

A Political Defence of Kant's *Aufklärung*. An Essay

The aim of this essay is to analyse the potential for political emancipation that lies within Kant's conception of *Aufklärung*, in critical dialogue with enlightenment critics and specialized Kantian literature. My thesis is that Kant's concept of enlightenment is intrinsically political and so it must be studied from the point of view of his political philosophy, which was fully developed in the decade of the 1790s. From this standpoint, I propose we study the role and place of *Aufklärung* within Kant's central political thesis, to wit: that only the united will of the people can be a legitimate authority.

Keywords: Kant; Enlightenment; popular sovereignty; Foucault; Adorno and Horkheimer

Subject classification codes: Political Philosophy.

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Introduction

This essay takes as its starting standpoint Ingeborg Maus' thesis that we live, without fully acknowledging the fact, in a time "of counter-enlightenment". For Maus, our deleterious unawareness of this fact is mainly due to two extended intellectual prejudices, to wit: the

false theses that enlightenment underwent a process of moral decadence that ended up in the unleashing of a technical reason detached from its own normative premises, and that this decadence was *in nuce* inscribed in those very normative premises.¹ However, I will not address the question of whether modern enlightenment is a project we should complete (as Habermas proposed) or, on the contrary, the cause of most of our contemporary environmental and humanitarian catastrophes, as those postures Habermas called the “three conservatisms” affirm.² Instead, I propose that Kant’s concept of *Aufklärung* constitutes a

¹ Cf. Maus, Ingeborg, *Zur Aufklärung der Demokratietheorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 7.

² Habermas’ expounded his position on the subject in his talk “Die Moderne –ein unvollendetes Projekt” in 1980, when he was awarded the “Theodor Adorno” prize in Frankfurt. The original discourse on the unfinished project of modernity was then printed in *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 3-14, as “Modernity versus Postmodernity”, and then reprinted in several other publications. Its main theses are developed in Habermas, J. *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985).

In view of the fact that “little of this optimism” of enlightenment thinkers like Condorcet “remains to us in the twentieth century”, Habermas posed the question: “should we continue to hold fast to the intentions of the enlightenment, however fractured they may be, or should we rather relinquish the entire project of modernity?” (Habermas, J.. “Modernity: An Unfinished Project”, in Passerin d’Entrevès, M. and Benhabib, S. eds. *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity. Critical Essays on The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997, 38-55, 45-46). After analysing what he sees as the “false negation [Aufhebung] of culture” and the “aporias of cultural modernity”, he proposes that “we should learn from the aberrations which have accompanied the project of modernity [i. e., enlightenment] [...], rather than abandoning modernity and its project” (Habermas, “Modernity: An Unfinished Project”, 51). Habermas proposes a specific way of continuing this project: reconnecting modern culture with “an everyday sphere of praxis that is dependent of a living heritage and yet it is impoverished by mere traditionalism”. This reconnection will only prove beneficent (and a continuation of the enlightenment project) “if the process of social modernization can *also* be turned into *other* non-capitalist directions, if the lifeworld can develop institutions of its own in a way currently inhibited by the autonomous systemic dynamics of the economic and administrative system” (Habermas, “Modernity: An Unfinished Project”, 52-53). Now, Habermas sees a big hindrance to this solution of the aporias of modernity: what he calls the “three

radically alternative notion which cannot be reduced to the ideas of enlightenment implied by the antagonistic postures in the debates that took place in the last two decades of the twentieth century. In the end, Kant's *Aufklärung* renders these discussions irrelevant.³

The best way to study the exact meaning of Kant's concept of *Aufklärung* is acknowledging that it is an intrinsically political concept; therefore, to understand it, we need

conservatisms", as he names all current positions critical of modernity: "young conservatives", who "establish an implacable opposition to modernity precisely through a modernist attitude"; (Bataille, Foucault, Derrida); "old conservatives", whose opposition to modernity is absolute and thus recommend "a return to positions prior to modernity" (Habermas mentions neo-Aristotelianism and holds this current was initiated by Leo Strauss), "new conservatives", who do relate to the "achievements of modernity" and think "politics should be immunized as much as possible from the demands of moral-practical legitimation" (the first Wittgenstein and Carl Schmitt). But note that Foucault himself refused to take part in what he termed "the blackmail of the enlightenment" (Foucault, M. "What is Enlightenment?". Trans. Catherine Porter, in Rainbow, Paul, ed. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, 32-50, p. 42), the attitude of demanding that we take a position for or against it.

