

IDEOLOGY AND TRUTH: THE RETURN OF THE OLD COUPLE IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

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SUMMARY

The author argues that any discourse analysis, as well as other approaches in social sciences and humanities, cannot ultimately avoid the truth and ideology distinction. The first part of the article provides several glimpses at the Western philosophical tradition that preserves the value of truth. In the second part, an idea for political science, grounded in such a history of ideas, is sketched. After a brief discussion of what is ideology as opposed to truth, the author proposes a thesis about ideology, identity and power, and several heuristic ideas how to develop it. In the third part, he briefly provides examples from political and policy analysis that correspond to such a project. In the final part, he explains the importance of preserving the distinction between ideology and truth in the discursively postulated “post-truth” era. This combination of epistemology, science, analysis and teleology is reflected together in one political area of utmost importance for political science operating in the public sphere: the politics of naming.

KEY WORDS: ideology, truth, post-truth, discourse, power, identity, political science, politics of naming

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INTRODUCTION

ἐγὼ διδαχθεὶς ἐν κακοῖς...
Ὀρέστης

“I have suffered into truth...” (Aeschylus 1979, 243).¹ Thus speaks Orestes, recounting his experience from which he has learned when to speak and when to remain silent. The poetic English translation of the ancient Greek verse captures an epistemological tension which is not present in its literal rendition (“I have been thought through bad things...”).² A true insight is something associated with experience. The truth is learned through experience. It is revealed through it. Perhaps more often than not, the access to truth on a personal level involves suffering instead of a victorious bliss. It comes out of an “ordeal”, a word Orestes employs – at least in English translation.³

This experience, both ethical (“I am a new subject”) and epistemological (“I know something new”), may be timeless in the sense that human beings learn about themselves, others and the ways of the world, through personal tragedies and collective tribulations. Both philosophers and laymen still seek the truth on less ethereal or abysmal levels and express it in language: they speak and/or write to communicate it the others, more or less versed to assess it. Those scholars who are by definition focused on less noble levels of truth seeking, thinkers of society, sociologists and political scientists, often employ or have employed the words “discourse” and “ideology” in conveying their messages about the social and political world. The first word usually has something to do with conveying ideology or truth (“a discourse is true or infused with an ideology”), while the second is opposed to truth (“an ideology per definition is not the truth or the whole truth about things: it is a political position”).

This essay – acknowledging the discourse as a useful concept and its valuable usages and analysis – returns to the old couple of ideology and truth, as something more fundamental. It tries to clarify both concepts, and it tries to show how this distinction still makes sense and can still be applied analytically in politics, especially in the present times that are sometimes, in various media outlets, dramatically called a “post-truth

1 Verse 276 from *The Eumenides* (“The Kindly Ones”).

2 One version abbreviates this as “Schooled in misery...” (Scott n.d.). A bit funny but precise Croatian as well as Serbian translation of the English version which renders the epistemological tension might go: “Upatio sam u istinu...”

3 In the original it is not a Socratic βᾶσανος, a touchstone used to check the purity of an allegedly precious metal and an enduring metaphor for philosophical, judicial and religious ordeals, but simply πράγματα, i.e. things or the real stuff which is as consistent with the line of thought I develop in the essay.

era". Since I want to go beyond discourse, I have to be careful here. By "discourse" I mean a system of linguistic mechanisms that in the social sciences and humanities appears as a focus of analysis and an important operational concept. Even discourse analysis, driven by political or epistemological motivation, looks for an ideology in the texts. It says something about their political intent. It, so to say, identifies the political software behind or coded in the linguistic hardware of the text.⁴ It is the analysis that clarifies what is an ideology that serves power and implicitly what truth and possibilities lay behind the words serving power. In other words, after six years of academic teaching on the tenure track not to speak of many more years of research and assistantship leading to that – teaching about Foucault in the field of political ethics and about interpretive policy analysis and its tools, dealing with various discourses, stories and constructions in the realm of public policy – I gradually came to the position that after all is said and done on the formal level of a discourse analysis, there remains one fundamental question. The answer to that question is often eluded in a cruel, manipulative or obtuse way. The question is simple.

"Is this true or not?"

And then perhaps some qualificatory issues emerge such as "On which level?" and so on but the quest for the truth remains. To ironically paraphrase the introduction, I have suffered into this question from my academic experience. This leads me to the purpose of this mental exercise. I want to revive an old ethical tradition. The following section will associate it with Plato, while the conclusion will associate it with Aristotle, viz Alasdair MacIntyre as one of his prominent modern ("neo-Thomist") followers, interested in epistemological crises and the possibilities for political ethics in modernity (MacIntyre 1977; 2007; 2016). But I should here point out that the tradition is at least a bit older, more widespread and associated with civilizations beyond the Western one. For example, it is clearly articulated in the teachings of Confucius who was interested in the problem of true names present in *Cratylus* which I discuss below.

In the 13th book of the *Analects*, Master Kong claims, warning his disciples that civilized gentlemen should speak carefully: "If names are not rectified, then words are not appropriate. If words are not appropriate, then deeds are not accomplished. If deeds are not accomplished, then the rites and music do not flourish. If the rites and music do not flourish, then punishments do not hit the mark" (Confucius 2000, 49). There are right names and "aberrations". From the right names, the right words, the right deeds, the right mores and customs, and the just punishments follow. I.e. (music aside) a whole structure of authority in a polity, obvi-

4 This is roughly the metaphor van Dijk offers in his works, e.g. in his systematic treatise on ideology (van Dijk 1998).

ously associated with the distinction between truth and, in modern words, ideology. What the Analects want to say is that, conversely, if we turn all the names upside down and, consequently, live in a lie, a confusion ensues, political and moral, and a degradation of a polity. Names can conserve a tradition to a point and perhaps names can foster a new reality which makes them tools of politics. But if things or, obviously much more importantly, persons, living beings and their environment, history and future, are named wrongly, or oppressively, a public space may become a place of tyranny. This is the central issue of this essay. The politics of change or preservation of an order than becomes a political ethic of the truth.

The structure of the essay revolving around those motivations and issues is the following.

First, I provide several glimpses at the old tradition that affirms the notion of truth. The reader can think of it as a series of flashes that reveals it in some expected and some less expected places. Is it a big and implicitly political *ad hominem*? Do I want to say that these grand old men thought so and thus a little one can feel at ease when claiming the similar thing? Perhaps. However, beyond their authors being old and venerable, the reader will hopefully see that there is some content to it. There is an argumentation beyond mere proclamation.

Second, I turn to the notion of ideology. If something is not truth, but not exactly a lie, at least not a simple one, what it is and why? How does it work? After a short definitional game, delineating the concept, to explain its “why” I will offer a thesis. Here I will borrow from Pierre Bourdieu – whose work highlights the language games of power pervading the social field, associated with official and unofficial struggle for symbolic capital (Bourdieu 2001) but one must also remember Bourdieu was an experienced field sociologist who affirmed sociology in a non-relativistic way, i.e. he implicitly excluded science from the struggle.⁵ I will also offer heuristic guidelines to apply this thesis with some often misused notions such as “identity”, hinting to the “dialectics” of its change, associated with the interregnum, a state of the shaken or crumbling political orders in the divided societies permeated with ideological and identitarian struggles. Let’s say, somewhat pretentiously, that it’s the case of a special theory. The essence is quite simple: ideology – conveyed through discourse with its

5 There is an old paradox at work here, of a guy from Crete claiming that all Cretans lie. When we listen to him, he seems to exclude himself from the lot. Bourdieu is a bit similar. The struggle of naming is pervasive and political but of course, Bourdieu claims, as we should turn to engineers when we build or fix bridges, when we claim something about social life we should turn to sociologists who have *le savoir sur le monde social*. He employs yet another analogy claiming it’s a sociologist’s duty to intervene as a meteorologist should predict weather. If a meteorologist who can presage an avalanche, in Bourdieu’s metaphor, does nothing, he is no good (cf. Bourdieu 2000, 43–44).

nooks and crannies of language that speaks the truth but also deceives – is a function in the struggle for power of various identities. It serves those who speak. It has a purpose for them involved in the struggle. Groups, be it good or bad, sound or unsound, in the field of political naming claim that which fosters their power and expands their liberty or freedom, or what they think is a good life for them and others. This may be associated with truth beyond or in the realm of appearances but more often is not. (“A good economy, socialist or capitalist, may not produce results projected, political imposition of duties or system of rights might not lead to good life but to the destruction of the social.”)

Third, since I am a political scientist by formation and vocation, I provide a few crude examples in politics and public policy just to suggest how analysis on this basis could work in practice. These are but short elliptic illustrations of what one could do with the thesis and its corollaries analytically. That is: after some evocations in the history of ideas and a thesis in political science, an illustration of its application or perhaps a corroboration in politics and public policy is offered and I intentionally do it in a bit “undone” way, throwing ideas and hints how to do it (“The reader can apply the theses to explain one or more cases and autonomously reach epistemological and normative conclusions”). There is still science, and political science is not necessarily political in the narrow sense of a partisan bias if it tries to reach the truth and expose ideology.

