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Afterword to Karl Vorländer's *History of philosophy*, v. 3 [or: **The multi-dimensional Enlightenment**]¹

From Karl Vorländer's sketchy and fragmentary presentation of the life and work of some main representatives of Enlightenment thought, one can hardly gain an overall picture of the Enlightenment and its age, which would be sufficient for today's [kinds of] knowledge and knowledge requirements; one can, however, with considerable accuracy, infer a general conception of the Enlightenment, which was not untypical for a certain tendency in interpretation, and still contains some topical point of view or aspect[s]. According to that, the Enlightenment, is portrayed on the one hand, through the spreading and dissemination of empiricistic and sensualistic currents, on the other hand, through the programmatic emphasising of the claim of human Reason in dealing and coping with the problem[s] of the world with its own forces and powers, and in shaping, moulding human life by virtue of its own insight. However, (a [kind of]) Reason, which is cognitively reliant and dependent on sensorial

¹ Kondylis, Panajotis, „Nachwort“ in Vorländer Karl, *Geschichte der Philosophie mit Quellentexten*, Band 3, Neuzeit bis Kant, Teil II, S. 328-345 [= *History of philosophy with source texts*, Volume 3, New Times until Kant, Part II, pp. 328-345], Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, Hamburg, 1990. For the purposes of this translation into English by C. F., ©, June 2018, apart from the German text, which was the main source for this translation, the Greek version was also consulted **not** by Kondylis, i.e. by Κουτσουρέλης, Κώστας, who gave the Afterword the title: «[Η μονοδιάστατη και ἡ πολυδιάστατη ἐρμηνεία τοῦ Διαφωτισμοῦ]» [= “[The one-dimensional and the multi-dimensional interpretation of the Enlightenment]”] in Κονδύλης, Παναγιώτης, *Μελαγχολία και πολεμική. Δοκίμια και μελετήματα* [= Kondylis, Panagiotis, *Melancholy and polemics. Essays and studies*], εκδ. Θεμέλιο, Ἀθήνα, 2002, σσ. 91-116.

experience, cannot overstep the bounds of mere intellectual thought (i.e. thinking with one's mind), whereas empiricism and sensualism in themselves and of themselves are constantly in danger of degenerating into a gross materialism. The supposed rational-intellectual basic feature of the Enlightenment implies that anti-intellectualistic currents like the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) is not permitted to be counted amongst the real and true Enlightenment; and the implication from the fundamental contradiction assumed and accepted between the claim of autonomous Reason and the clinging to sensorial experience, is again the implication that for this contradiction's overcoming a philosophical synthesis is required like the one Kant accomplished. The way of looking at the Enlightenment *sub specie philosophiae kantianae* as its completion, consummation and perfection means of course a smuggling of teleological points of view into an in itself open development or evolution, and a corresponding examination and sifting of the material pertaining to the history of ideas; above all, it means a normativistic perception of the essence of the Enlightenment, namely a reduction of the same Enlightenment, in so far as it should be "genuine and authentic", to those norms which Kant had founded, justified and wanted to defend through his double demarcation against empiricism or scepticism, and, dogmatism or traditional ontology.

The normativistic perception of the Enlightenment must, in addition, directly or indirectly avouch Kant's content-related definition of the Enlightenment as "man's way out of his self-encumbered mental immaturity or nonage". Because such a normativistic perception is represented by philosophers and researchers who understand their own endeavour at thought as the meta-development (= further development) of this same normativistic perception of the Enlightenment, which was according to their opinion the practical-moral/ethical chief matter of concern of "the" Enlightenment. In particular, in

Germany after 1945, despite the nuances, reservations or counter-voices, the said normativistic perception of the Enlightenment seems to be championed with an emphasis which is often lacking in analogous schools (or lines) of thought in Anglo-Saxon countries or in France. This phenomenon explains why the great impulses, which pressed and pushed research in recent decades towards a revision of one-dimensional interpretations of the Enlightenment, did not start or come from Germany, which, on the other hand, is psychologically quite understandable: it springs from the traumatic experiences with regard to National Socialism, and accompanies the wish that the Enlightenment ideal is made into, or becomes, the constituent element or part of a liberal or democratic political consciousness, which is supposed to bear and support a correspondingly shaped body politic, polity or state essence. The background (backdrops) pertaining to the history of ideas, incidentally, strengthened ex negativo the tendency of mixing up the historical picture of the Enlightenment with the current Enlightenment intention and purpose. Because although in the 19th and in the 20th century, large parts of the laicist (i.e. non-clerical and secular) bourgeoisie and the socialists in their totality talked of the Enlightenment in the normative sense *and* positively (when they even with that [term “Enlightenment”] on each and every respective occasion meant something different, or highlighted in regard to that term, different aspects), it had, on the other hand, thus come about that in Germany already in the 18th century the formation of a national feeling of identity – and indeed not only in respect of “reactionaries” – was frequently accompanied by an unmistakable, pointed shielding and protecting [of Germany] against the supposed shallowness and superficiality of the Western-Enlightenment spirit(-intellect).ⁱ This attitude or positioning survived in various versions in the 19th century, and in fact came to light in the 20th century, especially during the First World War and naturally after Versailles, with new force, which was seen in aestheticising intellectual circles, as well as in the radical Right. It does not have to specifically be proven

that this positioning's effects on the scientific exploration of the Enlightenment in Germany was possibly still more fateful than the one-dimensional normativistic perception.

Social-politically motivated contention and strife about the essence of the Enlightenment by no means, nonetheless, constitutes exclusively a German phenomenon. In general, argument, contention and strife regarding the Enlightenment was – when this belonged already to the past and could be looked at in a retrospective survey or examination, or in respect of its supposed consequences –, from the beginning under the influence of social-political intentions, purposes and considerations, and indeed in the framework of the great debates, which the French Revolution had unleashed and whose pre-history or course was of concern. Naturally, the protagonists or supporters and adherents of the Revolution did not understand this same Revolution as, and make this same Revolution out to be, a piece of usual/common prose pertaining to power politics, but understood it as, and made it out to be, a radical political *and* intellectual(-spiritual)-moral/ethical turn in the history of mankind; seen in this way, the French Revolution constituted the practical realisation of that which the Enlightenment had thought and dreamed about. Just as naturally was, however, the fact that the foes of the Revolution started from an organic connection or binding between the Revolution and the Enlightenment – only with reversed signs, i.e. symbolism: in their eyes, the Revolution represented and constituted the loathsome and atrocious, but unavoidable upshot of a long undermining of the estate-based-Christian values by a minority of power-hungry [power-thirsty] intellectuals, who managed to mislead the masses, and by invoking abstract universal ideals, to erect and establish their reign of terror.

