed – what? – the information contained in the musical scores, these ones material objects, thus at hand, and only when the inter-

¹⁹ Karl Popper, *Three Worlds*, The Tanner Lecture on Human Values, Delivered at The University of Michigan, April 7, 1978, <https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/resources/documents/a-to-z/p/popper80.pdf>, pp. 143-167 (p. 144)..

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 157: "Knowledge in the objective sense consists not of thought processes but of thought contents... The objective thought content is that which remains invariant in a reasonably good translation".

But see Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, § 25.

²¹ Karl R. Popper, *Knowledge and the Body-Mind Problem*, [Based on his Emory University lectures, 1969], Edited by Mark Amadeus Notturmo, London: Routledge, 1994.

preters play, transposing their ideas about how to do this in sounds (which pertain to the material world).

However, although we acknowledge immaterial objects – as the above-mentioned *ideas* of a work, *values*, *meanings*, *performances* (Popper discussed the latter) – through the medium of both individual feelings and mental processing and material embodiments, we can judge them *in se*, as such, and we behave according to them precisely, and not only according to the individual reactions resulted from other people’s feelings or according to material aspects of our surroundings. Therefore, this world of immaterial manifestations of the humans – considered not only as only minds but also as bodies, i.e. as unities of matter and consciousness – within the material world *exists*. The problem arises when the unity of the human existence – the *unity* of the subjective and objective, of the material and immaterial, of the abstract and concrete, in their mutual feedbacks and interdependence, irrespective of the history of their apparition – is reduced to a unilateral determinism, to a “one way causation”.

1.3 Hegel’s inferences

This was the problem with Hegel. If we draw a didactic scheme, we see, as above mentioned, the Kantian moment and that of Hegel. Both of them were *realists*, acknowledging the real world as both material and spiritual and having material and subjective and objective spiritual aspects. Hegel was that who developed the dialectical representation of the world, of its knowledge, beyond the dialectical analysis of the human thinking and the human moral by Kant (who did not called his methodology “dialectic”, but transcendental and critical). And nevertheless, Hegel annulled his own dialectic with the unilateral determinism of the Spirit on the human world.

Actually, he annulled the dialectic two times. (And thus he raised questions: something that is very good, not only for philosophers).

Once, when Hegel considered the objective Spirit as being the only *solution*, the logical ideal recipe for the historical problems of man’s existence: *as if* the objective Spirit would nothing to do with the subjective consciences which have many contradictory ideas concerning society. Keep attention: the fact that the logical character (the truth/false, the deduction, the derivability, the correspondence and the consistence) belongs only to mental objects as ideas, and not to material objects or subjective events, is not tantamount to consider the entire spiritual aura of mankind as rational/logical.

Secondly, when this solution determines and explains the world, *despite any possible opposite "passions"*; moreover, the force of the objective Spirit is seen when people work *for it* consciously or not – and this fact is called "*the cunning of reason*" – and when those people who oppose the logic of the Spirit suffer; but this "*phenomenal*" fact does not issues from the possibility that the directives of the Spirit may be problematic or even opposed to people: "*The particular is for the most part of too trifling value as compared with the general: individuals are sacrificed and abandoned. The Idea pays the penalty of determinate existence and of corruptibility, not from itself, but from the passions of individuals*"²².

1.3.1. Mediation

The mediating role of experience sends to the inquiry of the relationships between ideas and facts. Letting aside that we know the world – thus it appears in front of us through the medium of concepts and their relations – the ideas influence so much that one can rapidly conclude that the facts are only the result of ideas. It's not difficult to arrive to the idea of the whole of the human ideas – and ultimately, of the true ideas, as the Spirit (the spiritual realm) – that determine the knowledge and thus, the world. (And of course there is, just because in the structure of man the ideas determine every thought, state and action, the huge role of the spiritual realm). But if one looks closer – and it is dialectic that which does this, actually, the dialectical thinking – it's clear that the ideas influence only ideas, so the ideas are external factors to the facts. The ideas influence the facts through and with the agency of the will to act. Thus, the facts must be compared with facts, and the ideas with ideas, in order to see which fact is better than the other fact and which idea is better than the other idea.

Thus, in the relations between ideas, facts and mental processes, therefore, in their knowledge, *every one of them plays the role of mediating factor*; and many times, in all their positions: as every one of them plays the role of both triggering factor and result.

1.4. Hegel's splendid and lame dialectic

Consequently, the Kant – Hegel line led to the theory of dialectical development of ideas as fundamental causation of facts, of the world. The realm

²² G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (Lectures of Philosophy of History), p. 47.

of ideas, of ideal coherences, was conceived as the objective factor of the subjective ideas and acts of humans. What was important in this line was the understanding of the intellectual construction of ideas – as for instance that of transition from hypothetical imperatives to the categorical one, from desires and adequate ideas to these desires to moral reasoning deriving the necessity of moral norms, beyond conjunctures – and the answer to the old philosophical question about *adequatio rei et intellectus*: and now the world was indeed the realisation of the objective Spirit.

But was it? Does this transposition of the dialectical logic of concepts and reason into the Hegelian picture of the world not follow a paradoxically formal scheme of the dialectic of three stages of development of concepts (Freedom, for instance) and three moments in the development of reasoning (thesis etc.), and is the world displayed according to this scheme not a simplification? Does such a world not be jammed, cribbed into this scheme, is the infinite wealth of experience not reduced in this scheme? And since the experience of the consciousness is infinite, meaning that the world is infinite, does this scheme give the account of the experience of the consciousness?

In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel ignored everything that was outside his scheme. But is this not “metaphysics” or “speculation” – in the pejorative sense of the terms, as a deduction of the world from concepts? Yes, it is, and Hegel made a *dialectical metaphysics*. Are the ideas not the direct movers of the reactions of men, mediating the sense data? Of course, they are. Do the ideas not influence in a decisive way the facts? Of course, they do. But they do this because of their *contents*, and these contents are not only abstract but also and similarly necessarily *concrete*. Otherwise, they would not determine the actions, would they?