I think there are at least two considerable problems with Habermas' reflection on enlightenment in this discourse. The first one is that he takes modernity and enlightenment to be almost the same thing, which is not the case, since not all modern thinkers were enlightened. Besides, this equation leaves a big question aside: can we talk of one modernity and of "the" enlightenment? The burden of proof is on the side of the ones who claim we can. The second one is that he analyses the topic eminently from an aesthetic perspective, leaving the main importance of the topic, politics, aside. Foucault's and Adorno's and Horkheimer's readings also tend to assume that there is one modernity and one enlightenment, and they also conflate them. All these authors' theses have had a great influence on setting the agenda of the discussions, and I think this is why these errors are very common in the debates.

³ Throughout this paper, I quote Kant's words as edited in the *Akademie-Ausgabe*: Kant, Immanuel. *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin et al: Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften et al, 1900ff). I quote them with abbreviations, which I enumerate in the "References" section, followed by page numbers that correspond to the pagination of this canonical edition. For example: "WiA, 35" is the abbreviation for Kant, Immanuel. *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*. Göttingen and Berlin: Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften and others, 1900ff, vol. VIII: 35-42.

to reconstruct and delimitate its systematic place within Kant's *political* philosophy, that is, our perspective should be eminently structured neither by philosophy of history nor theory of knowledge. Indeed, Kant's enlightenment entails a series of specific tenets that come to light only when we connect it to the normative touchstone of Kant's idea of legitimate political authority, the united sovereign will of the people. Within a political framework, the proper questions to ask relate mainly to the concept of , the "exit from immaturity", by which Kant defined "*Aufklärung*" in his enlightenment essay. Let us first remember the famous definition:

Enlightenment is the human being's exit from his self-incurred immaturity.

Immaturity is the incapacity of using one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause lies not in lacking of understanding, but in lacking of the decision and courage to use one's understanding without the guidance of another.⁴

To understand the idea of emancipation included in Kant's concept of *Aufklärung*, we must pose at least the following *political* questions: Who has to emancipate from whose illegitimate authority? In other words: Who is the *agent* of the enlightenment? And which is the *target* of enlightenment, that is, which are the phenomena that need to be put under the "all-crushing" exercise of free and public criticism? Which are the real enemies of enlightenment who deliberately hinder emancipation? If there is, as Kant thought, a necessary normative relationship between reason and authority by virtue of which reason is the only source of legitimate authority, then we must discover whose concrete reasoning it is about and which uses of reason can be authoritative without running the risk of becoming

⁴ WiA, 35.

heteronomous sources of rationalization at the service of a given paternalistic and despotic guardian.

I believe that there is a significant analogical relationship that links Kant's distinction between private and public uses of reason, on the one hand, to the distinction between despotism, which is the rule of a private will, and republicanism, which is the rule of the united public will of the people, on the other. In this conceptual framework, my main interpretative thesis is that Kant's enlightenment is the *task by which the people emancipates itself from the heteronomous shaping of its public judgement by an instrumental culture at the service of illegitimate political powers, in order to fully exercise their sovereignty*. In other words, Kant's enlightenment is the never ending undertaking of criticizing existing authorities and their influence on public culture, in order to set the conditions of possibility for the existence of legitimate authorities, that is, omnilaterally justified ones.

This image of Kant's enlightenment is different from the one presupposed by the critics of the enlightenment and also in some respects from the one usually proposed in the *Kant-Forschung*. In what follows, I contrast my rendering of Kant's *Aufklärung* with two paradigmatic analysis of it, Foucault's and Adorno's and Horkheimer's, and with the some recent studies within the specialized literature.

II: Kant's *Aufklärung* as political critique of culture

Foucault's analyses of Kant's *Aufklärung* are more a reception of it than a rejection.