Despite the unbridgeable contrast in the ratings, evaluations and assessments of both positions, certain essential assumptions jointly underlie them, which thereafter became common property and directly or indirectly stamped and

moulded for a long time the current representations and notions of the Enlightenment, even scientific notions. First, Revolution and Enlightenment were thought about together, which means, that [[i.e. the [French] Revolution]] was derived from this [[i.e. the Enlightenment]], which again implied the possibility of reducing the Enlightenment more or less to what was, for the ideology of the Revolution, relevant in the broad sense, and consequently unified them (i.e. Revolution and Enlightenment) under this point of view. However, since the Revolution had appeared with the claim of realising certain norms and values on a social scale, then – secondly – the quintessence of the Enlightenment had to be viewed in its conscious normative positioning, which in turn meant that one had to take at face value the self-understanding of the Enlightenment’s representatives and adherents (followers, supporters), and, the negative agreement [[= agreement coming from the opposing [conservative²] point of view]] with this self-understanding of the Enlightenment and the Revolution’s foes. Thirdly, the Enlightenment appeared to be intellectualistically oriented in the sense that its norms and values constituted settings (such as mores, institutions, laws, etc.) of autonomous Reason, which did not (necessarily) rely or depend on experience, but commandingly or flippantly (depending on how one judged the matter) ignored or rode roughshod over the great chaotic diversity of the empirically given (i.e. of empirically given data, facts); the social embodiment of this Reason or this self-conscious intellect making the world better was none other than exactly the intellectual – from the philosopher to the militant journalist.

On this coupling of normativism and rationalism or intellectualism rests not only the proud self-consciousness of many Enlighteners (i.e. Enlightenment

² As Kondylis showed in *Konservativismus (Conservatism)*, 1986, “conservatism” has absolutely nothing to do with today’s American polemical and meaningless, in terms of historical-sociological content, distinctions between Western mass democracy’s “paleocons”, “conservatives” and “neocons”. Here, P.K. is referring to the second major phase of conservatism c. 1789 up to end of the 19th century, or WW1 at the very latest. The first phase of conservatism involved, inter alia, the battle of *societas civilis* against absolutism and the initial stages of secularisation commencing in the 16th century [translator’s footnote].

thinkers), but also the critique which the Enlighteners' foes, especially after the outbreak of the Revolution, had exercised against them. Above all, the counter-revolutionary wing of Romanticism accused the Enlightenment that it necessarily advocated and championed false norms and values because it worked with the cold intellect and despised, scorned the voice of the heart or of feeling, in which the genuine essence and nature of man was made known and proclaimed; because only feeling takes root in what is concrete, that is, in the world of History and Tradition, which stood to be preserved, whereas pure Reason lingers and dwells best on its universalistic and ultimately strange or even inimical to man, abstractions (i.e. abstractions which are universalistic and ultimately strange, foreign, alien, and a foe, to and for man). This conservative-Romantic critique of the Enlightenment could, for its part, gain or procure the dignity and eminence of a scientific insight into the deeper character of the Enlightenment, because it seemed to represent merely the negative counterpart of the positive, but at the same time, one-dimensional perception of the Enlightenment. This conservative-Romantic critique of the Enlightenment's spreading and dissemination had as a consequence that one deduced the Enlightenment as a whole from the geometric spirit(-intellect) or from the Cartesian thought style, but above all wanted to classify phenomena or manifestations in the history of ideas like the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]), and indeed Rousseauism or the Sturm-und-Drang [= Storm and Drive/Urge/Stress] movement, not as constituent elements or parts of the Enlightenment, but as (harbingers and heralds of) the reaction against it. This Romantic perception and critique of the Enlightenment was freely varied, and developed a late effect and impact, after its social origin and its social motivation for the most part faded into obscurity and fell into oblivion; that is why today the ascertainment might trigger off in the clueless as regards the history of ideas, astonishment that Adorno's and Horkheimer's complaint, lament and grievance against the Enlightenment as the apotheosis of

instrumental Reason, together with all the moral, ethical and cultural consequences of this fact, basically constitute a disguise of the outlined old-Romantic-conservative perception in a neo-Romantic-progressive conceptuality and language. In order to be able to understand and explain the possibility of this perseverance of the content-related leitmotifs, despite the (sudden, wholesale) change of normative intent, one must, though, know of the long and complicated peripeteiae of the old-conservative critique of capitalism and of culture in their late intersection with the corresponding socialistic positions.

The first great syntheses on the thought of the Enlightenment reproduced in various modifications and variations the, in the meanwhile becoming quite usual and commonplace, one-dimensional interpretations. Hazard³ reconstructed the positive programme of the Enlightenment in regard to the backdrop of its critique against established Christianity, and attempted, in the course of this, to demonstrate how this programme as a whole resulted in the universal claim of autonomous Reason. The reasons for the practical breakdown and failure of the Enlightenment programme lie, according to his opinion, not least of all in the underestimation or suppression of feeling (sentiment), which of course implied that the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) did not *stricto sensu* belong to the Enlightenment. Hazard, nevertheless, did not make any effort to explain the fact ascertained by himself that phenomena, which according to his depiction and account caused the crisis of the Enlightenment, chronologically very often preceded the supposed heyday of this same Enlightenment. The content-related-logical arrangement of the material, which was supposed to underpin and substantiate the impression that the crisis of the Enlightenment was the late consequence of an insight into its inadequacies, shortcomings and gaps, contradicted the historical sequence or order [[of things]], and consequently elements of thought, which in reality logically and temporally

³ Paul Hazard (1878-1944) [translator's footnote].

belonged together, are separated from each other as logically heterogeneous, as well as being separated from each other temporally, too. However, the consistent explanation of the *fact* of the logical and temporal belonging together/co-existence of the above-mentioned elements of thought, instead of their artificial separation, would have required and demanded an essentially different overall interpretation of the Enlightenment. Similar objections could be raised against the fifteen years older work of Cassirer, who indeed following Dilthey, does not want to accept the Romantic reproach of the ahistorical intellectualism of the Enlightenment, but instead attempts to force and squeeze the great variety of the history of ideas into what he calls the Enlightenment's thought form. This thought form supposedly corresponds with, or stems from, the methodical procedure of the mathematical natural sciences, and not least of all means and signifies the sovereign shaping and moulding of experience by means of the intellect, as this is shown paradigmatically in the central concept of law[s]. From this perspective, Kant pops up as the completer and perfecter of the Enlightenment, that is, as that thinker to whom the Enlightenment thought form applied not only as regards the whole width and expanse of philosophical question formulations and central themes, but also as the thinker who founded and justified the Enlightenment thought form in terms of the theory of knowledge, and explained, made clear or plausible, its epistemological necessity.