Fourth and final, this leads me to the question of purpose. In an attempt to provide an answer, I bring together the concern for the true names and the question of truth in analysis with some familiar republican motives that are skeptical to the project of liberalism focused exclusively on the negative concept of liberty as a right to say no or extract a particular benefit from the state. In the end, I cannot suggest that there is reason for optimism – the question of optimism or pessimism of truth preservation is an empirical one – but this teleological framework appealing to practical wisdom is decent enough to preserve the truth as a presupposition for any workable teleology. It provides for a fair game of a common public vocabulary and values against particular interests and the tiresome language games of manipulative discourses. It is an ethical call for the value of the truth in the so-called post-truth era where the true speech is often replaced with a bonfire of ideological manipulation.

A HISTORY OF TRUTH? SOME GLIMPSES AT THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

Cratylus, Plato’s famous dialogue about language and naming, is one of the initial intriguing places where the story about truth can be found, some-

where near the very beginnings of Western philosophy as we know it. It is of less importance if the particular ancient Greek etymologies offered in the dialogue, implying that the names convey some original or essential truth about things not readily present, are true or a joke: one might accept the positions of Cratylus, a naturalist, or Hermogenes, almost a de Saussurean conventionalist, or, most probably, on a practical level reach a nuanced position between the two extremes as good enough to go on with life in language. This is not of central importance here. However, there is a place in dialogue where Socrates does not seem to jest, even if he speaks hypothetically (which probably, as usual, makes the underlying power of logic more convincing). It's his critique of the sophists, economically or politically motivated relativist manipulators of the day. If everyone has his own truth, it is not possible to divide folly from wisdom. Consequently, wisdom becomes impossible: "And if, on the other hand, wisdom and folly are really distinguishable, you will allow, I think, that the assertion of Protagoras can hardly be correct. For if what appears to each man is true to him, one man cannot in reality be wiser than another" (Plato n.d., 386c).

This *partage de la folie*, as Foucault had it in his inaugural Nietzschean Collège de France lecture (pointing to the division between reason and madness as one of the procedures governing discourse in the West), here serves as the basis of ethics. Ethics is grounded in the knowledge of the truth. And rightly so. If there is no truth about things on some level, there is no basis for ethics and, one might build further in the normative sphere of collective life, good politics. We might call "true" those statements about things that are not such, or accept madness, but this relativism or manipulation might not be the best political course even if it can in exceptional cases serve as a gate to the higher truth. N.B. that practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*) in the same dialogue is associated with the right perception of motion and flux and temperance (*σωφροσύνη*) with the preservation of wisdom in such circumstances (Plato n.d., 411d-412c), but even these and many more etymological insights into the (diano)ethical virtues do not carry the point important for us here. As the finishing skeptical bit of the dialogue has it, pitting the doctrine of ideas against the Heraclitean flux of things eliminating the possibility of any permanent knowledge (and perhaps language itself as the place of truth): "This may be true, Cratylus, but is also very likely to be untrue" (Plato n.d., 440d). It is the very possibility of a true discourse that is affirmed prior to this, which is to be reached via process of reflection and not by an un-critical assent to the externally offered onomata and their accompanying language games and practices: "no man of sense will like to put himself or the education of his mind in the power of names: neither will he so far trust names or the givers

of names as to be confident in any knowledge which condemns himself and other existences to an unhealthy state of unreality” (Plato n.d., 440c).

Perhaps there are no shortcuts in the process of thinking leading to the truth, but I hope some shortcuts are allowed in the presentation of the history of thought. For the purposes of this essay, we may skip the stoical contemplations and theological orientation of philosophy in medieval times. At the dawn of the modern age, renaissance and classicism, philosophy may still speak in a theological idiom but its epistemological discussions turn secular. There are many interesting contextual problems here – whether the metaphysics of the day shapes politics or it’s the other way around (Sunajko 2015) – but it’s beyond the scope of this essay. In any case, it’s not the higher transcendental truth of God or his immanence in the world we are dealing with but the truth of things or ideas. If it’s not of things and existence, or of quantity or number, as Hume formulated his fork dividing theoretical and empirical knowledge, the discourse should go to the flames “for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion” (Hume 1999, 211). We thus formally enter the epistemological modernity and shake off the religious and metaphysical excesses from above.

Although one might speak about the critique of idols by Bacon, and dig into more pragmatic down-to-earth British tradition of philosophy, Descartes is an obvious reference if we rewind history a bit from Hume and seek an exemplary topos of the epistemological modernity even if it’s still clad in the language of God. To simplify a bit, Descartes’ thought is directed against the swamp of theology and *disputatio* as a traditional Jesuit method of arrival to the truth. Throwing different opinions on the subject is interesting but one is soon fed up and not feeling any smarter. The path is needed. A method. Descartes’ specific claim of our interest here is simple and seems logical as Plato’s “either or” from above. If there are two persons with different judgment on the same thing, claims Descartes, at least one is wrong, as he elaborates within his second rule of method.⁶ “At least one” (*l’un des deux au moins*) is witty and insightful, of course, as is the aphoristic procedural continuation from the actually published *Discourse on method*: experienced lawyers (*longtemps bons avocats*) are not, for that reason, better judges (*meilleurs juges*) (Descartes 2000, 104–105). The argument again slides into ethics – from logics to the good practice of production of the truth – and it might seem that, contra Hume, many philosophers interested in the good life thought that there are ways to derive ought from is.

The final example corroborates this position. I have chosen it because at the same time it’s contemporary enough and offers an interpretation of

6 Or, *toutes les fois que deux hommes portent sur la même chose un jugement contraire, il est certain que l’un des deux se trompe* (Descartes 1826).

one of the alleged fountainheads of relativism, Nietzsche, specifically his essay on truth and lie in an extra-moral sense (Nietzsche n.d.). Bernard Williams is interested in the concept of truthfulness.⁷ His final book *Truth and Truthfulness* claims: “The concept of truth itself – that is to say, the quite basic role that truth plays in relation to language, meaning, and belief – is not culturally various, but always and everywhere the same” (Williams 2002, 61). The statement is detonated in the middle of nowhere of the book like a bomb, coming from a sort of a once closeted Nietzschean who offered a Hobbesian interpretation of Nietzsche. Truth has no history, claims Williams. But what does he mean?

First, let's take care of Nietzsche. It's a harder nut to crack from the position of truth. In the said essay, he claims each and every thing is different. World is a set of different things. However miniscule these differences are, there are no two completely similar things. Language erases such differences. Using that same vehicle, as all nominalists do in their discussions, Nietzsche claims we forget the differences in the formation of concepts. There are no two same snowflakes, even no two same leaves (the latter is Nietzsche's example) but we still use the same word to refer to them. Nietzsche's poetry enters the story. Our nervous stimuli become encoded in words. We produce concepts as the spiders spin their webs. We engulf the world in metaphors and his picture of truth emerges as a mobile army of metaphors and other figures of language through which we refer to the world. Columbarium of concepts, graveyard of perceptions are some of the figures which emerge in Nietzsche's poetic and aphoristic style.

So far so good. As Platonic agents in a Heracliteian flux of things, we use the words of language as approximation to depict, according to convention, this set of human relations we metaphorically represent. Truth is a map, not the territory itself. We're fine with it and we might add a tidiness of method, following the precepts of the so-called French idealism as formulated by Descartes. However, an ethical dilemma then arises for Nietzsche, the question of will, will to truth as Nietzsche calls this in paragraph 344 of the *Gay Science* (Nietzsche, 1887a). It's an ethical choice. Science as a truth producing activity appears there as a sort of prudence or utility to protect ourselves. Why (such) morality? – Nietzsche asks further, being a philosopher, when nature and history are immoral (he lives in the century of Hegel and Darwin). Why keep the faith in truth which he equates with both Christianity and Plato, and which corresponds to our short history

7 The concept renders itself more or less easily into French as *véracité* or in German as *Wahrhaftigkeit*. There are some dilemmas if one wants to translate it to Croatian and Serbian: *iskrenost* corresponds to *sincerity*, *autentičnost* to *authenticity*, and *istinost* to the truth-value of a statement. Perhaps *istinoljubivost*, equivalent to German *Wahrheitsliebe*, could go, but I leave it to the linguists, being lucky to write this in English.

here, affirming truthfulness? (A Humean would perhaps ask: Why derive an ought at all?) We after all live in a world of overpowering, dominating, reinterpretation, and generally nasty politics. In the world of genealogy, as Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* argues (Nietzsche 1887b).