Obviously, the present remarks concern only the logical consistency, thus the dialectic of Hegel’s conception. Not the historical, contextual and philosophical, and not the personal reasons of this unimaginable contradictory guise of what should have been a triumphant dialectical picture. It is of primary importance to see, beyond fragmentary coherent dialectical descriptions, including beyond his dialectical scheme, in what sense was the Hegel’s dialectical conception limited.

The main sense was just the shrinking of a dialectical theory of knowledge. The ideas give the pattern of people’s thinking and acting, thus – of the world. And it’s true. There is no world *for us* without conceiving it: receiving ideas, processing them – obviously, also the ideas which reflect

simple facts from the real life, thus confronting all these ideas – and relating them in as coherent reasoning as we can do. These ideas – and more, all the ideas – explain the world to us, make it intelligible, so give our knowledge of it, and motivate our acts as responses to the world as it is understood by us: *as if* they would be an external instance that governs our thinking, the Reason treasury of the human world, above it, *as God*.

But is the world only a passive matter receiving the ideas which imprint them? This other relationship in the *whole of ideas and world* is that which misses from the Hegelian dialectical construction. Consequently, neither the whole does appear, so dialectic is lame.

Hegel said, obviously, that the humans put in operation the ideas they receive and arrive to, namely, their “need, instinct, inclination, and passion”²³. The states of the consciousness are and have “motive power” as a middle term in logic, without which there is no derivability. But if so, Hegel’s scheme is:

Ideas/Spirit → humans’ states of consciousness → the world (as it is known, as it appears in the Concept, in the theoretical representations, thus as Spirit, as the logical products of the Consciousness, as the only aspect of the world that counts because it determines the world)

And the circle of causation of ideas from ideas continues. It’s normal: truth is only a fact of idealisation (*Ideelle*), it is an ideal object of the thinking. But it’s only half of the process. There is no explanation of why the Spirit looks as it is described in Hegel’s system, determining only what is described in the system – and nor the feedback relationships from the world to the ideas, without which there is no whole at all, so neither its truth. Because: dialectically, the truth is the account of the whole²⁴. The whole is *concrete* and, obviously, it is what people understand of it in their historical effort and what of this understanding is retained in their concepts, in their theories²⁵

²³ *Idem*, p. 36.

²⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface, p. 11: “20. The True is 'the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development”..

²⁵ Hegel prefigures the latter epistemological observation that the concepts are theories.

describing “the essence”²⁶. The essence is what is known as a result of a dialectical evolution of ideas through negations. The process is wonderfully displayed. (And at the same time suggests doubts: the ideas are necessary and just the necessary ideas have the force to push the knowledge of the world – and the world as such – forwards; but once necessary ideas are later negated by other necessary ideas; it’s because of the inner dialectical feature of knowledge, of course, but why would this ideal process be so difficult / difficultly received by people who still support the former necessary ideas or by people who were the harbingers of the new necessary ideas when these ones had not the force to negate the old ideas, and necessary were just the old ones; etc.)

However, we must be careful: the above formula suggests two faces. One is that the world is as it is known; a logical, expected continuation of Kant’s theory. As its result, the ideas about the world are determined by their inner dialectical development and, obviously, they arrive to a coherent corpus of true, logical results (metaphorically, the Spirit). The other is that the ideas about the world are determined by the Spirit – i.e. by the impersonal logical result of the consciousness as such, by both the inner development of ideas, the dialectical methodology as such, and its True results as a treasury of (human) Reason – and thus, the world as such is determined by the Spirit. And here, the understanding of this concept is literal.

Dialectic – the arrival to the synthesis of the whole – involves a *retrospective* thinking (see the metaphor of the Minerva’s owl in *Philosophy of Right*²⁷). The ideas and the world evolve through the relative solving of contradictions – namely through permanent negations, through surpassing /outstripping which may be transgressions as mistakes and also outrunning with positive effects, all of these actions calling in fact new analyses and negations – but in each moment people think that the Truth is that which they collaborate to in that moment. Only philosophy, namely the dialectical system advanced by Hegel, said he, is able to see the intertwining, negation, continuation of the ideas as the essence of: both the true ideas about the world and the world as such. Only philosophy – that “does not appear until reality has completed its formative process, and made itself ready” –

²⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 12: “when we speak of *things*, we call their *nature* or *essence* their *concept*, and this concept is only for thought”.

²⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Preface, p. 20.

emphasises that “only in the maturity of reality does the ideal appear as counterpart to the real, apprehends the real world in its substance, and shapes it into an intellectual kingdom”²⁸.

And the retrospective image done by the dialectic philosophy is as the traditional metaphysics that derives the world from concepts: the world is not only as it is known – and the problems/the problematic and the solutions are never a copy but their logical development in thinking and its objective products – but also in accordance with the Spirit, i.e. with the truths of every moment and their Truth.

We do not know what the world as such – “in itself” – is and we do not act in this world but according to our ideas, and especially to verified and consistent ones: and thus the world is “for itself”. But the world is a rebel entity, thus the ideas always negate themselves²⁹, and actually we cannot take them as particulars³⁰ – irrespective of which universals they embody – as granted. Consequently, there is a profound contradiction between the even false ideas followed by humans in different stages of history and the apparent consistency of the development of the world in spite of momentary lapses. And this contradiction was solved by Hegel in an inherent contradictory but marvellous way.