Indeed, Foucault's positive proposal "to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible

transgression”⁵ is almost what Kant himself proposed. So Foucault’s contrasting of his proposal to the allegedly Kantian one clearly involves a mixture of correct and incorrect theses.⁶

Foucault’s main correct thesis is that by treating the subject, Kant shows himself as being aware of his own responsibility towards philosophizing as a “discursive practice with its own history”.⁷ Foucault correctly notes that putting the question of the present at the centre of philosophical reflection means a historical novelty: by posing the question, Kant the philosopher sees himself within his present in a special fashion. It is neither about showing his adherence to a certain tradition of thought nor about reflecting on history as an abstract member of humankind. Kant poses and answers the question considering himself as a member “of a certain ‘we’, a ‘we’ corresponding to a cultural ensemble characteristic of his own contemporaneity”.⁸ In *What is enlightenment?*, then, Kant considers “philosophy as the problematization of a present-ness”, a problematization that is “the interrogation by philosophy of this present-ness of which it is part and relative to which it is obligated to locate itself”.⁹

⁵ Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”, 45.

⁶ Deligiorgi, Katerina. *Kant and the culture of Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005), 57, correctly highlights that “Foucault’s own analysis of these complexities [i. e., of Kant’s answer to the question ‘what is enlightenment?’] is especially useful because it focuses precisely on those features of the essay that account for the originality of Kant’s argument”. For her full analysis of Foucault’s reading, see Deligiorgi, *Kant and the Culture of Enlightenment*, 56ff and 169ff. For a good explanation of Foucault’s reception of Kant’s critical philosophy, see Gordon, , Colin. “Question, ethos, event: Foucault on Kant and Enlightenment”, *Economy and Society* 15, 1 (1986): 71-87.

⁷ Foucault, Michel, “Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution”. Trans. Colin Gordon, in *Economy and Society* 15, 1 (1986): 88-96, 89.

⁸ Foucault, “Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution”, 89.

⁹ Foucault, “Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution”, 89.

Now, the present in which Kant sees himself as a philosopher and which he puts at the centre of his reflection is a certain political state of affairs *of which he disapproved*. Situated in this state of affairs, Kant answers Zöllner's question "What is enlightenment?"¹⁰ by also responding to the particular and concrete situation of enlightenment in late eighteenth century Prussia. In his erudite work on the historical context of Kant's treatment of enlightenment, Lestition correctly holds: "much of Kant's mature scholarly work, and particularly his moral and political philosophy, developed against the background of what may be termed the end of enlightenment in Prussia –the sharp swing to conservative religious, cultural, and political policies following the death of Frederick II in 1786".¹¹ And indeed, Kant did not try to

¹⁰ The question "what is enlightenment?" was first posed by the enlightened preacher Johann Friedrich Zöllner in "Ist es ratsam, das Ehebündniß nicht ferner durch die Religion zu sanciren", *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 2 (1783): 508-516. The question appears in a footnote in page 516: "What is enlightenment? This question, which is almost so important as 'what is truth?', should be answered before starting to enlightening! But I have never find it answered". Moses Mendelssohn's answer, "Über die Frage: was heißt aufklären?", *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 2 (1784): 193-200, precedes Kant's „Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?“, *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 2 (1784): 481-494, but Kant had not read Mendelssohn's work before writing his essay.

¹¹ Lestition, Steven. "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", *The Journal of Modern History* 65, 1 (1993): 57-112, 57. For Lestition, "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", 77, "the way in which Kant's essay framed the issue of the nature on 'enlightenment' gains a new significance –at once historical and philosophical- when viewed in the context of [...] the potential 'end of the enlightenment' in Prussia". Lestition establishes and studies three social, cultural and political realities that point to this "end of enlightenment" in late eighteenth century Prussia: the controversy, initiated by Jacobi, around Lessing's Spinozism (1784-1786), the decadence of freemasonry, and, most of all, "the accession in Prussia of Frederick William II (following the death of Frederick II in August 1786)" (Lestition, "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", 63-64). As to this third event, Lestition points out that "with the King's Religion-Edict in July 1788, the replacement of the Enlightenment-minded von Zedlitz as head of the Spiritual Department, and the sharpened Censorship Edict of December 1788, Woellner and the King made it clear that they intended a peremptory counterstroke against what they viewed as the pernicious consequences of forty years of Enlightenment" (Lestition, "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", 65-66). The influence of

answer to the question of the present-ness as termed by Foucault only in the 1784 essay. All of his political writings of the decade of the 1790s, which were published under the counter-enlightened government of Friedrich William II and after the French Revolution, present a critical and negative diagnosis of his political and cultural present.