Williams' answer is simple, albeit all the labels from the history of the political theory I will throw at the reader. Hobbesian interpretation of Nietzsche means that one can affirm both Descartes and Nietzsche and be sort of a Cartesian Machiavelli.⁸ Truth is the correspondence of words and things and we may chose it or discard it. If we choose it, we are truthful. We choose truthfulness. This has a history. Williams tries to show a normative logic of this with a thought experiment, with a just-so evolutionary story. This is the style of analytic philosophy such as Nozick's. There is a state of nature and the statements that are sincere and accurate pay off in a social setting if we want to avoid perdition alike to a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* scenario. We may save ourselves from a bear attack if we shout "bear" when we see one and we may learn from the past when we read a truthful history. Thucydides is for Williams the father of history, since he introduces these values in the activity of writing history: accuracy, sincerity and non-mythical time. History becomes rational, emancipated from mythical consciousness. Is that bad?

Perhaps, as Nietzsche notes in one of his innumerable jottings, there are no facts as such but interpretations.⁹ The old meanings and purposes are obliterated as he claims in the *Genealogy of Morality*. Any political subject can see that (and that is also one of the reasons why Foucault is an unorthodox historian). But there is, together with that statement, a truth about changing nature of certain facts. Many facts moreover, especially in human affairs. That is the point of genealogy. It is politics, one of a willful power or of a reflected choice. Nietzsche offers us a true discourse, a poetic hypothesis, and his metaphysical self even speculates in a revelation about the eternal return since to all these permutations (of facts) there might be an end and thus a repetition of the same.¹⁰ Truth is preserved both in Nietzsche and his interpreter Williams.

8 I owe the phrases "Cartesian Machiavelli" and "closeted Nietzschean" to James Miller. He taught about Williams in a seminar *Truth, Deception, & Self-Deception in Politics, Philosophy, & the Media* at the New School in the Fall semester 2017. As the usual disclaimer goes, the acknowledged influence does not imply any responsibility whatsoever for the content or the style of the essay.

9 Nietzsche frames the statement as a critique of positivism: *gerade Tatsachen gibt es nicht, nur Interpretationen* (Nietzsche 1887c). We create hypotheses about the world.

10 This thought is present already in Blanqui's writings, as Benjamin noticed, "ten years before Zarathustra – in a manner scarcely less moving than that of Nietzsche, and with an extreme hallucinatory power" (Benjamin 2002, 25). Be it said also that the central thought of Nietzsche's genealogy also precedes him: it is present in the 38th chapter or Cervantes'

The claim seems to be, in this tradition I glimpsed at, however elliptically, that there are truth claims (“Plato”), that multiple contradictory “truths” about same things on the same level are not possible (“Descartes”), that relativism undermines itself and is unethical on some level (“Plato”, “Descartes”, “Williams”), and very likely politically harmful (I leave a tiny bit of Aristotle, conveyed through MacIntyre, for the end section). Folly may lead to a higher insight, persisting in the falsity may reveal the truth, and an unethical conduct may lead to a higher good (as providence works in Victor Hugo’s novels). There are, in other words, many more thinkers in the tradition of Western philosophy, epistemology and political thought: Foucault underneath one of his masks, epistemologists and historians of science such as Kuhn and Feyerabend, and various political thinkers be it Adam Smith for economy or Charles Lindblom for politics. They would offer a more nuanced picture. My idea in this section is not to offer a strict and simplified Popperian morality play (“Always strive to falsify, be a stern puritan in science and a careful piecemeal engineer in politics”). But nuances wouldn’t change the core of the story. The fundamental stakes are important: there is truth. Every time we speak, we acknowledge it. And we should care for it. If we ignore it as such, this may arguably lead to discord, peril and decay or at least such are hypotheses offered by the prophets and religious teachers above, in their basic form of the empirical truth-claims.

Perhaps there is a big Platonic theme to be elaborated on here, associated with the claim that there is no justice without the access to the truth. The importance of the truth may also work for various ethical and practical systems such as the one of conquest or mercy beyond the political ethics of liberalism of individual rights but such themes would demand several volumes beyond these cryptic remarks. I’ll thus content myself with a more modest claim. Discourse can (and should) convey the truth. This is one of its functions. If something, conveyed in a discourse, is not truth and also not a simple lie, falsity, poetry or meaningless gibberish, and refers to political life, then it’s very probably ideology. And ideologies differ. People offer different political stories bringing them into conflict. The next sections offers a thesis about how to deal with that. It does so from the vantage point of political science which is in reality often closer to a partisan advocate than to reasonable judge, even less to a methodical scientist, but should ideally aspire to the latter roles. If there is truth, why do people speak ideologically and what to do with it? This is not the terrain of philosophy but of political science.

Don Quixote where science speaks there would be no weapons without it but the weapons respond that without guarding of the peace with weapons there would be no science. It’s both a Hobbesian thesis and a Foucauldian insight.

IDEOLOGY, IDENTITY AND POWER: AN “EXTENSION OF THE DOMAIN OF STRUGGLE”

What is ideology?

The interesting narratives tracing the history of the concept from de Tracy and Napoleon via Marx and Engels to this day are not important here. Nor shall I enter into an analysis of the specific ideological positions as various readers and textbooks do, with a focus on ideologies in plural and the “*content* of political thought” (Heywood 2017, 4). There is the usual spatial metaphor of left and right, with a history of more or less changing content under those labels; there are anvils and spectra with multiple dimensions, and other conceptual tools that present and typify ideologies making them easier to grasp (cf. Heywood 2017, 16–17). These are also beyond the scope here. All that aside, beneath the discursive fuzz and massive literature on the topic, ranging from ideology critique to a more relativistic sociology of knowledge, it is a concept that is not that hard to grasp even if usual works on the topic often start with about dozen of different definitions, which is similar to Geertz’s line-up of the definitions of culture at the beginning of his probably most famous book (Geertz 1973). I shall give it a try and then typify it along few lines to get some additional contours.

Let’s take a look at few definitions. For Kent Tedin, ideology refers to a set of attitudes which means ideology has cognitive, affective and motivational components (Tedin 1987). It may have elements of truth which can, in Popperian sense, be falsified, but it is both moral and political: it moves the subjects and gives them sense of political right and wrong. Ravlić’s definition accentuates this. For him, ideology is “a set of political ideas and values which are made for human orientation and action in an infinitely complicated political world” (Ravlić 2012, 355–356).¹¹ This set of ideas that explains, evaluates and orients an actor, programming his or her action, can also be associated with a simple scheme, a tripartite model of “freedom (or liberty)” which consists of agent, obstacle and goal: the point is that each ideology inscribes them with their own political content (Ball et al. 2017, 2–3). That means that different practices of naming and ideological signification in the history of political polarizations call to action (it’s an interpellation, in Althusser’s terms) different actors that fit into various more or less sound, convincing, comprehensive and coherent stories about goals and obstacles between them and freedom or liberty or some other kind of politically defined good. For Heywood, who claims that “[a]ll people are political thinkers”, the concept refers to the world-views professed by that

11 ... skup političkih ideja i vrijednosti koje su upravljene za ljudsko orijentiranje i djelovanje u beskrajno složenom političkom svijetu.

political people, with their visions of good society and some implicit or explicit theory of change to reach that preferred end; ideology is, in its relation to power, a “[m]ore or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power” (Heywood 2017, 1, 10).

Several further observations may be added to this framework. It is for example not hard to agree with Eagleton that ideology is “most effective when invisible” (Eagleton 2007, xvii), since some are blind to what is obvious to others, although ideology can and does become visible when named as such by others, Eagleton included, often in ideological struggles. I obviously agree with Eagleton that concept is not to be abandoned (Eagleton 2007, xxi). Eagleton also (beyond being unhappy with Mannheim’s approach as unilluminating), adds some other useful and more or less witty remarks such as: “Ideology, like halitosis, is in this sense what the other person has”, or “Ideology is a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context”; furthermore, when associating ideology with power, he rightly claims that all conflicts between persons are not ideological, he sees it as a more useful concept than myth, and points out that ideologies have “effects *within* discourses” (cf. Eagleton 2007, 2, 5, 8, 9, 109–110, 188, 194). This is all of course helpful and to it one might add that ideologies of endism are themselves ideological (Heywood 2017, 325) and that, if that is a parallel with religious figures of thinking (ideological endisms reflecting religious eschatologies), it is certainly not the only structural similarity. Ideologies can easily be seen as secular versions of religious doctrines with their prophets, anointed collective, judgment days, heavens and hells. As Bertrand Russell long ago noticed in his *History of Western Philosophy*, Marxism has a similar structure to Judeo-Christian religious narrative: dialectical materialism equals Yahweh, Marx equals messiah etc. (cf. Gray 2018, 31). But my point is not, at least not here, to explore their temporality or psychological appeal. More important for the discussion is the fact that specific ideologies often fit different contents into the basis-superstructure theorizing usually associated with some currents of Marxism: e.g. class, race, nation, sex, gender serve as the bases of cultural production in different (often ideological) ideology critiques. However, as Carl Schmitt leaves the basis of political relation empty in terms of identifying a specific distinction that can serve as the basis for political contest, we must abstract here as well.