First, the Spirit is the dialectical methodology itself, the inner logic of the world of ideas that directs their evolution. *Then*, the Spirit is the interweaving and combination of True ideas in both every moment / historical stage and the Truth of their connection and form in a final stage when it is possible to evaluate the former True ideas and to conclude the goal of their development. In this second hypostasis is the Spirit tantamount to the directive of Reason. And *third*, the Spirit is the Consciousness: as a human consciousness and a transcendent one, outside the human. In this third hy-

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ Later on, Gaston Bachelard considered that only the permanent *revision* of ideas, as an inner moment of knowing, assures a “scientific rationalism”, Gaston Bachelard, *Le rationalisme appliqué*, Paris, PUF, 1966, p. 124. And to revise and correct require to refuse the analysis of separate ideas, because they are always correlated. This is why no idea – AB, and obviously, no Spirit as a quintessence – is absolute, Gaston Bachelard, *L'idéalisme discursif*, in *Etudes*, Paris, Vrin, 1970, p. 93.

³⁰ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 37 “But he who is active in *promoting an object*, is not simply “interested,” but interested in that object itself”. (Here it is the *avant la lettre* idea of intentionality).

postasis, the Consciousness is knowledge in its autonomy as every human product³¹, autonomy that imposes in the human consciousnesses the understanding of what is inevitable, no matter how complex is the concrete social human life³².

The above are like three faces of a deity: this one is close to humans and embedded in them (in their minds), it is also outside them as their best, leading them benevolently, and it is, also outside them, the abstract entity of Reason commanding inexorably the course of things, because it knows their inner dialectical logic and, inherently, its reason-to-be. No matter the names of a deity, neither their correspondence with a face or another, important is the acknowledging of its functions. And since the function of the Spirit/Reason/Idea/Consciousness is to promote what is the humans' reason-to-be, the Reason and the Consciousness, their/its driving force over the humans and their reality follows³³.

Since the reason-to-be is the dialectical Reason, there is no final stage in it, in the conscious analysis and imposition of the dialectical development of both knowledge and reality. Actually, from any reasoning, irrespective of the weigh of the synthesis, we do not only stop, by assuming it, but also begin to question it, so to see it as the basis of a problem, do we? The *telos* of Reason – and of Consciousness, and of Spirit as the overwhelming treasury of the human dialectical effort of knowing – is to not be content with a no matter how important and synthetic idea, to permanently begin and continue. However, this is “in theory”. When related to the world history, Hegel transformed his dialectical pattern. As it is known, there was a final stage: that was to develop, but in the same frame.

³¹ This comparizon with every human product is the result of the Hegel's and Marx's dialectical philosophy.

³² I G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 28: “That activity is the medium by which the universal latent principle is translated into the domain of objectivity”.

³³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 80, p. 51: “The progress towards this goal is also unhalting, and short of it no satisfaction is to be found at any of the stations on the way. Whatever is confined within the limits of a natural life cannot by its own efforts go beyond its immediate existence; but it is driven beyond it by something else”; and § 805, p. 591: “Spirit is all the phases of content in which it externalizes itself, and the process of leading these phases back to a full consciousness of self”.

2. Idealism

Hegel gave a very important definition of idealism – and of philosophy –: “The claim that the *finite is an idealization* defines *idealism*. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in the recognition that the finite is not truly an existent. Every philosophy is essentially idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only howfar this principle is carried out”. And he continued: “The opposition between idealistic and realistic philosophy is therefore without meaning. A philosophy that attributes to finite existence, as such, true, ultimate, absolute being, does not deserve the name of philosophy. The principles of ancient as well as more recent philosophies – whether ‘water’, ‘matter’, or ‘atoms’ – are universals, idealizations, not things as given immediately, that is, in sensuous singularity”³⁴.

There are different objects of sensuous experience, and no one denies this. They are the objects of common-sense and, at their first level, of sciences. But philosophy not only arrives at the understanding of concepts and ideas of and related to these objects, but also to the questioning of and reasoning about the concepts and ideas as “universals, idealizations” – in science the pendant of idealisation is *model* – as mental objects in and for themselves, and thus about their content as *essence/being* of the external objects they correspond. More: the understanding of the essence or being is the result of a spiritual activity where reason is both positive – by subsuming different particulars under their universal, their category (as Kant shows) – and negative or dialectical, by negating the determinations of idealisations. As a result, “a given particular is not subsumed under this universal but, on the contrary, it has already been determined together with the determining of the difference and the dissolution of this determining”³⁵.

This particular is the finite. And its truth – truth itself being a spiritual process – is found only at the level of cognition, where the determinateness arises, giving the content of the finite in „the immanent development of the concept”³⁶.

This aspect of concepts as idealisations – which are analysed and not only historically but also, and first of all, logically (but not as a practical procedure of judgements, but as an ontological exposition of the presenta-

³⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 124.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

³⁶ *Idem*.

tion and becoming of ideas) – and which are constituted from determinants which appear just in the logical dialectical process is not refuted by Marx. The content of knowing is the content of external objects. The capture of this content is the work of consciousness, that is „spirit as concrete, self-aware knowledge – to be sure, a knowledge bound to externality, but the progression of this subject matter, like the development of all natural and spiritual life, rests exclusively on the nature of the *pure essentialities* that constitute the content of the logic”. In this activity, the spirit, just „on the way of manifesting itself frees itself from its immediacy and external concretion. There is not only about the mediation of the knowledge and content of the external object by the movement of the spirit and its creations, the concepts (this was clear already in Kant), but also about the fact that the spirit/consciousness considers its own movement and creations as „its subject matter as they are in and for themselves”³⁷. Philosophy questions the concepts and their inner logic and change, of course. And this is the realm of thought „in its own immanent activity or, what is the same, in its necessary development”³⁸.

Hegel’s above definition of idealism describes the method/pattern to approach the existence, from the standpoint of Kantian transcendental idealism. The external world, the finites are not denied, of course. But they are *more* than their appearance according to the senses, namely they are known, thus *are* according to the movements of ideas. Their true existence in their concreteness is tantamount to their essence grasped only by ideas.

So what the richness of the concrete world consists of? It consists of the many *meanings* of things, much more beyond the sense data, produced by ideas. And this nobody refutes.