Now, Cassirer defines this – ostensibly typically represented by Newton – thought form in such a way that its authorship or paternity could be attributed just as well or just as much to Galilei, for example, in relation to which it must remain unclear wherein the specific feature of the Enlightenment, as well as the particular secret of Newton's tremendous impact on the 18th century, lie; apart from that, Cassirer is not in a position to consistently follow and pursue his interpretative main thread or theme into all the areas investigated by him in

respect of Enlightenment thought, and logically and in terms of the history of ideas satisfactorily deduce and infer Enlightenment thought's concrete physiognomy from his assumed premises. Finding himself in a state of self-imposed compulsion to apprehend "the" Enlightenment as a united Whole, Cassirer must often tacitly, silently pass over texts and facts or even handles them on (i.e. in accordance with) a Procrustean bed. Above all, the materialistic tendencies fall prey [[to Cassirer's interpretation of the Enlightenment]], which Cassirer brushes aside as a merely isolated phenomenon (or manifestation) without any typical meaning⁴. This is indeed an understandable stance, if one thinks of the constitutive role of the struggle against materialism for the coming into being and character of neo-Kantianism; on the other hand, no appropriate picture or image of the Enlightenment can be sketched or outlined if one cannot explain why materialism programmatically comes to the fore for the first time in the history of ideas of the New Times precisely in the 18th century. In short, Cassirer proceeds tautologically by letting everything fall by the wayside which does not agree with the, assertorially taken as the basis, thought form of the Enlightenment, and teleologically, by describing the development of the Enlightenment with regard to its supposed completion and perfection in Kant's work.

These short remarks on two standard works in the literature of the Enlightenment [[i.e. by P. Hazard and E. Cassirer]] should have elucidated which are the essential deficiencies and shortcomings of one-dimensional interpretations. The same reasons lead, for the most part, to their questioning and revision, which motivated Adorno's and Horkheimer's neo-Romantic – and still always one-dimensionally conceived – reckoning with the Enlightenment too. Two world wars and the advent of that which in its time was called totalitarianism and in some of its versions was practised and imposed (also) by

⁴ "Typical" can be read as "characteristic" or as "meaning regarding type" [translator's footnote].

invoking original Enlightenment ideals and values, must have spread the feeling that the epoch which had written the catchwords, catchphrases and empty slogans of Enlightenment humanism on its banners and standards, and worked, in accordance with their self-understanding, for their realisation, was already at its end – still more: that the practical failure of the efforts and exertions which had their origin and beginning in the programme of the Enlightenment, already on the basis of this failure's magnitude, scale and extent, could be traced back and put down to neither chance and coincidences, nor to subjectively evil intentions, but had to lie in the Enlightenment approach itself. Understandably, conservative or liberal (as to formal equal rights) researchers and historians were first of all ready and willing in favour of making such assumptions (thus, e.g. Becker or Crocker), who understood themselves in part to be guardians and custodians of the Christian-humanistic inheritance, and tended in relation to that to ascribe the totalitarian aberration to the radicalisation of Western-free/liberal thoughts and ideas by the godless Enlightenment intellectual and world-theoretical regime. A similar distance vis-à-vis the Enlightenment gradually developed also by people, who from personal experiences with modern political movements, or from their own reflection on the paradoxical dynamic(s) of social and ideological factors, were unpleasantly impressed by the phenomenon of the sudden change of Enlightenment ideology into tangible forms of dominance, domination and ruling over others. It began, all the same, the scientific search for dark sides, drawbacks, buried aspects, unexpressed presuppositions or implications, inner contradictions or historical parallels; the essentially new and fertile [[element]] in this positioning was that one was no longer interested very much in classifications and periodisations, but much more intensely interested in a multi-dimensional apprehension of an object and subject matter known as multi-dimensional.

Of course, the mere reappraisal and revaluation of the programme and of the historical effects of the Enlightenment did not in the least suffice to bring about a scientifically sound overall picture of it. Important developments in the methods of research into the history of ideas, as well as pathbreaking insights into the mechanisms of the formation and impact of philosophical and scientific theories, came to be added. The more thorough and more profound confrontation with the history of the natural sciences, which represents and constitutes one of the major achievements in the history of ideas of recent decades, and frequently amounted to a historicisation or relativisation of the once absolute claim to objectivity of the so-called positive or exact disciplines, had to for example yield [[the finding]] that Newton's explanation of nature was not the result of an application of certain methods to newly deciphered physical data taking place in a historical vacuum, but rather was a synthesis which, i. a., had to not insignificantly thank the hermetical tradition; by the way, this hermetical tradition's enormous influence on the intellectual(-spiritual) life of the 18th century was based, as we know today, on factors which interrelated with political and theological, rather than specifically natural-scientific points of view. Under these circumstances, there could naturally not be talk any more of a thought form of "the" Enlightenment paradigmatically represented by Newton's scientific achievement, especially in view of the fact that the Enlighteners (i.e. Enlightenment thinkers, philosophers, journalists, propagandists,...) in their great majority wanted to belittle the purely mathematical component in Newton's work, as well as mathematics in general as science, since they saw in them a resurrection of intellectualistic abstractions.