Consequently, various definitions of ideology – in the familiar trope of introductory scare-lists, Heywood offers only 9 definitions in comparison to Eagleton’s 16 – should be discarded or understood as very specific theories insofar as they point to the specific bases of ideology such as economical structure of society. As Geertz put aside the various definitions of

culture in order to define ethnography as an interpretive science searching for meaning, so the theorizing about specific bases of ideology should be replaced with a more general theory pointing to power. This means, in the end of this short review of literature about ideology, that the most succinct definition that I have found is at the same time the best one: ideology is meaning in the service of power (Thompson 1984).¹² The question is then: for whom does it work? The question may sound simplistic, archaic, not-at-all-structuralist but it is still the right question since “structures” in a given setting also work for the concrete people which yield power over other people however their identities and conceptions might have been formed. In the end of this short review of literature about ideology, we can thus hear the echo of the above question about the truth:

“Whom does this serve?”

It is not truth but ideology and it works for someone. But how does the process usually look? Before finally laying down the thesis that suggests where and how to search for the answer to this simple question, I only need to link this view of ideology with the motif of politics of naming. Ideology produces political names. Bourdieu is a theorist both of power and the struggle for names and normative categories. His political sociology is well known and is not to be expounded here. Social fields, forms of capital, habitus of an actor in a social field, search for distinction and so on: in that dynamic setting, names are not fixed. Bourdieu is right when he asserts that battle for names is pretty pervasive in society. His thinking is a continuation of the old French tradition of thought that warns about politics of naming. In the realm of ideology, Sartre was right: To speak is to act, and things which we name have lost their innocence.¹³ And it is not only French tradition, associated with the political Left. Sensibility for the politics of language is widespread: “In politics, words and their usage are more important than any other weapon”, warns Koselleck, a German historian of concepts (Koselleck 1968, 57) who, in his *Begriffsgeschichte*, traced historical changes of language as well as semantics of revolutions and crises (cf. Kursar and Tomičić 2014).

However, Bourdieu goes a step further which is important here. To reiterate, he is quite explicit about pervasiveness of this struggle. We need names to work for us. Everyone. Every civil society activist as every lawyer in a court of law and every social human being in a struggle for the definition of the situation, knows this. This is a process that appears both in

12 Veyne uses the following metaphor that can make such a broad concept more vivid: ideology refers to “the relationship between the paper money of words and the gold depository of power” (Veyne 1988, 80).

13 *Parler c’est agir : toute chose qu’on nomme n’est déjà plus tout à fait la même, elle a perdu son innocence* (Sartre 1948, 27).

public and private settings, it's formal and informal: there is no social agent who does not try to attempt to do this – to create a world that is more convenient for him or her by naming (ideologically).¹⁴ This is the meaning of the above claim that all people are political thinkers even if they do not reflect too much. And, to remind the reader, Bourdieu's position is that at least in the social world, words can make things.¹⁵ They can change things and perhaps even the world. Even truth needs power or force to back it up, as Bourdieu often claimed,¹⁶ which adds another paradoxical layer—not only on his sociology, but also on Williams' philosophy and this text defending the truth using both of them.¹⁷

The things in the world are framed as something by ideology: this enables some actors and restricts others. To refer to economy, evolutionary biology or some other paradigm in search for an explanation why and how people produce such names would be very interesting but I feel it's a task for another scientist who would search for specifics. To answer the question of who does it and why, and how does this work, I'll stick with the generality of power that is so dear to political science. With the title of the section, in any case I want to suggest that this process – ideology production associated with identity and power – goes broadly and that ideologi-

14 *Il n'est pas d'agent social qui ne prétende, dans la mesure de pouvoir de nommer et de faire le monde en le nommant: ragots, calomnies, médisances, insultes, éloges, accusations, critiques, polémiques, louanges, ne sont que la petite monnaie quotidienne des actes solennels et collectifs de nomination, célébrations ou condamnations, qui incombent aux autorités universellement reconnues* (Bourdieu 2001, 155).

15 *Quand il s'agit du monde social, les mots peuvent faire les choses* (Bourdieu 2001, 328). From Schmitt's perspective (that political concepts are secularized religious concepts), this is but a secular variant of God creating the world with words (Gen 1 & John 1,1 but also many other less conspicuous places than the very beginnings such as Ps 33,6). From a religious perspective, both in Christianity and Islam where Adam gives names to the things in the world this is an ability taught by God. Although there are differences in Christian and Muslim tradition (where Adem informs the angels or the *malaikah* about the names) as well as between Hobbes' view on language and Hegel's *Majestätsrecht* or the authority to name given to the first man, it seems that self-naming (*sebe-imenovanje*) is a sin in the religious tradition in contrast to Hobbes and Hegel (cf. Pavić 2007, 95–96, 102). This also opens normative questions about the diversity and dissent of names problematized in the creation myths: is it a good thing, a projected station in providential eschatology of suffering and salvation, contributing to the richness of the world, or a punishment for vanity of falling from God's proto-language bestowed upon Adam?

16 He correctly associated this with Spinoza: *Je ne cesse de répéter la formule de Spinoza, 'il n'y a pas de force intrinsèque de l'idée vraie'* (Bourdieu 2000, 68). This, of course, opens the big question of interchangeability of true and right in various languages and various etymologies of the word "truth" which I cannot explore here but I should say that I don't think the results would alter the argument significantly.

17 I should remind of the simple solution for this paradox: "truth is out there", but truthfulness – our attitude – is in the realm of ethics and politics. This also explains the "post-truth" era as an ethical and political problem, not an epistemological novelty.

cal struggle is pervasive.¹⁸ So, finally, the thesis (1) and its accompanying heuristics (2–6):

- 1) *Ideology is a function in the struggle for power of different collective identities.* There are different bases that can serve to constitute a political collective. The political collectives produce meaning based on their current identity. Individuals and groups prefer names that better their positions and ensure hegemony. Naming is in that sense a function of power. If symbolic power is power to constitute something, a “quasi-magic”, according to Bourdieu,¹⁹ it needs mobilization of force, propaganda or democratic power in the Arendtian sense.
- 2) *Identities are composite.* Economic, social, ethnic, national, sexual and so on. Some or all of this makes someone’s complex political identity, especially when associated with one’s personal trauma and hardship. It is not only economy or a nation or one’s sexuality in a concrete case. It is the composition of this and the corresponding life experiences that make individuals and then groups different in comparison to others which opens the potential for the political conflict and serves as the basis for ideological production.²⁰
- 3) *Identities are not fixed.* At least in the long run. There is a dialectic of particular and universal at work in politics and history. Formation of identity is associated with collectives, sometimes with particular and exclusive ones but often with universal projects and their legitimation. Languages, wars, revolutions, crises and the bases above: they all have a say. People accept political ideas, enter into the struggle, win or lose. Nothing is fixed, be it good or bad. In the realm of natural history, organisms that were, now are extinct. In the realm of human history, religions, empires, nations, federations, states even more so. They have a shorter time span. Not to speak of political identities of today.
- 4) *Ideology and eschatology are a function of biopolitics.* I want to claim that the function of ideology is to promote or stop certain forms of

18 The reference is to the title of the first Houellebecq’s novel, *Extension du domaine de la lutte*, which could not be translated into English literally, at least by the publisher’s criteria applicable to the translation of the titles of the novels of the new and then relatively obscure French writers (the novel’s title was translated as: *Whatever*). The novel has an essayistic insert on sexual competition independent of the economic one, with its sexually mostly unsuccessful protagonist ending up in nihilism and madness, which is reflected in the writing that becomes chaotic.

19 *Le pouvoir symbolique comme pouvoir de constituer le donné par l’énonciation, de faire croire... pouvoir quasi magique* (Bourdieu 2001, 210).