Accordingly, just in order to “reveal” the essence/truth of the finites and as many meanings as possible, the scrutiny of ideas together with the deep awareness of the peculiarity and place of ideas towards we and the world are *sine qua non*. The old requirement of the necessity of clear and distinct ideas (Descartes), and thus of the development of concepts/definitions (Hegel), follow. Only in this attention towards concepts which appear as moments of self-criticism in the development of ideas, can

³⁷ *Idem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

we have truer meanings about the world³⁹. Only by intransigently respecting the discovery and exposition of the dialectical relationships in and of the whole, can we construct anticipative theories which consist of the displaying of different reasoning based on different premises, criticising themselves and generating holistic theoretical landscapes⁴⁰. We do not arrive to truth by “applying” the abstract ideas to concrete phenomena⁴¹, but by deciphering the logic of these concrete phenomena through the instrumentality of ideas criticising themselves and developing themselves.

However, this is only the “technical” aspect of the Hegelian idealism: and it is common to both “idealists” and realists. The problem is, as Hegel pointed out, how far its conclusions go: concerning the relations between ideas and the concrete world.

2.1. Objectivity

No one denies the existence of the objective reality. However, what is real – and has meanings for us; and especially the meaning that there is reality – is the result of our experience, i.e. our interaction with that objective reality. Letting aside that the ideas mediate this interaction, the real is the result of

³⁹ We do not necessarily need empirical proofs to understand who sabotaged the Nord Stream pipelines (see June 10, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nord-stream-sabotage-probe-turns-to-clues-inside-poland-4ed20422>), it's enough to reason putting the question *cui prodest* (see *La NATO attacca l'Europa*, 16 Giugno 2023, <https://www.byoblu.com/2023/06/16/la-nato-attacca-leuropa-grandangolo-pangea/>).

⁴⁰ Ki-Weon Seo et al., “Drift of Earth's Pole Confirms Groundwater Depletion as a Significant Contributor to Global Sea Level Rise 1993–2010”, *Geophysical Research Letters*, Vol. 50, Issue 12, 28 June 2023, e2023GL103509.

⁴¹ It's, Aristotle said, because the terms are used in various senses and these different senses are given because they relate to different and various concrete situations. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vols.17, 18, translated by Hugh Tredennick. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1933, 1989, 6, 1026a.: “the simple term “being” is used in various senses, of which we saw that one was *accidental*, and another *true* (not-being being used in the sense of “false”); and since besides these there are the categories, e.g. the “what,” quality, quantity, place, time, and any other similar meanings;”, 1026b: “and further besides all these *the potential and actual*”.

both the experience of senses and of the thoughts⁴². The sensible experience – obviously translated into/as empirical and empirical abstract concepts – gives a subjective knowledge, explained Hegel. Only the concepts as theories give an objective knowledge, because only they can be criteria of coherent judgements and only they give the possibility to check and repeat the complex experience of the world.

The ontological priority of the external reality does not annul – and is not annulled by – the relative character of reality, because it depends on our experience. And both the sensible experience and the conceptual/theoretical experience generate “epistemological obstacles”, delays and troubles. But only the theoretical experience configures inexistent realities: not only as ideal alternatives but especially as a conceptual knowledge that is a model⁴³. And though we apply our conceptual knowledge to the external reality aiming at forging it according to our knowledge, there is a resistance of the objective reality. To know is just to be aware of this relationship and to evaluate the pressure and the opposed resistance: and to construct better concepts. Accordingly, the relative character of the objective reality – the fact that the modes of reality are conceived of⁴⁴ – doesn’t mean absolute relativism in the construction of concepts.

The common-sense spontaneous realism allows an adaptive relation with the world, but since its results are not always happy, it requires the scientific realism of the awareness of the systematic methodical construction of concepts and knowledge. The philosopher who, as Hegel, considers philosophy a science, and the scientist, obviously, do their research not as individuals but as “representatives” of the method of systematic construction of reality. But this construction shows that all the aspects of the empiri-

⁴² Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements – between what is knowable from experience and what is knowable only from reason – is very important here. Because: if we transpose and substitute the two manners of thinking to both facts from experience and theories about them indistinctly, we confuse facts with ideas.

⁴³ Gaston Bachelard, *Épistémologie* (1971), Textes choisis par Dominique Lecourt, Paris, PUF, 1974, p. 158 : “The real is never ‘what one might believe’ but it is always what *one should have thought*...in fact, one knows against a previous knowledge, by destroying badly made knowledge, by overcoming what, in the spirit itself, is an obstacle to spiritualization”.

⁴⁴ Patrick Juignet, « Une ontologie pluraliste est-elle envisageable ? », *Philosophie, Science et Société*, 2022, <https://hal.science/hal-03217728>.

cal – so the concepts, too – interact. Therefore, once more the concepts are parts of experience, although they are conceived of as external landmarks of the objectivity. But also only at their level can we conceive of alternatives, the “ought”⁴⁵.

3. Dialectical materialism

Continuing the old metaphysics⁴⁶, the main tenet of Hegel’s idealism was that the ideas become independent of their subjective production in the human mind and that as such have their own life of inquiring themselves, of negating and developing themselves, of understanding and of their power to impose their logic on the actions of humans, and even when their passions would oppose to this logic. As mentioned, the dialectical materialism pattern has assumed this idea because it simply cannot be refuted. The ideas form a specific realm of reality and the huge importance of this realm is visible just in the dialectical interpenetration with the realms of human actions.

⁴⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 675: “But the process of this finite cognition and this finite action transforms the initially abstract universality into totality, whereby it becomes *complete objectivity*”.