In this context, the more detailed and accurate investigation into the history of science afforded another essential service to the study of the Enlightenment. Such an investigation made, namely, the central meaning of the development of the biological sciences for the thoughts world (ideological universe or system of

ideas) of the Enlightenment clear (Roger), and accordingly forced this investigation to a review and scrutiny of the common assumptions regarding the supposed provenance of 18th century materialism from Cartesian mechanicism; it was necessarily in general seen and appreciated that the Enlightenment's perception of nature, which had constituted the theoretical foundation for the struggle against the theological teaching of Creation, was formed under (i.e. with) considerably different epistemological presuppositions than Galilei's, Descartes's or Hobbes's mechanistic world image, with whose help new-times rationalism in the 17th century won its first great battle against the until then dominant interpretation of the world.

The investigation into the development of the Humanities (= sciences of the spirit(-intellect)) in the Age of the Enlightenment likewise brought materials and facts to light which conclusively and definitively destroyed the Romantic – contested and disputed indeed, for his part, by Dilthey – yet surviving legend of the ahistorical positioning of the allegedly intellectualistic Enlightenment. The renewed readings or even the rediscovery of texts like for instance those of the Scottish School, from the point of view of question formulations and central themes which the modern social sciences posed and raised, showed that the Enlightenment had not merely left the old court historiography behind, but also political historiography (= the political spelling [out] of history) (Hume, Gibbon), and could establish historically founded sociology. The opening up of the historical world in its material rootedness and great diversity was without doubt an intellectual(-spiritual) acquisition of the 18th century, which only during both of the centuries following it brought its fruits to full ripeness (or full fruition). This ascertainment had to, for its part, make the conclusion compelling that the historical constructions believing and having faith in (recti)linear Progress, to which one was accustomed to simplistically reduce the historical thought of the Enlightenment, constituted only one side or one aspect

of the actually proffered spectrum in historical positionings and general attempts at interpretation. Relativistic or sceptical positions, which were not merely opposed to the first-named (believing in linear Progress) positions, but very often also interwoven with them, by no means constituted a slighter or negligible and unimportant part of the same spectrum. Relativism and pessimism were recognised as organic constituent elements and parts of Enlightenment historiography (Vyverberg), and if this phenomenon could not be explained straight away and not always lucidly, then, at any rate, the indication of this was an additional cogent and valid reason to seek an overall picture of the Enlightenment rich in nuances and content.

The same need was partly induced, partly intensified by the increasing reciprocal penetration and saturation of methods and of disciplines. Not by chance, researchers, who were specialist philologists (specialists in literature) did an outstanding, superb job regarding the revision of the one-dimensional interpretations of the Enlightenment (Dieckmann). A feature of the Enlightenment itself consisted in that it rendered fluid the boundaries between philosophy, literature and science as different genres of the written word, and in some cases in fact effaced such boundaries. Research into the Enlightenment necessarily converted this ascertainment into reading philosophical, literary and social-scientific or natural-scientific texts parallelly, that is, on the basis of content-related commonalities, connecting or combining such texts with one another, and bringing to light the world-theoretical assumptions underlying them. The canon of the relatively few renowned thinkers, who one considered for a long time to be the classical representatives of the Enlightenment spirit(-intellect), and were treated preferentially or exclusively [[by scholars]], was consequently considerably enriched, and its earlier hierarchical structuring was at least partially dissolved; obscure, dubious or notorious works were revalued and understood differently, whereas the better knowledge of the history of the

coming into being of already well-known and established [[canonical works and texts]] allowed some of their former radiance and luster to fade. The widening, extension and expansion of the basis in respect of material, and the disintegration of the old canon, permitted, for their part, not only an insight into the until then hidden corners of Enlightenment thought, but also a deeper and more subtle understanding of the great topoi around which this thought revolved and in which it sought its ultimate world-theoretical justification, for instance, the topoi of nature or of happiness; the exemplary research accomplishments of Ehrard and Mauzi, which dealt with these topoi, were possible exactly based on the outlined methodological presuppositions and prerequisites. The in the meantime advanced sociological investigation of the life of the literati, of publishing, of the reading public etc. in the 18th century, which shed light on and illuminated concrete situations and compulsions, under whose influence Enlightenment thought was shaped and moulded in its great variety and multiformity, afforded useful, valuable help in the course of this.

One-dimensional interpretations of the Enlightenment rest directly or indirectly on the assumption that the great common denominator, to which both decisive general matters of concern, as well as the particular positions and concepts concretising this Enlightenment, could be brought down, can be found in the programmatic statements of the Enlightenment itself. It was suggested that this common denominator be seen in the *concept of Reason*; because the Enlightenment was actually presented, and indeed *as* Enlightenment, with the claim of putting aside Revelation and Authority all along the line through the autonomous activity of human Reason, or at least of putting the Enlightenment to the test and [[of carrying out its]] purging or purification on the part of Reason. Nonetheless, already the fundamental (and familiar) contrasting and contradistinction between Reason and Revelation or Authority let us recognise that the invocation by the Enlightenment of Reason has a purely polemical or

negative character, which again implies that a unifying way of looking at the Enlightenment movement may be undertaken only with regard to its demarcation against the Church-theological foe, although the latter was not combated and fought with the same emphasis and with the same arguments by all Enlighteners. However, the polemical-negative agreement regarding the invocation of, or appeal to, Reason against Revelation and Authority was not translated and converted inside of the Enlightenment into a positive agreement over the concrete content of this same Reason; the suggested content-related definitions and determinations of the concept of Reason, as well as of Nature, by various thinkers and currents on each and every respective occasion, vary and differ considerably from one another, or they are in fact diametrically opposed to one another, so that a positive unification of the Enlightenment under the aegis of Reason, to which all [[sides]] nevertheless appeal, cannot be managed. If we want to make a certain definition of the concept of Reason our own and use this same definition as our measure, yardstick and guiding principle, then through that we would be merely announcing our readiness and willingness to identify ourselves with the self-understanding of a certain wing of the Enlightenment movement, and to sacrifice descriptive procedure and method in favour of normative options and choices.