20 Family and upbringing tend to be important. George Lakoff, a cognitive linguist and a political liberal in American sense, accentuates this (Lakoff 2002).

life. Power is another name for that: forms of life that impose themselves on each other or on nature. I shall abstain from discussing power in any detail, even if it is a key concept in the long history of political science. It has convincingly been done elsewhere, be it Hobbes or Rousseau, Schmitt, Habermas or Foucault, Neumann or Arendt in political philosophy and theory, Lasswell in his policy sciences, Weber, Parsons or Lukes in (political) sociology. Every political science and public policy primer has to say something on it and I have written about elsewhere (Petković 2017, 233–297), and there is no reason to repeat that here. Let me only say that, traditionally and historically, individuals or groups of humans constituted on various not at all fixed criteria tend to like power and want to expand it, even if it's destructive for them and others (and it often is). To impose one's will against others, wherever this ability may stem from, is one of the old and still valid traits of power, as Weber had it. It is the analytically delineated "power over" of Marx and Weber against the political and social "power to" of Rousseau and Parsons (of non-problematic collectivities). By referring to Foucauldian and later Agambenian biopower or sometimes biopolitics²¹ – throwing it like a bomb here, seemingly *ex nihilo* – I want to associate power with human life: collectives renew life or fail to do so. Eschatology, an old religious and theological term, referring to the doctrine about the end of times has its secular variants: ideologies often speak about their ideal final state. It is often a vision of ideal life at the end of history.

- 5) *Intensity of the struggle for names is a measure of the weakness of power.* Decadence of power reflects itself in the chaos of naming. When a power struggle is open, a contest for names emerges. If political order is unstable, this is marked by the battle of naming. It rages up to the constitution of parallel languages in a society. A singular symbolic power is shaken. There is no centrality but factions. The conflict becomes horizontal. Various factions often try to employ state apparatus to enforce their names. Penal symbols and practices are especially important in this struggle: we do not

21 Foucault conducts the analyses of liberalism in his lectures *The Birth of Biopolitics* with the help of concepts such as *régime de vérité qui partage le vrai et le faux* and *dispositif de savoir-pouvoir*, i.e. the very mechanism that is introduced in political economy is the criterion of truth (e.g. the free market). He does not make use of the concept of ideology. He rejects it. It's another language game – a play with words from the perspective taken here. In any case, contrary to some simplifications, Foucault does not refuse the concept of ideology as such, even in his earlier *The Archeology of Knowledge* and makes use of it in his analysis of biopower in the sense employed here, in his earlier lectures *Society Must Be Defended* (e.g. racism as ideology).

only want to fight those who wield the wrong and dangerous names, we want to punish them from the position of authority. Struggle for the limits of public language that channels itself in private venues and interaction of society is part of the struggle for power (revolutionary discourse may, on the contrary, start in private spaces and turn public).

- 6) *Ideology may not be important for life.* This may come as an anti-climax but it is a good way to think about the politics of naming and human life. Like in Jurassic Park which is, of course, not about dinosaurs but about American culture and families as well as any given Spielberg Movie (except perhaps Schindler's List): Life finds a way. Ideology must serve an emergent force helping power but it may also be a symptom of waning power. Life may supersede it. This is one of the lessons of the new (natural) history. (Alternatively, one can think about this "thesis six" not from the perspective of Hollywood films but from literature: the endings of Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace* may offer a clue.)

The next step is to show what to do with this set of ideas. Certainly, in further analytical work one should draw the precise coordinates of existing ideological divides to accompany this position. The existing systems and schemata and their application often demonstrate a bias in naming (e.g. "liberal" not only today and not without some historical ironies, often means an intervention in society and imposition of tax, punishment and language, not the freedom from the tyranny of the state). Various dimensions are often lumped together, usually of economic issues and the so called morality policies, often in an unilluminating and manipulative way. But this would mean to enter into specific content which I cannot do here. The next section will instead discuss the possibility of application of these theses in the analysis on few illustrative examples.

POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY: SOME EXCESSES IN PARTISANSHIP AND IDEOLOGICAL VOCABULARIES

Let's take a look at the first case. It's a piece of engaged text entitled "Letter from a trans man to the old sexual regime" which addresses the readers as "Ladies and Gentlemen, and everybody else". It claims the following:

Since the sexual and anti-colonial revolution of the past century shook their world, the hetero-white-patriarchs have embarked on a counter-reformation project—now joined by "female" voices wishing to go on being "importuned and bothered". This will be a 1000-year war—the longest of all wars, given that it will affect the politics of reproduction and processes through which a human body is socially constituted as a sovereign subject.

It will actually be the most important of all wars, because what is at stake is neither territory nor city, but the body, pleasure, and life (Preciado 2018).

The author, a New School alumni Paul Preciado, explains that he is “not talking here as a man belonging to the ruling class, the class of those who are assigned the male gender at birth” and he describes himself in the following terms: “I was a Lesbian for most of my life, then trans for the past five years. I am as far removed from your aesthetics of heterosexuality as a Buddhist monk levitating in Lhasa is from a Carrefour supermarket”.

Beyond the playful juxtaposition of consumerism and Buddhism, three things should probably be noted. First, obviously, it is a piece of ideology, not a truth statement. Second, by its tone, its echoes Engels’ Elberfeld speeches which call capitalism a brutal war of all against all and call for a revolution which will be bloodiest of all wars (and then peace will ensue). However, it would probably be completely non-intelligible to Engels, not because it appears almost 175 years later, but because it places the struggle in another domain and seeks a political solution. It shows that sexuality and reproduction are ideological by the very fact that some can politicize them as such. Third, it thus illustrates the extension of the domain of struggle. I have chosen it because it may fit easily into all the six theses above if a reader gives it a thought.

If this dimension of the political phenomenon is called politics as a struggle for power by the means of ideology in contrast to truth (ideology among other means of politics), the two other dimensions, polity and policy are as political even if they do not include calls for revolution or war as extreme forms of political struggle “continued by other means”. They are politics in this perspective – constitutions with their language and values are domain of struggle as are strategies, programs, measures, their implementation and evaluation. Contemporary public policies (as are constitutions and laws) are politics in the sense of irrational maneuvering space, opposed to *Schimmel*, “mildew”, a metonymy Mannheim uses in *Ideology and Utopia* to denote other part of the distinction – mere technical administration and its suffocating bureaucratic documents. This leads me to the second set of examples that shows how public policy is ideological.

The perspective on public policies as an area of the political struggle for definitions of the problem is classically explored in Deborah Stone’s *Policy Paradox* (Stone 2011). It provides both entertaining and meticulous analysis of goals, numbers and stories about causes of problems in public policy as an area of ideological contestation. The possible illustrations are almost innumerable. There is now a long tradition in public policy research that discusses the social construction of target populations claiming – *quelle surprise* – that beneficial policies target “powerful, positively viewed groups” while “punishment policies” are applied to the

“negatively constructed” (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 337). To evoke that tradition here is not to criticize its ideological operations and the insertion of ideology where the truth and value judgments can be reached (“To say constructed as something is similar to the claim ‘Discourse is such and such’: it puts the truth-question in the brackets”). My interest is in its focus on these issues in the situation of a strong “partisan polarization” where “mixed, divided social constructions” appear, especially in the case of refugees “with some viewing them as courageous people escaping from horrendous conditions to make a better life for their families, and others viewing them as fraudulent criminals who will sneak into the country and commit crimes” (Schneider and Ingram 2018, 16).

The “moralistic” policy designs appear which “enable the majority party to open public debate on moral issues in terms favorable their image, place restrictions on the rights of groups aligned with the other side of the issue, and promote a social construction of ‘shame, unworthiness, immoral’ on such groups” (Schneider and Ingram 2018, 26). In other words, in public policy, we can observe politics – an old process of who gets what, when and how, with conflicts which become worse since the battle of names (“the propensity to rely on oversimplified stereotypes, labels, and emotional appeals is clearly visible”) has intensified leading Schneider and Ingram to diagnose a “degenerative democracy” which is “characterized by over-subscription of benefits to the ‘advantaged,’ oversubscription of punishment to ‘deviants,’ neglect of the weak, and extensive deception as the parties work to make themselves look good (Ibid., 27). To be sure, this does not work only for Arizona, or some other American state but obviously has more general connotations for the policy processes in the West. Degenerative democracy is another name for a polity of a post-truth era.

To illustrate this further, one can take any contentious policy issue in divided societies with possible patterns of degenerative democracy. Abortion is usually taken as a crown-example. Take for example the operation of naming in a narrative offered in MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*:

Murder is wrong. Murder is the taking of innocent life. An embryo is an identifiable individual, differing from a newborn infant only in being at an earlier stage on the long road to adult capacities and, if any life is innocent, that of an embryo is. If infanticide is murder, as it is, abortion is murder. So abortion is not only morally wrong, but ought to be legally prohibited (MacIntyre 2007, 7).

It’s easy to contrast this “pro-life” position with a “pro-choice” one: any feminist legislation proposal will frame the issue as the question of reproductive rights and medical issue, demand the cost coverage of the procedure from the public health system if there is such, and probably add a bit on the voluntary sterilization at public expense. The reader can rest: I will not enter into the content in this controversial case. The truth is there for

the reader to reach. The point of these examples is not to show the obvious – that there is at least a little Fouquier-Tinville in most of us, the “political thinkers” ready to call a nun a criminal assassin (and maybe vice-versa). Various groups involved in the policy process, as the above letter and virtually any political commentary on an internet site and various communique issued by the opposed ideological factions of civil society, could probably be analyzed with good results with the above 1–6 schema.