But see also a late expert in Hegel: H. S. Harris, “Would Hegel Be A ‘Hegelian’ Today?”, 7-17, in *The Spirit of the Age: Hegel and the Fate of Thinking*, Paul Ashton, Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos, editors, Melbourne: re.press, 2008, p. 17: “To believe that *ought implies can* here is to admit the saving capacity of reason, to recognize the positive presence of the Spirit, its existence as moral necessity, i.e., as freedom and as charity It is not a very comfortable home that we have made for ourselves in this world. But the absolute philosophy is the one that shows us that it is our *home*, and that we are the ones who have built it”.

⁴⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 25: “The older metaphysics had in this respect a higher concept of thinking than now passes as the accepted opinion. For it presupposed as its principle that only what is known of things and in things by thought is really true in them, that is, what is known in them not in their immediacy but as first elevated to the form of thinking, as things of thought. This metaphysics thus held that thinking and the determination of thinking are not something alien to the subject matters, but are rather their essence, or that the *things* and the *thinking* of them agree in and for themselves (also our language expresses a kinship between them); that thinking in its immanent determinations, and the true nature of things, are one and the same content”.

But dialectic requires a consistent treatment of a system. If we accept that in the system of *ideas-actions*⁴⁷ the ideas determine the actions, why not accept that the displaying of actions influence the ideas?

The ideas constitute a realm of their own, but why not accept that the actions constitute a realm of their own, too?

The existence of ideas justifies specific sciences, and obviously not only neuro-physiology, psychology, linguistics, logic, but also their ontology (Hegel's *Logic* being an ontology of ideas/consciousness in their autonomy and dialectical displaying, developed as a science). The realms of actions – and more, in different domains – together with the material and immaterial products (as institutions and relations, but also as corresponding theories) of actions in the delimited domains – are studied by specific sciences. Do we not see that not only people act according to their ideas, as a result of them – and this is irrefutably true and unanimously known and accepted – but also that their actions in their compositions of multiple aspects and individual passions influence their ideas? Shouldn't this feedback be contained in the ontology of ideas, and more, in the human/social ontology and philosophy of history? Shouldn't the feedback between the command of Reason and the rational speech – that is in its essence free – be contained in the ontology of ideas, and more, in the human/social ontology and philosophy of history?

It's absolutely obvious that the humans behave rationally⁴⁸, following the paths of searching for and detecting the causes and the results of phenomena and actions, inferring from data and checking their conclusions. It's equally obvious that the structural manner – speculatively⁴⁹ discovered – of reasoning, not only as logical patterns as such but also as their development through a meta examination of the particular states and conclusions in every moment of judgement, namely the dialectic feature of

⁴⁷ Is there such a system? There is, since a system is a taking into account, that which we circumscribe when we focus on something.

⁴⁸ But see Heraclitus, *Fragments* (in Diels, 1912), translated by John Burnet, Arthur Fairbanks, and Kathleen Freeman, https://antilogicalism.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/heraclitus_fragments_final.pdf, fragment 2 (thus 22A2, taken from Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, VII 133) : “And though reason is common, most people live as though they had an understanding peculiar to themselves”.

⁴⁹ In the Hegelian meaning of this word.

reasoning, condensed in “Concepts/“Theory”, is common, too; and that the “Concepts/“Theory” that is not only the basis, in mind, of the understanding and action, but also the realm of ideas as available to different humans, is likewise common. The dialectical materialism cannot oppose, actually it integrates these aspects.

A) But the fact that people behave rationally is not tantamount to their observance of the commands of Reason. If it would have been so, all the behaviours of humans would be the same and the world history would be different than it is.

B) And people behave rationally according to their specific conditions and goals: they fit/apply the logic to these conditions and goals. Therefore, in order to understand why and how do people act, the thesis of determinism/mediation of ideas over their intentions and practice is not enough. And just in order to understand the power of the realm of ideas over people, it is necessary to see the ideas as *criteria* of behaviour. And once more, the ideas have *concrete* contents and just this *concreteness* gives the different *criteria*. But the concreteness depends on the real – and imaginary, also – existential conditions and goals of people. Consequently, the ideas processing these conditions and goals – including the spectacle of other conditions and goals – are as determining over the behaviour of people as the ideas about mathematical abstract objects over the decision of a mathematician to develop a formula or another; and as the ideas about the development of the reason-to-be of the human reason in its impersonal model (the Spirit) considered as the most specific feature, thus essence, of the human being and his most important treasury for the philosophers who were interested to use these ideas in theories either about the different transcendental and logical conditions of the experience of knowing or about the role of cultural ideas in the existence and evolution of societies.

C) What is the concrete influence/determinism of ideas on the world? This question resumes the openness of the Hegelian philosophy about the transposition of ideas as beliefs and decisions. The results of ideas are the values, the goals and decisions of people; and the world as they decided and acted. Thus to ask which are the results of the ideas, is appropriate. And these results are different even from the logical development of the Spirit as a rational objectification of the realm of ideas. Obviously, one can forge the image – the theory, thus the ideas – of the reason-to-be of the reason/Reason as being its own liberation from the constraints of the real life and thus, the image of its freedom to develop the most consistent ideas

of this freedom; and thus, the image of the concept of Freedom as quintessence of the reason of the (human) history.

These images are beautiful intellectual constructions, caused by the intertwining of the evolution of the German idealism, the creativity of thinking and the inner logic of the speculative way of philosophy with the historical conditions of these constructions. But they demand, even from them, questions about their continuation. There are different paths to continue the beautiful speculative philosophy of Hegel. A path can be the treatment of the Spirit not in a Hegelian speculative manner but in simple paternalist idealism.