The reduction of the Enlightenment to the concept of Reason entails a further optical illusion, which for research until now has had particularly regrettable and unfortunate consequences. The invocation of Reason or the appeal to the use of Reason and to the obeying of its principles and precepts, as (i.e. in the manner) these result from Reason's use, was commonly called *rationalism*, and in this sense, one calls and denotes the Age of the Enlightenment as the Age of Rationalism and that sort of thing. Now, however, rationalism was often lumped together with intellectualism; one confused therefore the content of Reason with its constitution, composition and texture pertaining to the theory of knowledge,

and believed that the confession of faith in Reason amounted to a confession of faith in the intellect as the supreme, uppermost and most valuable, precious capacity and faculty. From the perspective of the history of ideas, this confusion stems from the old Romantic-conservative polemic(s) against the Enlightenment and its revolutionary effects and impacts. Conservatives (Romantics [= Romantic thinkers, philosophers, literati. et al.]) accused the Enlightenment that it would in the name of Reason support certain universal norms as well as a universal image of man, without taking into consideration concrete geographical, historical and social conditions; normative universalism could accordingly only spring from that capacity and faculty, which can be least affected by the senses and sensoriality, and at most in relation to that tends to generate and spin and weave further abstractions: the intellect. The Romantic-conservative opposition to the contents of Enlightenment – against Revelation and Authority – directed Reason was articulated therefore (also) in the form of a rejection of abstract intellectualism, or of a reduction of Enlightenment rationalism (as the epitome of certain contents and or norms) to intellectualism (as the form and method of thought); the supposed content-related errors of the Enlightenment in this way were supposed to be made out to be the necessary result of the Enlightenment's false method of thought and way of thinking. This Romantic-conservative rashness and fallacy would not have set a precedent if it did not really behave in such a way that the positive definition (determination) of the contents and norms in respect of Reason [[by Enlighteners]] had to bring results or yield its thoughts only universally, and in this respect, abstractly. However, in terms of the history of ideas, as we have already remarked, it has been thus, that the Enlightenment's concept of Reason is (formally, i.e. as regards form) united only as the polemical-negative counter-concept contrary to and against Revelation and Authority, whereas it appears to be split and ambiguous, polysemous as soon as one takes as one's benchmark the

Enlightenment's concept of Reason's different content-related definitions and determinations by the various Enlightenment currents.

It is therefore necessary to find a standpoint from which the abundantly and copiously attested to, and in the meanwhile having become [[part of the]] aware[[ness]] (i.e. known by people) in itself contradictory great variety (multiformity) of Enlightenment positions, is explained satisfactorily, and [[so that]] simultaneously the identification of the Enlightenment invocation of Reason, which means Enlightenment rationalism, with intellectualism, can be avoided [[too]]; because the intellectualistic narrowing, shortening or curtailment of Enlightenment rationalism cannot be reconciled with the decisive ascertainment of the content-related great variety and multiformity of the Enlightenment. Only an analysis which is oriented towards the process of the rehabilitation of the senses (sensoriality) may grant [[i.e. support]] this standpoint. The rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality does not constitute of course in itself the invention or achievement of the Enlightenment, but a core thesis of new-times rationalism in general, whose organic part and crucial phase is the Enlightenment; the Enlightenment turns against the central perception of ancient-Christian metaphysics, for which the sensorial-material world is ontologically inferior in comparison to the sphere of the pure (transcendental) spirit, that is, it is deficiently structured, inconstant, imponderable and as a result not capable of the same pure rational apprehension as that [[ontologically superior]] sphere. Against that, mathematical natural science of the 17th century sought to furnish proof that nature represents and constitutes a perfectly structured whole, which as such can and should make up the worthy and genuine, authentic, also the sole possible or to-be-taken-seriously, object and subject matter of human rational intellectual endeavour. However, the new-times rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality does not merely consist in this ontological (and cognitive) revaluation of the material world in its totality; it

simultaneously has a directly practical-normative dimension, whilst it can be translated into the demand for an autonomous morality and ethics (set of morals), which breaks with the heteronomous principles of the Christian-ascetic conduct(ing) of life (lifestyle, way of life). The ontological and the ascetic rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality now accompanies, within the framework of the world-theoretical complex of new-times rationalism, the primacy of anthropology, which takes the place of the primacy of theology. With regard to the ontological revaluation of the material world, this primacy means that man from now on chooses this world as the main area or realm of his activity, and attempts to dominate this same world through science and technology (technique); for the raising and elevation of man to the status of ruler, the putting aside or elimination of the primacy of theology is of course essential and imperative, since theology cannot think, i.e. conceive, of human dominance over God. With regard to the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality in the anti-ascetic sense, the primacy of anthropology again means that man is increasingly looked at as a natural being whose spirit or psyche takes root in the biostructure and moreover is (co-)shaped and (co-)moulded by outer sensorial factors. The contrast and opposition between the perception that man is nature's ruler (as well as his own), and the perception that man is nature, that is, the contrast and opposition between the normative and the causal (i.e. what is normative and what is causal), determined the character and development of new-times rationalism in general.

Through the Enlightenment, the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality reaches a hitherto unknown and unimaginable high point. At the physical-cosmological level, matter is increasingly ascribed to self-motion (self-movement), at the level of the theory of knowledge, empiristic or sensualistic tendencies prevail to a great extent, at the level of moral (ethical) philosophy, the anti-ascetic turn becomes unmistakable and in fact aggressive, at the social-

theoretical level, one evaluates material factors, from geographical up to economic, [[as being]] higher than ever before, and apprehends them in the concreteness of their formation, development, effect and impact. The radical forms of the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality remain, though, inside of the intellectual(-spiritual) overall spectrum of the Enlightenment quantitatively insignificant; yet their actual influence reaches far further. Because the ultimate ontological and moral-philosophical consequences of a consistent rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality at all levels are present at all times in all philosophical sides, groups and parties, which act and react exactly in regard to these consequences, that is to say, are theoretically articulated, and in the course of this, the rehabilitation of sensoriality moves forward and operates in the manner with which this corresponds to each and every respective ontological and normative fundamental or basic decision. If the unity of the Enlightenment is founded on its general effort to rehabilitate the sensoriality and senses of all levels mentioned above either way against the priorities of theological metaphysics, then its content-related great variety and multiformity springs from the quantity i.e. large number of different statements and opinions regarding the question of how and to what extent this is to be done.