The point is rather normative, to prepare us for the last section. Since true statements can be issued clearly on this and other cases given the state of knowledge, it should be done so, as should various valuations then be given clearly. It is exactly the truth that makes a choice hard and thus responsible, not the manipulation of frames that leads to pointless struggles. Each reader can do the exercise in the cases and thus see what is at stake. In the conclusion I will underline how my motivation is normative, not a “positivist” affirmation, as in some straw-man versions, of a frog-eye reflection of the easily observable facts that could be associated with “the truth”. But the readers will easily notice that, even if I have convinced them and they have accepted the old call for truth and perhaps some suggested theses for an ideology analysis, they do not have to subscribe to the political specifics.

CONCLUSION

*... a failure perceived most clearly by Nietzsche.
MacIntyre, After Virtue*

“Of course, you can speak in *oratio obliqua*, and thus avoid the commitments of speaking straight out.” Searle was right in his Speech Acts. We can all easily switch to an indirect speech. Instead of “He made a promise”, we may say: “He made what they, the people of this Anglo-Saxon tribe, call a promise”. You can do that “with any word you like” (Searle 2001, 196). This is often done with the help of the word “discourse”. In the meanwhile, the questions on the truth and the good remain unanswered, while the discourses roam around (there were even quite idiotic suggestions to erect a chamber of discourses, published in prestigious political science journals). To recapitulate, however, before I get to the ultimate point of this critique.

In this essay, I have first elaborated on some claims from the history of ideas that affirm the truth-falsity distinction. There is truth and there are good reasons why we use it or why we, as good philosophers, use a noble lie knowing exactly it is not true. Turning from Plato to the world of Aristotle, we will want to be ethical and politically reasonable. I thus tried to offer an epistemological backing for the distinction between truth and ideology,

a statements of correspondence between words and things and the political projects of naming. This, secondly, enabled me to associate ideology as a partisan meaning with power. Political discourse is often ideological, it affirms volatile relations of power. I offered one main thesis and five more supporting ones about this: collective identities fight each other with ideologies, identities are composite, identities are not fixed, end projections are biopolitical, battle for names reflect the weakness of power, ideologies may misfire. Third, this set of propositions can be applied to any given theme in politics and public policy in an ongoing *Kulturkampf* between conservatives and liberals across the globe and to other ideological struggles.

Is this too naïve and after all pretty strange – to implicitly return to the transparency of classicism, to the semantic world without any opacity or intermediary elements between words and things?²² Not exactly, because I do not claim that there are not intermediary elements. Discourse analysis is important because language and its uses are not that simple. I only claim that there is truth distinct from ideology underneath it all. Fourth, this brings me to the last question: Why explain this at all? It's Bernard Williams' question of the value of truthfulness, more easily answered in a context: "Look a bear" makes sense when we are really confronted with a bear in the woods. I say the truth (shout "bear" for a bear instead "squirrel" etc.) not to be eaten or to save my fellow human beings (from such a notoriously ravenous beast). Searle, the guy from the prior paragraph and arguably the biggest living analytic philosopher, has a useful epistemological anecdote that will lead us to a similar bottom line:

Suppose I believe my car keys are on the dining room table. Now, how do I find out if this belief is true or false? Do I hold the belief in my left hand and hold reality in my right hand and look to see if they correspond? That is not my picture at all. Rather, my picture is that I look for my car keys. If they are on the table, then my belief is true, otherwise not. In accord with disquotation, the way to find that it is true that p, is to find that p. The correspondence theory in action is applied disquotation. (Searle in: Prado 2006, 113)

Either the keys are on the table or not, and that can be checked. The purpose of all this (i.e. the history of truthfulness in Williams)? Well, I need the keys to drive my car, and I need to drive my car to go from "A" to "B", or more generally to be mobile, move efficiently and so on (add some ecological concerns if needed, it does not change the teleological schema requiring the truth as a basis). The question in our context is then: why an analysis of ideology in contrast to truth in a discourse as a paradigmatic task for the social sciences?

22 *C'est qu'entre le signe et son contenu, il n'y a aucun élément intermédiaire, et aucune opacité* (Foucault 1966, 80).

To affirm the true speech against manipulations means to answer to the long-going critique of social sciences and liberal democracies which have a niche for such an activity (in contrast to, let's say, theology or state propaganda). "Social science positivism fosters not so much nihilism, as conformism and philistinism" (Strauss 1959, quoted in: Deutsch and Murley 1999, 93). Leo Strauss was right. But my effort here, as I have suggested, does not fall under the polysemic label "positivism" in the sense that I would claim it is value-neutral. This would be the farthest possible thing from the truth to suggest. My effort comes out of the pervading sense of crisis which sometimes conjures up the term post-truth or even the post-truth era. It comes from what I believe, along with MacIntyre and many others, is the political crisis of liberalism: "On the dominant liberal view, government is to be neutral as between rival conceptions of the human good, yet in fact what liberalism promotes is a kind of institutional order that is inimical to the construction and sustaining of the types of communal relationship required for the best kind of human life" (MacIntyre 2007, xv).²³ I find that statement true, as is the following one: "Perhaps above all, liberalism has drawn down on a preliberal inheritance and resources that at once sustained liberalism but which it cannot replenish" (Deneen 2018, 29–30). In Germany, this is known, at least from the mid-1960s, as Böckenförde's paradox (the *Böckenförde-Diktum*), i.e. the idea that the secular liberal states cannot replenish (or that they even destroy) the social capital they presuppose. To be sure, a similar diagnosis also comes from quite different political voices. Bourdieu, for example, speaks of a waning social state in the West, as a sort of a fine civilization (almost as a fine ecosystem inhabited by the big blue catlike humans in Cameron's *Avatar*), only to be destroyed by "neoliberal" barbarians: *Destruction d'un ordre social qui a été très difficile à construire...* (Bourdieu 2000, 46). The bases of identity are multiple, identities composite, as I have claimed, and I will here leave the discussion of the economy of the social state aside, but the point is that the feeling of crisis is widespread across the ideological spectrum.

What should one do in the crisis of liberal democracy that produces the above intimated scenarios associated even with the terms such as "degenerative democracy"? Habermas was perhaps naively optimistic, still ready to write hundreds of pages of political theory instead of a Hellenistic diary, as for now is this author (writing such a long essay) and probably most readers of this journal as its very name suggests. Is some form of ethical stoicism an alternative? Since the public sphere is contaminated by the warring camps and sense of decadence is strong, it may be an indi-

23 For MacIntyre, the neo-Aristotelian, "contemporary philosophy theorizing about morality is flawed" (MacIntyre 2016, 77), and operates with fictions.

vidual solution. The pessimism professed by the mentioned French writer whose title I used for one of the essay chapters, who sees the entropy of the Western society as irreparable, suggests such an approach. For the religious, some Benedictine model comes handy as ever. To pray and work in silence and wait for something old but completely different is a story much older than the contemporary bestsellers: “We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St. Benedict” (MacIntyre 2007, 263). However, all the options – a retreat of pessimism or hope, isolated stoical endurance or the erection of new small patient communities with bits of messianic fatalism, the usual party politics or a revolution – demand one thing. They demand true knowledge. Those who waged a war or revolution on wrong premises perished as did those who were stoical when there was an opportunity of action: to suffer a life of a lost opportunity is one of the highest curses in the parables offered by religion – one of the bad servant from the Gospel of Matthew who hides the sole talent he has instead of using it. However, even outside of such an apocalyptic mood, the questions about what is just and good are not answerable without the access to truth and understanding of ideology.

After all is said and done, it seems that a meagre call for simple decency remains beyond the set of theses which will prove themselves or not against political reality. It is the call to be truthful. Relativism hides or lies. It postpones and manipulates, conducting politics that may not or dare not to present itself clearly. Beyond short-term tactical shots this is most certainly an imprudent road to political decay. Discourse is important, but it's only the first step in an analysis that tries to identify ideology and understand it. The battle of naming is going on in the broad realm of biopolitics. The truth serves as a basis for justice for different forms of life which is arguably a republican virtue. I am not sure if the telos of this call for truth is republican (as opposed to liberal). I have listed several options above that are certainly not such, and various historical republican calls have failed after all. A republic of true names may seem as a museum, a farce, an irony, or it may have a touch of eternity. Plato seemed to think so. However, if naming is republican, it would certainly include what Isaiah Berlin, interpreting Rousseau and others, called a positive liberty, not only a negative one. It would include duties that recreate life, not only the rights that stop power. The above catastrophists of liberalism were right in that claim, implicit or explicit. But who knows: who laughs last, laughs the sweetest, and the game of truth, ideology and the politics of naming goes on, with lives at stake. Here I at least tried to offer a glimpse at an epistemic basis for a sound teleology and prudent politics instead of folly.