And another path can be a dialectical materialism. It focuses on the *formation of ideas on concrete existential conditions* and on the *direct influence of ideas on the concrete existential conditions*. Dialectical materialism is philosophical approach: it demonstrates the existential basis of ideas and thus, the existential basis of their development. It is not psychology and nor a detailed description of the existential conditions. But it is based on this description and inner determinism of different existential realms, made by different sciences. On this grounding, the dialectical materialism is a holistic and general methodology for sciences. It is not a book of receipts for them and neither an absolutely external domain that involves the possibility of sciences to not take it into account, nor it selects from sciences what fits with its own suppositions. Actually, the sciences themselves develop their own particular dialectical materialist views, interpretations and questions: because the materialist dialectic perspective gives the space for always new standpoints of the “signs”. And thus both the general materialist dialectical methodology and the sciences are necessary for the decryption of the signs of reality⁵⁰, thus including of ideas. Sometimes some ones un-

⁵⁰ Howard Pattee, “Epistemization”, pp. 131-134, in *A More Developed Sign*. Edited by Donald Favareau, Paul Cogley, Kalevi Kull, Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2012, pp. 131-132: “the ideal of science is empiricism – conforming theory to experiment – and that this implies a necessary epistemic cut... The condition for the objectivity, or universality, of laws is that they appear to be the same for all conceivable systems and to all conceivable observers. Consequently, an individual system cannot be distinguished by objective laws alone. Any experimental test requires a subjective agent, or an observer, to choose an individual system for examination. This choice is largely arbitrary, but it must be made explicit if the concept of experiment is to have any functional meaning. This choice is the epistemic molecules can func-

derstand science as an absolutely a-philosophical business, but in fact it develops only in concert with philosophy.

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Therefore, (1) the development of ideas through their own logic is a *model* and a “*transcendental*”⁵¹/*methodological condition* of every experience of thinking. (2) The methodological conditions of the experience of thinking are not opposed to the philosophical conclusion that the ideas as *criteria* of the behaviour; instead, this conclusion is another methodological approach of the human beings and their practice. (3) It is not enough to speak about the general function of ideas – the function to be criteria for the human behaviour. All are ideas and all are criteria; *but the kind of criteria depends on the concrete contents of ideas; thus, on the existential conditions reflected by ideas.*

Actually, the *modern/contemporary* idealism-materialism divergence and problem is based on a, historically determined, misapprehension. Because: the Hegelian idealism is inherently integrated in the dialectical materialism. And because: in its core this idealism discusses *other* aspect than the dialectical materialism. There are two different aspects emphasised by the Hegelian idealism and the dialectical materialism. The first is that of the (relative) autonomy of ideas and the realm of ideas and that of the dialectical negation and development of ideas; the second is that of the strong influence of the existential conditions on the ideas. Both philosophical premises are valid. The problem is when they are used and developed in a dogmatic manner, when one neglects the mediation of ideas or when one ignores the existential conditions.

More: from a methodological standpoint, the two aspects complete themselves and complete our perspective of the world (and its knowledge). But in fact the dialectic of things, of reality cannot be grasped without the dialectical materialist approach. All the scientific concepts developed in the 20th century and in present are the result of this approach; as well as the

tion as symbols that instruct replication. But from our theories of physics, it is not possible to even imagine how symbols can become molecules”.

⁵¹ As a dialectical analysis of the development of concepts/knowledge from their inner logic.

breakthrough in philosophy. The system theory⁵², cybernetics with the feedback and the feedforward, the levels of reality, the boundary conditions and the top-down determinism⁵³, the holism and complexity, the management of instructions for procedures, are only few of the “embodiments” of the dialectical materialism. The blame on “present ideas of simplistic materialism reducing everything to matter” – that is an abstract concept, let’s not forget⁵⁴ – and to the physico-chemical, ideas “not understanding the extraordinary peculiarity and determinant role of the consciousness”, waved in amateur philosophical discussions, is but an unfounded chatting. Actually, no one promotes today these ideas: there are not anymore possible after Hegel and Marx.

4. Instead of conclusions

The concepts, the units of knowledge and also their relationships bring out *meanings*. The concepts are theories about, and just this means the evolution of meanings, the revealing of different perspectives and aspects. Everything, i.e. the whole knowledge takes place through ideas. The logic of knowledge is the articulation of what is judged, of the meanings. Thus, it is more – as Hegel showed – than the formal, instrumental logic. The fathoming of relationships between aspects, between determinates, the judgement of the evolution of meanings and their understanding – take place within the logic of knowledge.

The feelings and the goals, the interests, decisions and actions – exist in and through ideas, of course. But all of them have their relative autonomy; hence, neither the different aspects/realms can be understood only as the unique realm of ideas developed logically from themselves. The *content* of ideas is given by the external world. *This content gives the different realms of the (human) existence*. What happens in the outside world – the relations, forces, interests, ideas about them – give the various and dynamical content of the ideas. We can remain neither at the conclusion that “the pas-

⁵² Actually, the entire materialist dialectic exposition of the dialectic of society – economy, social and political relations, institutions, ideas – was that of a system theory *avant la lettre*.

⁵³ Michael Polanyi, “Life’s Irreducible Structure”, *Science*. 160 (3834), June 1968, pp. 1308–1312.

⁵⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of logic*, p. 392.

sions” are guilty for the delay of the rational understanding of “truth” and nor that anyway the humans are driven by the power of reason.

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What is the truth? What is more important for humans, the ideas or the existential conditions? The questions are absurd. Important are both⁵⁵, because *both* constitute what is essential to human beings.

The answer that they are important from different standpoints is not correct. It's clear that, as the ancients observed, the *logos*, the reason and its manifestations, is the *differentia specifica* of humans. However, even this emphasis of the ancients aimed at showing the difference and superiority of humans towards the animals.

Why would the human reason be the climax of (terrestrial) animals? Would it because, as Popper said, only at its level the ineffable realm of ideas is considered as an object/body of objects and because only the humans have access to it and “taste” it? Is the climax always the essence because the essence is the truth⁵⁶, as Hegel said? Is a synthesis a final situation?

From a consistent dialectical standpoint, a synthesis is only the beginning of other lines of development; as every moment of thinking and acting is a bifurcating point.