We shall understand why this question, of all questions, in the 18th century became acute in such a way that it had to give rise to a great variety of answers if we are clear about the function of the concept of spirit in the previous philosophical (and theological) tradition – a function which in the Age of the Enlightenment was challenged, contested and disputed for the first time so intensively and so massively. The spirit constituted namely not only the uppermost and supreme stratum of being, but also the bearer and guarantor of the normative [[element, dimension]] – both as God, which was the *ens*

*realissimum*⁵ and at the same time the epitome of all norms, as well as the human spirit, upon which the competence, jurisdiction, responsibility, capability and capacity was conferred to keep in check, control and to bridle the sensorial dimension of man, and to steer and guide such dimension in accordance with normative postulates. In a time in which God was still not dead, the danger and threat to the spirit through the rehabilitation or even the ontological autonomisation of the senses and sensoriality had to have an effect as a danger and threat to the normative and the ethical in general. This impression would have possibly disturbed less the great majority of Enlighteners, who let themselves be influenced by it, if it had not put in the hands of the theological opponent an effective weapon, which understandably made the dissolution of the traditional value hierarchy (hierarchy of values) out to be the nihilistic dissolution of every value and every norm. Under the concrete circumstances of the 18th century, the whole Enlightenment had to in practice defend itself against the suspicion of atheism or of nihilism,⁶ if it [[incl. its various sides, factions, schools, groups, etc.]] wanted to get a hearing in society. The inside of the Enlightenment held and carried out struggle⁷ over the form and extent of the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality is therefore at the same time a dispute (quarrel, wrangle) over the better strategy and tactics for the handling, or at any rate, neutralisation of the theological opponent.

The thus motivated and coming into being great variety and multiformity of the Enlightenment extends and stretches from positions which make larger or smaller concessions to intellectualism for the better safeguarding of the spirit as bearer of the normative [[element or dimension]], up to open nihilism, that is, to consistent value relativism and to bidding farewell not merely to theological

⁵ = “(Latin [=] the most real being) A term for God, reflecting the belief that reality, like goodness, comes in degrees, and that there must be a limiting, ultimately real entity.”

(<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095752787>) [translator’s footnote].

⁶ “Nihilism” in philosophy, or at least as used by P.K., does not mean “do and or destroy x, y, z”, but (ultimately) zero action, zero meaning [translator’s footnote].

⁷ = “Therefore, the struggled held and carried out inside of the Enlightenment” [translator’s footnote].

norms, but also to every thought pertaining to a norm and value (= but also to norm and value thinking). In view of that, – and once more, against the one-dimensional interpretations which always directly or indirectly start from a normativistic concept of the Enlightenment – we must make a double distinction. First, there is to be differentiation between the Enlightenment in the sense of intellectual(-spiritual) currents, which want to replace theological with a, as far as possible, secular and immanent explanation of the world, and, the Enlightenment in the sense of certain norms and values which defend not only against theology, but also against the scepticism and nihilism coming from the womb and bosom (from within) the Enlightenment itself; because the confession of faith in an immanent interpretation of the world does not necessarily mean also a confession of faith in a certain scale of values (value scale), unless one comprehends the concept of nature or of man normatively, as the great majority of the Enlighteners did.

On the other hand, differentiation is to be made between the Enlightenment in this double sense and its age (era, epoch). Not everything which was acted out since the last third of the 17th century until for instance 1789 in intellectual(-spiritual) Europe was Enlightenment; completely on the contrary: very much of that turned against the Enlightenment, and very much constituted simply a nonchalant continuation of hundreds of years of traditions in thought or merely habits, practices and customs in thinking. The Enlightenment unfolded within the framework of its age or epoch and under the conditions which it's epoch dictated; yet on the other hand, that which we call the Age of the Enlightenment, without the advent and effect (impact) of the Enlightenment, would not have been what it was. One sees that when one looks into and tracks, for example, the influence of Enlightenment thoughts and ideas on attempts at reform in the area of theology; not only did the (main current of the) Enlightenment have to take its theological opponent into consideration, but also

theology could barely manage and get by any longer without a (negative, reserved (restrained), positive) positioning vis-à-vis the Enlightenment.

If we now survey (overlook) and examine the enormous content-related and formal richness in nuances which characterises all these levels, then talk of the great variety and multiformity of the Enlightenment obtains its concrete sense and meaning on this side,⁸ i.e. irrespective of all fundamental conceptual differentiation. Nonetheless, we may insist that indeed the, in terms of thought, looser, but quantitatively by far stronger and also most popular mainstream of the Enlightenment was oriented empiristically, and at the same time made the effort to protect the spirit in its ontological basic forms (i.e. as God and as human Reason) in each and every respective different extent and different interpretation; from that one hoped for a putting aside or elimination of the suspicion of nihilism – both because one appeared and behaved in the name of values and norms, and that is why one had to repudiate nihilism out of genuine conviction, as well as because this repudiation was tactically essential in the struggle with the theological opponent. At one end of the intellectual(-spiritual) spectrum of the Enlightenment, which was dominated by this mainstream, we find intellectualistic tendencies which of course did not want to talk about intellectualism in the sense of the old ontology, but put in a lot of effort on the basis of the new-times world-theoretical options with regard to the founding of the autonomy of the human spirit beyond every sensorial experience, and despite the indispensability of this same sensorial experience; in terms of moral philosophy, this autonomy of the intellect or of Reason was supposed to be translated and converted into an ethics without utilitarian, that is, an ultimately relativistic character.

At the other end of the aforementioned spectrum are different variations of materialism, which quantitatively seen, counted just as little as the intellectualist

⁸ “On this side” = of this world, and not regarding the spirit, theologically seen [translator’s footnote].

tendencies, nonetheless they are anything but untypical curiosities, as for instance Cassirer opined. Because they unveil and disclose (especially in their nihilistic further education, i.e. unfolding to materialism's logical end point through La Mettrie and de Sade) the ultimate ontological and moral-philosophical implications exactly of that emphatic rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality, in which the mainstream of the Enlightenment also saw its indispensable world-theoretical position and at the same time its sharpest world-theoretical weapon. On the other hand, it must be stressed that materialism just as little, for instance, as Kantianism, may be looked at as the consummation and perfection or philosophically necessary completion and conclusion of the Enlightenment. It constitutes one amongst a number of logically legitimate, supportable and supported positions, which comes out and emerges from the anti-theological main approach of new-times rationalism in general, and the Enlightenment in particular – namely, from the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality in the expounded and explicated double sense [[outlined above]].