POSTSCRIPT:
A REPLY TO THE SEVEN CRITICS

For this sprightly essay I received no less than six engaged anonymous reviews, editorial suggestions, and one set of detailed comments from a prominent academic colleague and a friend. Some were beautifully written, some relentlessly and patiently critical, some were virtually inexhaustible and leading to rabbit holes. They were all very valuable, even the one that was acridly dismissive. Beyond various minor corrections of clarification and major cutting of some three thousand words – the additional literary allusions ra(n)ging from Herman Hesse to John Kennedy Toole, and the whole section about the discourse of truth in religion, usually associated with the prophetic anticipations of demise or godly invocations of hell – I felt it would be impossible to address all of the constructive critical comments by refashioning the essay itself. It would become something else, and I did not want that. I liked it just as it was perceived by the most of the early readers: interesting and intriguing, with its verbose meandering and a repetitive play of interlocked discourses, quite sententious, perhaps a bit too rich on the side of imagination – “dazzling but also dizzying”, as one of the readers effectively put it. But the critics do merit a response, and the only way to preserve the imaginative force of a purportedly unorthodox essay, with its less than sound but hopefully mentally stimulating parts; its digestibility for the reader and the better academic customs, was to briefly as possible address the critical points of the reviewers and the readers in a postscript. So here it is – an extra rabbit hole – and, as already noted in a note somewhere above, the faults are all mine.

I will first address numerous associations that were thrown at me from the rich realm of the history of ideas and more contemporary political theory that demand of the author to take a stand on various positions on the questions of the subject and the good associated with language and truth. I will then switch to the more substantial issues on the nature of politics, truth, opinion, and identity that together form the axis around which the essay revolves. The interventions will have to be brief since longer ones would inflate the postscript into yet another essay. Unfortunately I have to set aside some actual treatises that were brought up: the recent one dealing with the relationship of truth and democracy (Rosenfeld 2018) and a history of truth that tackles “the quest for language that can match reality” (Fernández-Armesto 2013) – the first one, because it belongs to a specific political analysis that adds to a political genealogy of the “post-truth” era, which is great but beyond the scope here; the second, because it is simply too big to handle here. Since I evicted religion, I feel that adding some comparative historical anthropology on truth finding techniques would be too much. It’s a Foucauldian question of different procedures or

alethurgies to arrive at the truth and their mutual relationship. I started with a hint of it (truth as ordeal), I have written about it extensively elsewhere (Petković 2018), so I can remain silent on it here. Let me just say that it seems to me that all the historical and contemporary techniques for conjuring up the truth – be it “primordial philosophy” or “great poetry”, as Heidegger has it (Heidegger 2002, 47), or good old Popperian science that produces falsifiable hypotheses, and so on – have something in common in its effect, as do all varieties of lying and forgeries.

First and foremost, Heidegger and Kant in retrospective of Heidegger (as the Eleatic forerunners of Kafka, according to Borges, become Kafkaian in retrospect). I agree that you have to have an identity – you are a subject, not a whole, but a part of a moving whole – for the world to be intelligible. Be it a Copernican turn, a worn out phrase used to speak of Kant’s critical enterprise with man in its center, or a project of philosophy understood as an universal phenomenological ontology, i.e. the existential analysis of the *Dasein* (pardon the jargon), this rings true to me. But it is also a truism at my level of analysis. Some sketchy hints on the identity forming processes I add below.

On the other hand, the absence of Hobbes, beyond a little nod in a footnote about religious archetypal parables on naming, is obvious. Very probably due to civil wars of religious factions, he has the strongest sensibility to the problem of the politics of naming. Let’s put aside the specific enmity to the Catholic Church, in the retrospective an overzealous crusade against the Aristotelian scholastics (he shares this with Descartes), and intriguing proclaimed sternness towards metaphors: his line of thought in the chapter four of the *Leviathan* parallels the one of the Confucius I have offered in the introduction. Hobbes could have been used instead, together with some further useful motives appearing in the *Leviathan*: his thoughts on prudence and sapience from the fifth chapter are relevant for the last part of my essay, as well as the hermeneutical maxim to focus not on “the bare words but the scope of the author” from the Chapter 43. His naïve sounding and stalwart constructions (one is almost compelled to feel a mysticism in it) starting from the most basic elements are again, which is symptomatic, actual in these times. I can only conclude with the incomparable charming lines from the fourth chapter of Hobbes’ *grand oeuvre*: “a man that seeketh precise *truth*, had need to remember what every name he uses stands for; and to place it accordingly; or else he will find himselfe entangled in words, as a bird in lime-twiggs; the more he struggles, the more belimed”.²⁴ Furthermore, if the view that there is one semantics instead of many (e.g. one associated with the links between

24 They would say in these parts of the world: *Zapleo se k'o pile u kućine...*

words and things, and the other with the rules of public discourse) can be associated with Hobbes, I think he is right. (To remind the reader, Hobbes is unyielding: when discussing Job and the existential stuff of non-political suffering, he refuses to use the word punishment for the bad developments of destiny from the point of view of the subject. He is strict in advocating one universal politics of naming.)

As for Marx, my discussion of ideology is indeed not framed by his and Engels' treatise and Marx's philosophical remarks on alienation. I see the talk of false consciousness as an ideological project itself. The world is to be changed, according to the 11th thesis on Feuerbach, obviously based on some interpretation of it, if not philosophical then perhaps politico-economical as is the case in Marxism. This position then plunges into a revolutionary program which, even if it is not intrinsically malevolent, had quite bad historical results in all its geographical and temporal variations. To say, on the other hand, that ideology is meaning in the service of power is to broaden the field of political economy into biopolitics, and to include a more complex picture of identity beyond the politically framed binary or so economic class struggle.

Aquinas and Adorno were also amicably thrown at me in the reviews. As for the scholastic definition of truth as the adequacy of thing and mind (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), it is an understandable association since I use MacIntyre but is too big a bite, one that I cannot chew here: it is not a modern correspondence theory but much more complex position involving a combination of theology and an Aristotelian metaphysical paradigm, distinction between human and divine intellect, and so on. I cannot do any justice to it here. It requires both time for further thought and space which I have exhausted. It is something worth contemplating as well as, let's say, Eliot's take on Dante's Divine Comedy and the idea of Godly love preceding the earthly ones, but as such it seems to be quite out of scope here. As for the Adornian *right* to non-identity (one German professor, in a parrhesiastic-dyonisiac moment of truth, said this is the most important concept for him), I see the negative dialectics as a political claim. Adorno makes politics out of Nietzsche's remark from above of not two entities being really identical. If truth is somehow associated with the development of the whole – *Das Wahre ist das Ganze*, as Hegel puts it in his foreword to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* – this is only a part of the whole, i.e. a maxim of ideology for particular identities against the posited whole (in Adorno's words: *die Unwahrheit von Identität*/the “untruth of identity”). I'll reflect on this a bit more in the following part dealing with substantial claims. Finally, one of the reviewers was skeptical about liberalism's value neutrality both on theoretical and practical level. He is right in a way and that is a part of the problem which invokes analyses ranging from Schmitt's

insights into politics of “depoliticization” to Gray’s critique of what he calls “evangelical liberalism”. On the other hand, I cannot really enter how much this does justice to the concrete authors mentioned – Rawls, Dworkin, Raz and others – since I am not an expert for them. Perhaps it does not. However, a critique of liberalism – in the sense of the claim that a sole focus on negative liberty, its politics of rights and claims, accompanied with the discourses of entitlement and victimhood – forgets a viable program of positive liberty to create or preserve something (perhaps associated with some forms of social capital), since it constantly and obsessively looks to the gutter, stands as far as I can see. To seek a *modus vivendi* and regulate a public reason is to retreat from the problem. It is the situation described in the thesis no. 5 above. This finally brings me to the substantial part of the response.

Perhaps most important question raised by the reviewers was: Is the whole realm of politics, by its very definition, ideological? There lies the crux of the problem with no easy answers in a moving world of collective and changing identities, i.e. in political history. One position that can be derived from Bourdieu as portrayed above states that words can make things in the political realm. This suggests a politics of change or even revolution. Things can be otherwise. Changing of the vocabulary is part of the ushering of the new world. The other position is a conservative one. Readers may be surprised but it is the one held by authors so different as Arendt and Foucault, that is, Arendt under political attack, writing her essay on *Truth and Politics*, and Foucault discussing the great rage of facts (*La grande colère des faits*) that speak back to political oppression. In the essay (originally published in *The New Yorker* on February 25, 1967), Arendt memorably claimed that “it may be in the nature of the political realm to be at war with truth in all its forms, and hence to the question of why a commitment even to factual truth is felt to be an anti-political attitude”. She also stated there that “to look upon politics from the perspective of truth, as I have done here, means to take one’s stand outside the political” and she (“conceptually”) equated the truth with that “what we cannot change”. Her point was there are limits to the political will, as was Foucault’s in his critique of the use of the political (*le politique*) instead of politics (*la politique*) in French appropriations of Morgenthau and Schmitt. Politics as a technique of governing, normatively understood, is a fine art. Both of preservation and change.