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, “Mazzini and Napoleon”, 1858, in Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, Volume 15, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1980, pp. 485-489 (485): “Nothing is easier than to be an idealist on behalf of other people. A surfeited man may easily sneer at the materialism of hungry people asking for vulgar bread instead of sublime ideas”. (And he continued: “The Triumvirs of the Roman Republic of 1848, leaving the peasants of the Campagna in a state of slavery more exasperating than that of their ancestors of the times of imperial Rome, were quite welcome to descant on the degraded state of the rural mind”). Later on the well-know pyramid of needs (Abraham Maslow) displayed the above conclusion in science.

⁵⁶ As the truth of a human being revealing – including to him – at old age? It's clear that this is not false and thus people must live until they become too tired to do this, just in order to “reveal their truth”. However, this kind of apex is not really revealing because it is showing only *in mente*; the old have no time to transpose into reality their wisdom. For this reason, the truth of a human being is not in a moment of his life, not even in a moment of culmination. His truth is the whole of his life, with all the contradictory thoughts and actions.

The truth of man is not his reason and its result, the realm of ideas. The truth as the spiritual was the tenet of the contemplative philosophy. But in a philosophy that made a dialectical interpretation of that philosophy, *the truth of man is the unity of his flesh and spirit*. The latter cannot be explained independently from this unity. The whole creativity and creation of man arise from the inner struggle of the whole system of his identity. Even the infinity and wholeness of the spiritual realm depend on the finitude of the individual human. For this reason, the spirit itself is not absolute, but relative.

But just because of its power, the logically consistent ideas about the world should be implemented. The analysis of the power of Spirit is absolutely necessary; but it is equally imperative to analyse – and thus, forge – *how, to what extent and why this power is or not implementing in the real world*.

This analysis is assumed by the dialectical materialism.

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The development of dialectical materialism is not a cancellation of Hegel's dialectical idealism. It is its completion (and, since every completion is likewise a correction, it is also its correction) as an *Aufhebung*: and a never finished process.

What the dialectical idealism was interested to show was the *universal*, the "law", as the science does (and nor art and theology, whose principle is the particular), and as Hegel's systematic philosophy was conceived as a science. The dialectical idealism emphasised the universal of the "mechanism" of the development of ideas and of their constitution as a special existential realm determining the consciousness and behaviour of humans. In this, the dialectical idealism was absolutely necessary, as every essential moment in the history of thinking, here, of philosophy.

Hegel continued the tradition of philosophy whose focus on the universal neglected the individual and thus, the concrete. It was inherent to this traditional philosophical model to subordinate the individual to the universal. The individual had "passions etc." but ultimately he was a rational being and, generally and in the historical tendency, his acts – according to the universal requirements and command of Reason. And this moment of the history of philosophy was – as the former Kant's normative ethics of the categorical imperative – intrinsic to the function of metaphysics.

Obviously, philosophy felt the inadvertences between its construction and the real world and aimed at solving them. And the most suitable terrain was that of modern political philosophy, confronting the deep opposition of “the people” against oppression. A knot in the chain of solving was the concept of *multitude* in Spinoza, and not in Hobbes⁵⁷. The Spinoza’s concept described a concrete manifold of individuals having, each of them, their own needs and propensity to freedom, as well as their own right to it, beyond a simple representation by the One. For Hegel, the contradictions in the state-civil society unity were to be solved by both the becoming of a social and benevolent state and the development of reasonability in the members of the civil society: but all of these in the frame of private property ruled discipline, as moments in the evolution of Reason.

Speculatively said, the dialectical materialism started from the opposite premise: that of the equality in theoretical dignity of both the universal and the individual. Is there a ground of this premise? There is just the dialectical criticism of the metaphysics that deduces the world from concepts: the necessity to begin with the description of the world. With all the autonomy of *logos* – thinking, thoughts, words/discourse, reason – that puts forwards the universal, the individual and the particular are the starting point of the thinking and the formation of concepts. First, the individual and the particular call both their affirmation as identity – by simply naming them – and negation, generating their appurtenance to a wider class of objects and their differentiation within this class. There is no concept, affirmation and development of the universal, without the pre-existence of the individual. But is this pre-existence significant for philosophy?

As it was said, in the relations between ideas, facts and mental processes, therefore, in their knowledge, every *one of them plays the role of mediating factor*; and many times, in all their positions. But letting aside this aspect or rather considering it a model: both the universal and the individual play a mediating role in the knowledge of things. Thus it’s allowed to start reasoning both from universals and individuals.

⁵⁷ See the discussion of the difference in Ana Bazac, “Conatus and the worth of life in a time of crisis”, in *Philosophy and Crisis: Responding to Challenges to Ways of Life in the Contemporary World*, 2013 Conference Proceedings, G. Maggini, H. Karabatzaki, V. Solomou-Papanikolaou and J.Vila-Chã (Eds.), vol. II, Washington D.C., Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, book series IV. “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change”, vol. 11, November 2018, pp. 137-152.

However, what is here the individual?

1) It is the *empirical*, the *factual*. We can start – in metaphysics and the common-sense approach – from universal, from concepts to which we fit the individuals, i.e. the facts: as if we deduce them from the concepts; as if the world would be the result of the concepts, as in the traditional metaphysics. But – in dialectical idealism, dialectical materialism and also common-sense approach – we start from facts and discover the concepts fitting them.

This *starting point* is important, obviously. But the starting point as such does not guarantee the *truth* of the knowledge about it. In dialectical idealism, the truth of facts is given by the dialectical development (negation etc.) of the knowledge/concepts about them. And the beauty of this development is so overwhelming that the knowledge/the concepts seem to brush away the “details” of facts and to transform the facts in illustrations: and thus, the dialectical idealism in metaphysics.

Consequently, the *subject matter* of the philosophical analysis is something different from the starting point. In dialectical idealism the subject matter is just the knowledge as articulation of ideas in their development. In dialectical materialism the subject matter is the facts. Clearer, when the subject matter is a fact/a system of facts, it is comparable only with facts, not with ideas about those facts. These ideas are important only at the extent when we add the subject-matter of ideas about the facts just in order to better understand the system of facts – which, of course, the ideas about those facts take part of.