There is an important difference between Kant's 1784 essay and the political works posterior to 1793, the year in which *Theory and Practice* and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* appeared. In the decade of the 1790s, Kant had achieved the conceptual framework and the normative political-philosophical criteria, which would be fully elaborated in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, to explain why the political reality in which he lived was so adverse to enlightenment. In 1784, Kant had not fully developed his political philosophy yet.¹² We have to take this fact seriously, because it is only when we see the full extension and specificity of Kant's political philosophy in the last decade of his intellectual development that we can discover that *enlightenment is a political concept, tailored to play an indispensable role as condition of possibility of the rule of the united will*. At least, we are

this regressive political turn, this open "attack on the Aufklärung", influenced the philosophical discourse in a specific fashion: it worked to "sharpen the rhetoric and conceptual terms within which public debate on the merits (or dangers) of the Enlightenment was henceforth carried on" (Lestition, "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", 66). However, the great influence of institutionalized religion in Prussian affairs was not new: "orthodox clergy in different Prussian territories had begun to raise it beginning in the late 1760s and 1770s; and in 1780 the Duke of Württemberg, influenced by Pietist-oriented estates, had set the precedent of forbidding deviation from Christianity's 'fundamental articles' and the Lutherans' concordial formulas" (Lestition, "Kant and the end of enlightenment in Prussia", 61).

¹² At least, he had not yet *published* it and although the main theses of his political theory can already be found in notes from the decade of the 1760s (see, for instance, Refl. 6593, AA XIX: 99s) and in the lectures on natural right from 1784 (*Naturrecht Feyerabend*), Kant did not fully develop the systematic form of his practical philosophy, to wit: the division of the metaphysics of morals into two independent moral doctrines, the doctrine of right and the doctrine of virtue, until the decade of the 1790s.

in a better position to fully understand it than if we relate the 1784 essay *only* to the critical works of the 1780s.¹³

In 1798, Kant published his stance on university policies: the *Conflict of the faculties*. From this text we can extract a series of theses that pertain to enlightenment as critique of the present. For *Conflict* is, from its beginning, a direct response to the attack on enlightenment by Woellner's religion edict issued in 1788, from the point of view of a philosopher who knew at first hand of the interference of the government in all intellectual matters. It is surprising that Foucault chooses to focus only on the second part of the text. I think this is due to the fact that he reads Kant's *Aufklärung* pre-eminently as a matter of philosophy of history, and as a political matter only to the extent that it is subordinated to the reflection on history. But it is in the "Introduction" and in the first part of this polemic text, entitled "The conflict of the faculty of philosophy with the faculty of theology", where Kant analyses the conflict between the task of philosophy and the tasks of the "higher faculties" (theology, law, and medicine) from the perspective of autonomy in the production of knowledge.¹⁴

¹³ Foster, Jay, "Kant's Machiavellian Moment", *Con-textos Kantianos. International Journal of Philosophy* 2 (2015): 238-260, argues that we should analyse the *Aufklärung* essay for its own sake, and not as a part of a broader Kantian conception of enlightenment developed in many works. His thesis on the essay is that its intended audience was the Prince and that Kant means to tell him which the political conditions for enlightenment are. I hold the opposite theses. On one hand, Kant's concept of *Aufklärung*, being political, can only be properly understood within Kant's political philosophy, and so it is methodologically necessary to turn to his political writings. On the other, although it seems very plausible that Kant has "the prince" in mind as his audience, the role of enlightenment within Kant's theory of popular sovereignty is that *Aufklärung* is one of the conditions of possibility for the effective rule of the autonomous general will. As such, it cannot be imposed from above, that is to say: by the Prince.