In other words, to revolutionaries the realm of politics may seem extremely wide, but it is in fact quite narrow. If the names accompanying the programs deviate from life, from what works and what is sustainable and possible, they will most likely cause trouble – the angry facts returning to the political programmer – and, most importantly, unnecessary human

suffering. Realm of politics as the realm of the possible is in fact quite restrained, at least historically (who knows, with the development of technology...). Limits to the extreme leaps of ideology and often destruction are offered by the truth of life. That's also the point of the sixth thesis I offered above. Words often cannot create an alternate reality. They create an illusion and an oppression instead. Ideology has its limits.²⁵

But how do things change in this worldview? This brings me to the words "dialectics" and "identity" I have quite often used above. One of the readers was right to mention Kwame Antony Appiah, whose own complex ethnic, cultural and sexual identity made him sensible for the issues of identity politics as the new generations in his wider family filled him with hope. His view of identities, historical and social scripts, that expand horizons and can play positive role, but are not fixed (he affirms "appropriations", borrowing and "stealing" from other cultures), seem fine to me. The wider points are that identities change in the course of things and to be stubborn in fixing them is an ideology as strange as forcing them to change. There are subjectivities emerging, mixing, and so on: the "we" and "I" change on the basis of personal experience or trauma, history and politics. I mentioned dialectics to vaguely refer to this process of change. It is a much misused word coming from the simple conversations and exchanges that evolve dynamically and change those involved. I used the term dialectics in an arguably non-ambitious, very rudimentary and under-theorized sense, to denote a gradual shift in the rhythm of political things, i.e. not as an overarching logic of history but an observation of change in identities. Dialectics is not linear, in opposition to eschatology, secular or sacral, and it is not static, in opposition to metaphysics (ironically even Stalin remarks this in his Questions of Leninism, along with the less sublime lines on the destructions of the kulak opposition). Dialectics need not to refer to a violent political revolution denotes but to an open evolving game. But, after all, I don't want to go much further than to state an empirical observation that identities and political frameworks do change and a normative one that I am not in principle inimical to it.

Adornian negations, to be outside or against, appear in this process. As one of the reviewers warned, implicitly opening some sociological questions about the presuppositions of the "post-truth" politics, opinions

25 There is a fine moment in Karlo Štajner's account of his "7000 days in Siberia", i.e. an instructive story of almost 20 years he had spent in Soviet prisons and camps. In the repetitive torturous interrogations he is submitted to, his simple account of truth is called tactics by his interrogators. There is it then: a direct juxtaposition of truth and tactics. The point is that his oppressors in power feel he is not politically loyal or he might not be. They cannot truly prove that he is a spy or counterrevolutionary agent (since he is not), but for them, as a social democrat, he is an existential, Schmittian enemy of their ideological cause. The irony is that he has survived the ideological regime that has tortured him.

also appear, “neither true nor false, neither poetic nor meaningless“, thus seemingly placing themselves nowhere, or in a heterotopia between truth and ideology. There is a useful saying here, uttered by Harry Callahan, a police officer from the famous film franchise: “Opinions are like assholes, everybody has one.” The idea here is not to eschew arguments with vulgar remarks or to advocate police brutality, but to point to a problem of indifference and a grain of truth contained in the remark of a fictional tough cop armed with a magnum. If opinion is, by definition, not necessarily based in fact or knowledge – it is a mere “preference” reframed by Lindblom as “volition”, to sound more politically serious – it remains in the purgatory of politics. It may be true, or it may be ideology serving particular power. We don’t know yet. If it is neither true nor ideology, nor relevant to power in any case, well, that’s fine, but it’s no concern of political science. One has to make a choice or choice will be made by someone else.

Is then the political space – as a whole, as such – colonized by the ideological? And can, for example, something be true outside of power, but then become ideological when it comes into power and serves the regime? By my definitions no, on both accounts. There might, after all, be a fine space for truth in politics, although I admit there are some vertiginous possibilities of interpretation here. Arendt’s essay is the best proof of it.

Finally, the truth. It indeed seems to be a sort of correspondence against constructivism and nominalism. If it’s not such it is not useful except tactically as a manipulation, i.e. a lie. Correspondence is not enemy of pragmatism and does not lead to a scholastic ontology and the intellectual penetrations into the somewhat mystical *Ding an sich*. The whole section of the history of philosophy was necessary exactly to find such fine moments where the ultimate defense of truth is given. They only point to it because truth, of course, cannot be proven by discourse itself. It lies beyond it. It resides in things. This is the point of simpler examples of bears and car keys but which transpose as well to the examples from identity politics and morality policies.²⁶ There are things, and more importantly persons, outside

26 Unfortunately, I also cannot enter the vast jungle of American scholarship on Nietzsche which was, with considerable furor, thrown at me which does not come as a surprise since Nietzsche, the restless aphorist and not a serene system builder, is one of the prominent mirrors where various authors like to look at themselves and see everything differently than it is. As a scholar dealing with Foucault, I am fine with Leiter’s assessments of differences between Nietzsche and Foucault (*Genealogy of Morality* is after all something quite different than the genealogy of penal policy attempting to explain the Western soul in *To Discipline and Punish*), and Miller’s view of Nietzsche’s prophetic utterances as quite different from Foucault’s parrhesia, the true speech directed at others not at destiny. As for Nietzsche’s pragmatism, postmodernism and so on concerning truth, I find Nehamas’ sober-minded observation in the recent text convincing. He asks the reader to imagine “foraging in the proverbial savannah of the Pleistocene”, i.e. to take the role of one of the “monkeys” in the Clarke’s/ Kubrick’s 2001 Space Odyssey prologue situation: without the monolith you run or you die

of texts and since our situation is plural and agonistic with different interests, it is a good idea not to lie or project ideology on things and persons but to speak precisely about the same things. Translate projected eschatological wars as “I want it to be so”, and personal choices as those who involve terminations of life if they do. There is a price for choice that is not eliminated by incessant melodies of Orwellian ideological jargons of politics, which, following Arendt, stumble at something they cannot change. We may sometimes need to admit our own selfishness and cruelty. If by taking notice of all of this I only engage in *enfoncer des portes ouvertes*, as one of the reviewers noticed, in response I can only quote the old lyrics: “The door is locked now but it’s open if you’re true. If you can understand me, then I can understand you.”

The only thing left at the very end is a small question of style that puzzled at least one of my reviewers: what does a sentence here and there, within quotation marks but without a Harvard-style bracketed reference, mean? Well, it means: this could be a typical restatement of the claim I have just made, its possible coagulation in an indicative parody of common parlance. It is thus not, as it was once said, a strange assault on one’s own words, but a slight touch of irony within a narrative that could help a reader get a richer understanding of author’s claims.

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when you see “a sleek, yellowish, spotted animal”. If you want to make sure it is a leopard or cheetah, you count the spots (or the hairs on a bear’s fur or something similar, in Williams), you die. Nehamas concludes: “None of this suggests that it is in principle impossible to get things right: Nietzsche never denies that one might count the animal’s spots correctly. His point is simply that, in these particular circumstances, the effort would take long enough for the animal to make a meal of you” (Nehamas 2017, 327).

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SAŽETAK

IDEOLOGIJA I ISTINA: POVRAK STAROG PARA U DOBA POST-ISTINE

Autor tvrdi da svaka analiza diskursa, kao i drugi pristupi u društvenim i humanističkim znanostima, ne mogu u konačnici izbjeći razlikovanje istine i ideologije. Prvi dio članka daje nekoliko pogleda na zapadnu filozofijsku tradiciju koja čuva vrijednost istine. U drugom dijelu, skicirana je ideja političke znanosti, utemeljena na takvoj povijesti ideja. Nakon kratke rasprave o tome što je ideologija nasuprot istini, autor predlaže tezu o ideologiji, identitetu i moći, te nekoliko heurističkih ideja kako je razviti. U trećem dijelu ukratko se navode primjeri iz političke analize i analize javnih politika koji odgovaraju takvom projektu. U posljednjem se dijelu objašnjava važnost očuvanja razlike između ideologije i istine u diskurzivno postavljenoj eri „post-istine“. Ova kombinacija epistemologije, znanosti, analize i teleologije ogleda se zajedno u političkom području od najveće važnosti za političku znanost koja djeluje u javnoj sferi: politici imenovanja.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: ideologija, istina, post-istina, diskurs, moć, identitet, politička znanost, politika imenovanja.