And because the common-sense approach was mentioned at both the two kinds of starting points: it can consider the things according to prejudices or clichés which veil the complexity of empirical existence and substitute this complexity with simple slogans or notions as verdicts⁵⁸; but generally, for the common sense the truth is the immediate sensible reality and this ignorance of the mediation of thinking and knowledge leads not only to falsity in the ordinary life but also to an inconsistent theory of truth, that does never explain the empirical facts⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, „Wer denkt abstrakt?“ (1807), in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, 2 Band (Jenaer Schriften – 1801-1807), pp. 575-580.

⁵⁹ See the already quoted G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 25.

However, distinct from the epistemological turn of philosophy, made by Kant whose Copernican revolution in philosophy was just the positing of the transcendental conditions of experience, Hegel – who developed another type of “transcendental” conditions, those of the dialectical constitution and development of the concept, the truth, the spirit, and thus Hegel opposed to the understanding of his methodology as transcendental – considered that the reason-to-be of philosophy is more than that turn, it is, in the line of Aristotle, the focus on “being qua being” and thus the distance of thoughts from sensible experience is as harmful as the empiricist exclusivism. He said that in order to go beyond the common-sense understanding of real empirical things and their connections and causes it is necessary to add a “philosophical consciousness” that emphasises the unity of a finite thing at the same time emphasising its differences, as well as the unity of all finite things maintaining their unique differences, and that shows the constitution of causal laws in the empirical world through “conceptual structures *and* concrete universals”. “Speculative philosophy, therefore, has as its function the need to make explicit – i.e. provide speculative/rational/critical articulation – what common sense takes implicitly. In this sense, philosophical consciousness is more responsive to reasons than ordinary consciousness”⁶⁰.

Therefore, both dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism had a sense of humility before the real, but the latter confronted the abstract empirical concepts with the dialectical analysis of the real facts and thus confronted the abstract empirical concepts with concrete conceptual structures. Indeed, when this confrontation does not take place, the real is interpreted through the lens of concepts/theories which, consciously or not, select real illustrations as their truth.

More or otherwise put: the dialectical materialism confronts the abstract empirical concepts with *practical reasons*. Thus it is not only the theoretical reasons related to the articulation of ideas which must be understood when we regard the real facts but also the practical ones. These ones arise, on the basis of our intentional focus on something, from our intention to perform our acts according to *ideas* about a preferred situation. Accordingly, the ideas about the preference and, clearer, about its ends are related with the analysis of their constitution: that sends and involves the constitu-

⁶⁰ Paul Giladi, “Philosophy and Common Sense”, *The European Legacy*, 23 (3), 2018, pp.: 269-285.

tion of ideas about facts⁶¹. Therefore, it is not, roughly speaking, that we confront ideas with facts and that the truth would arise from facts, but that we confront ideas with ideas, their articulation. Truth never arises directly from facts, but only from their dialectical analysis⁶².

2) The individual is the human individual, too. For Hegel, this *Dasein* was the illustration of both the origin of the human consciousness – actually, its personification – and the substitution of the humankind in its evolution. A single man was enough for showing the meanders of thinking, and this singular model of thinking was enough for epitomising the progress of mankind. Thus, neither the many nor the concrete individuals of the multitude were targets of the dialectical idealism. By displaying the dialectical development of concepts, everything necessary appeared: the conditions of possibility of experience and knowledge seemed to be enough for the dialectical understanding of the human whole as such⁶³.

And the individual was erased; the sovereignty of reason over the human history⁶⁴ was conceived of in a statistical manner⁶⁵.

⁶¹ See, written in the tradition of analytic philosophy, Douglas W. Portmore, “The Teleological Conception of Practical Reasons”, (UC Berkeley ISUS-X, Tenth Conference of the International Society for Utilitarian Studies), *Mind*, Vol. 120, Issue 477, 2011, pp. 117-153.

⁶² For instance, the fact of the existence of social classes – an idea – is based on the analysis of ideas about both reasons of this idea, the coherence of ideas about features of the social class, and about alternative ideas/options; and the review of both our idea and its alternatives in a *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning. (Actually, the result of this review is not only that we arrive in the case of an idea to a strongest validity because it reflects maximal features of the notion of social class (and about its features) than the alternatives of that idea. See Douglas W. Portmore, “Maximalism versus omnism about reasons”, *Philosophical Studies*, Volume 174, 2017, pp. 2953-2972.

⁶³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 483: “Real possibility thus constitutes the totality of conditions, a dispersed actuality which is not reflected into itself but is determined to be the in-itself of an other and intended in this determination to return to itself”.

⁶⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 22: “Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process”. (But the fact that history – and any process – is understandable doesn’t mean that it is rational, and lesser that it represents progress.

⁶⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 50: *universal law is not designed for the units of the mass* (Hegel’s emphasis).

By showing the equal dignity of the universal and the individual in the philosophical explanation of the world, Marx annulled this manner; the Spinoza's multitude, i.e. the *every member* of the human commonwealth was posited: not in a normative way – as Kant's splendid categorical imperative – but in a radical dialectical materialist way. Not only as negative freedom (in Isaiah Berlin's term) of moral/passive resistance⁶⁶, but also as positive will and power to establish on Earth the "harmony" of the rights and duties of every one and all⁶⁷.

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⁶⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 117: "When the visible world has become untrue to freedom, the will no longer finds itself in the established morality, and is forced to seek the harmony, which the actual world has lost, in the inner ideal life".

⁶⁷ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (1845-46), in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Volume One, Moscow, Progress Publishers (1966), 1973, p. 38: "Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence"; and Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Preface* (1859), *ibidem*, p. 504: "man-kind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation".

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