The multi-dimensional apprehension of the Enlightenment, against the background of the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality, permits us additionally to avoid the old and still widespread confusion of Enlightenment rationalism and intellectualism with each other, as well as the false contradistinctions (e.g. Rousseau versus Enlightenment) and periodisations arising from that confusion. The Enlightenment rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality arrived on the scene as the opposition not only to that which one held to be scholastic intellectualism, but also to Cartesian mathematism and deductivism; in the simultaneous struggle against the intellectualism of syllogistics and of mathematics in the 18th century, both the empiristic-experimental part of natural science as well as the biological and historical sciences were revalued and upgraded. Parallely in relation to that, the empiristic theory of knowledge, through its genetic way of looking at things,

broke up and dissolved the customary and traditional concept of the pure intellect, so that Reason was no longer comprehended as the uppermost component part of a, from the beginning, soul structured firmly, solidly, fixedly, but as the highest tier of unfolding and development of a gradually coming into being, and of a constantly, continually dependent on the senses, spirit. The on the whole anti-intellectualistically adjusted and positioned Enlightenment could, nonetheless, regard itself in good conscience as rationalistic, because it did not in the least make its concept of Reason dependent on the ontological status of the intellect, but it bound and tied this concept of Reason to certain content with direct normative implications. “To be reasonable (rational and sensible)” meant in the familiar and common language of the Enlightenment “to live in accordance with Nature” – that is, in accordance with the commands which are inherent, laid down and deposited in (human) Nature, and not for instance dictated by Revelation and Authority.

Just as Nature as a polemical concept was directed against the supra(over)-natural, so too the confession of faith in Reason amounted to a rejection of the heteronomous determination of human action by supra-naturalistic teachings. And just as Nature encompassed sensoriality and the senses in all their dimensions, without, because of that, ceasing to command the reasonable (rational, sensible), so too Reason in Man encompassed his entire existence; this Reason did not have its Seat merely in the intellect, but it took root in very deep strata, and at least in the normal or ideal case was supposed to guide man with the safety and certainty of the natural instinct. Precisely this perception constitutes the great common denominator for the rest of the currents of the Enlightenment and of the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) or of Rousseauism, which one often regarded as an uprising against the Enlightenment, as harbingers of Romanticism. Because the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) loudly and emphatically asserted exactly the

taking root of the ethically-normatively understood reasonable (rational, sensible) in (human) nature, whilst at the same time the accusation of intellectualism against its opponents only arose because intellectualism was perceived in the ranks of the Enlightenment generally as an accusation. And conversely: no opponent of the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) or of Rousseauism accused them of irrationalism in the later pejorative sense, although many [[thinkers]] doubted whether under the presuppositions of the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]), the Enlightenment programme could be realised as a reconciliation of nature and culture. The organic common bond (togetherness or belonging together) of the philosophy of feeling[s] (or of sentiment[s]) and the Enlightenment *as* Enlightenment is shown and seen in the simple facts that the former started simultaneously with the Enlightenment movement, and that one of its first representatives, Shaftesbury, belonged to the most popular and most influential authors of the 18th century; Rousseau came, for his part, to the fore when very many classic works of Enlightenment thought had still not come out, i.e. been published. That is why already for chronological reasons, it appears to be impermissible to speak of a time (era) of dominance and domination by dry and stale Enlightenment rationalism, which was followed by a time (era) of feeling (or of sentiment) protesting against that dry and stale Enlightenment rationalism.

The rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality sparked off the conflict between [[what is]] causal and [[what is]] normative (between the causal element/dimension and the normative element/dimension). Logically, this conflict could be dealt with and gotten over, and indeed either by means of the abolition of the normative (this is what the nihilists did), or by way of the in principle separation of Is and Ought,⁹ or sensoriality (the senses) and Reason

⁹ As nihilists, La Mettrie more consistently than de Sade, who in turn was more consistent than Hume separating Is and Ought, who obviously felt he had to pull back hard from the full consequences of such a separation (see Kondylis, P., *Die Aufklärung...*).

(this was the path Kant went down). The mainstream of the Enlightenment could not and did not want, nevertheless, to accept both these consistent solutions: without the normative [[element or dimension]], the Enlightenment mainstream possessed nothing upon which it could prop (shore) up and support its social claim to leadership, whereas dualism not only entailed a resurrection of intellectualism, but would also make newly discovered (human) Nature as the source of norms unusable, and through that, possibly would enable or in fact make absolutely essential (necessary) a new reverting to the supra(over)-natural for the foundation of ethics. Were now the assumption, acceptance and defence of the (defined in terms of the Enlightenment) normative in the struggle against the theological opponent and against the ethics and (or) social organisation represented by such opponent absolutely necessary, then in this same struggle, causal explanation of processes and events in nature and society were just as little to be renounced and foregone; the causal was in fact investigated and summoned with the intention of making the arbitrary and imponderable interventions of God in whatever happens in the world (world becoming and world events) impossible and superfluous. The structure of the predominant Enlightenment concept of Nature, which has a causal as well as a normative aspect, illustrates this double necessity in the thought of the Enlightenment's mainstream. The interweaving of Is and Ought, or, causal and normative, could, nevertheless, not be looked upon as a completed fact, but as ontological design, arrangement and potentiality, or as a demand whose future realisation seemed to be guaranteed exactly by the "Nature of Things"; *hic et nunc* an, at any rate, "bad (evil or wicked)" reality dominated and ruled, that is, there was a chasm between Is and Ought which had to be overcome.

Therefore, and according to the concrete situation and the polemical needs on each and every occasion, at times, the causal, at other times, the normative aspect come to the forefront, which brought about new contradictions and new

strategies of bridging i.e. smoothing out [[such contradictions]]. This became noticeable and clear in the area of moral philosophy, in which the thesis of the naturalness of man was explicitly and emphatically supported in order to prove the teaching of Original Sin wrong, and simultaneously to underpin the anti-ascetic character of Enlightenment morals and morality, however in the process, the freedom of the will and consequently the capacity for moral action were at risk, in danger, together with the formerly sovereign and standing above mere nature, intellect, of being submerged and drowned; attempts at founding ethics on the concept of (Enlightenment) self-love and, through that, building a bridge between the natural and the reasonable (rational, sensible), remained therefore logically problematic and constantly fluctuating, vacillating between both limbs of the above-mentioned dilemma. Also, in the area of the philosophy of history, the conflict between causal and normative made its presence felt in the form of the contrast between the ascertainment that the mores, customs, manners, laws and norms of every people and every culture are dependent on material conditions and therefore relative, and the expectation that they can be influenced or even unified (and standardised) at the end of the historical process in the sense, and in terms, of universal values. The incessant fluctuations and vacillations between [[the]] causal and [[the] normative [[element, dimension]] under the pressure of the world-theoretical indispensable rehabilitation of sensoriality and the senses constitute an additional important reason for the content-related great variety of the Enlightenment or for the Enlightenment's one-dimensional interpretations' inadequacy.

From the perspective thus gained, the relationship of the Enlightenment with the *Revolution* must also be judged otherwise than before. Both on the revolutionary as well as the counter-revolutionary side, one was in the habit of deducing from a hypostatized or one-dimensionally comprehended Enlightenment a likewise hypostatized or one-dimensionally comprehended

Revolution, as if “the” Revolution had acted or behaved as a more or less true realisation of “the” programme of the Enlightenment. In reality, the Revolution constitutes a just as multi-layered and multifarious event as the Enlightenment itself, and there is no average or mean of Enlightenment ideas which would coincide, correspond or tally with the social content and programme of the Revolution; only more or less stable intersections of certain Enlightenment ideas and certain revolutionary currents are historically existent – intersections, incidentally, which were not from the outset in the form of programmatic positionings quasi certain and definite, but came about only during the course of the Revolution on and through various detours and roundabout ways. The perception that the Revolution was bourgeois because it had, of its result, been of use to the bourgeoisie, is based on an ultimately teleological way of looking at historical processes, and can neither explain the elementary peasant movement, as a result of which the bourgeoisie had to share its victory in France with the peasants, nor make clear and understandable the – before 1789 entirely unimaginable and inconceivable – political forms in their necessity, which followed the Ancien régime and destroyed it violently.

If the Revolution went according to the social-political notions of the bourgeois wing of the Enlightenment, then perhaps the Revolution on the night of 4 August 1789 would have concluded, since there was no place for Robespierre, Babeuf and even Napoleon. The Enlightenment had been for its part just as little as the Revolution “bourgeois” in toto, and it can be substantiated and proved that its most radical, which means materialistic manifestations, were highly suspicious of the great mass of the bourgeoisie and of the «philosophes» close to and sympathising the bourgeoisie, and these materialistic manifestations were rejected by the said «philosophes» out of reasons of principle as well as out of tactical reasons; the normativistically inclined materialists again gladly and loudly participated in the campaign

against the nihilistic materialists. If one keeps in mind the thus outlined heterogeneous overall picture, then from that one must conclude that Enlightenment thoughts and ideas during the revolutionary period were used rather selectively in those interpretations, which each and every respective situation of struggle, and all the respective settings of an aim (i.e. objectives), dictated. The great variety and multiformity of the Enlightenment intersected with the great variety and multiformity of the Revolution; however, in the course of this, what had an effect in pointing the way, was not the logic of the texts and of the ideas, but the logic of the struggle.

The multi-dimensional interpretation, which revolves around the axis of the Enlightenment main approach, that is, the rehabilitation of the senses and sensoriality, lets finally the long-term effects and impact of the Enlightenment in the history of ideas be apprehended properly and in their full breadth. The rehabilitation of sensoriality and the senses ended up in the dissolution first of all of the intellect, and then (of the autonomy) of the spirit, and this process manifested itself, found expression and was reflected again in the primacy of wanting (volition) and of praxis (practice) vis-à-vis thought and theory, as this was articulated by Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, the pragmatists etc. in a different way on each and every respective occasion. The concept of ideology in the sense of “false” consciousness could be formed only on the basis of the Enlightenment perception of the material bindedness and of the practical-end(goal-purposeful-expedient)-rational orientation of the human spirit(-intellect), whereas the discovery of the whole of culture by Enlightenment historiography and sociology cleared the way for modern social science and the science of history (historical science). As is known, all of this had as a consequence the ousting and displacement of the question of Truth absolutely posed, and at the same time, an intensification, sharpening and heightening of the typically Enlightenment conflict between [[what is/the]] causal and [[what

is/the]] normative; above all, the attempts at the founding of the teaching of values and of ethics had to suffer under such conflict, which [[= and such attempts]] had to constantly move between the Scylla of an increasingly empty emergent idealism, and the Charybdis of an increasingly oppressive and intolerable, unbearable emergent relativism.

An analysis of the legacy pertaining to the history of ideas of the Enlightenment from this point of view, of course, must leave behind not only the legend of the intellectualistic Enlightenment, but also the normativistic perception of the Enlightenment, which reduces the Enlightenment to normative-emancipatory positions. Nonetheless, it appears to be impossible that normativistic abridgements of the Enlightenment will in the future stop dominating the broad scene, irrespective of what scientific research unearths and brings to light. All too many philosophers and intellectuals understand and release and distribute their own thought on norms and on values as the continuation of a one-dimensionally interpreted Enlightenment, which they are in the habit of invoking as the higher or highest legitimising authority, whereas their opponents merely reverse the signs, i.e. symbolism. That is why the wrangle over the character and consequences of the Enlightenment will go on. Philosophical thought is of its essence no less political or polemical than political thought itself. The interpretation of the Enlightenment must, because of that, be just as much as the Enlightenment itself under the influence of politics and of polemics.

ⁱ It is always fascinating to observe the various ideological and or physical clashes within the West as the West was on the way to, or exercised, world domination, and grossly disproportionate accumulations of forms of power in its ((British, French,...) elites' and secondly, over time, its peoples') favour, incl. through "divide and conquer", and then compare such differentiations with the West's current (USA-led) state of "eating itself from within", as a parasitic caste featuring grossly disproportionate crystal(lisation)s of forms of Power, inter alia, "divides and rules" and, unintentionally or otherwise, plays its part into driving the West into spinning out of control, incl., one could say somewhat cartoonishly, through generalised ideological lobotomisation and a universal loss of sense of all proportionality,... into, over the course of the 21st century or longer: defeat and or anomic, catastrophe, chaos, darkness, oblivion [translator's footnote = **nothing to do with P.K.**].