¹⁴ Piché also focuses on this part of *Conflict*. Regarding Deligiorgi's work, he poses the same question I am posing regarding Foucault's: "Leaving this later work aside is a deliberate and understandable choice. In fact, the developments of the *Conflict* do not fit well with the image of enlightenment that she tries to extract from the texts of the critical decade" (Piché, Claude, "Kantian Enlightenment as a

The starting point of the whole work is that there is a “division of labour” between faculties that entails “treating learning in its entirety in the manner of *factories*” (SF, 17).¹⁵ From this fact there proceeds a series of qualifications concerning enlightenment as the call to make use of one’s reason and its relationship to authority. For this institutional design produces a whole class of scholars that are actually “instruments of the government, invested by it and for its own end (and not for the sake of sciences) with an official post”.¹⁶ In this framework, when he describes the situation of the higher faculties regarding freedom of thought, Kant draws a distinction between public and private uses of reason that seems parallel to the one he had made in the *Aufklärung* essay. There, the “private use of reason” had been defined as that use “of one’s reason that someone is allowed to exercise in a certain *civil* post or office entrusted to him”.¹⁷ Here, Kant states that the members of the higher faculties, “as instruments of the government (clergymen, judicial officers, and physicians), have legal influence over the public and they make up a particular class of men of letters that *are not free to make a public use of their knowledge as they see it wise, but only under the censorship of the faculties*”.¹⁸

In *Conflict* it becomes evident, which is not perhaps the case of the 1784 essay, that Kant evaluates this situation negatively, that is to say, he does not celebrate that the scholars

Critique of Culture”, *Con-textos Kantianos. International Journal of Philosophy* 2 (2015): 197-21, 213). However, I do not agree with Piché’s interpretation of the meaning and significance of this work concerning the scope, target and agent of enlightenment, as I will mention later on in this essay.

¹⁵ SF, 17.

¹⁶ SF, 18

¹⁷ WiA, 37. An exhaustive and lucid analysis of the pair “public / private” can be found in Laursen, John Christian, “The Subversive Kant. The Vocabulary of ‘Public’ and ‘Publicity’”, *Political Theory* 14, 4 (1986): 584-603. 1986. Another good terminological explanation of the meaning of the pair can be found in Fleischacker, Sam, “Kant’s Enlightenment”, *Con-textos Kantianos. International Journal of Philosophy* 2 (2015): 177-196.

¹⁸ SF, 18, my emphasis.

from the higher faculties are not granted freedom to produce knowledge according to their autonomous use of reason. The ground for Kant's disapproval of this situation lies in the authoritative relationship between the government and the higher faculties:

The faculties are traditionally divided into two ranks: three *higher faculties* and one *lower faculty*. It is clear that this division is made and this terminology adopted with reference to the government rather than the learned professions. [...] *The government is interested primarily in means for securing the strongest and most lasting influence on the people, and the subjects which the higher faculties teach are just such means.*¹⁹

In this line of reasoning, Kant's critique of the faculty of theology is eminently political and clarifies Kant's main objection against churches in general. The first part of *Conflict*, together with Kant's theses on religion in his *Anthropology* and *Religion* works and in the *Doctrine of Right*,²⁰ make it clear that his opposition to institutionalized religion is not

¹⁹ SF, 18-19, CF, my emphasis. (Here I am quoting Gregor's and Anchor's translation. When I quote this version, I add 'CF' after the *Akademie's* pagination). Each higher faculty has a particular task, which Kant defines according to those 'incentives that the government can use to achieve its ends (of influencing the people)' (SF, 21, CF). Following this criterion, Kant sets a hierarchy of 'goods', each tied to one kind of these incentives. The first kind of incentives relates to the idea of an 'eternal well-being', and 'by public teachings about' it, subject of the faculty of theology, 'the government can exercise very great influence to uncover the inmost thoughts and guide the most secret intentions of its subjects' (SF, VII: 21-22, CF). The second kind relates to 'civil well-being'. Teachings regarding it are elaborated by the faculty of law and help 'to keep their external conduct under the reins of public law' (SF, VII: 22, CF). Teachings regarding the third kind of incentives are in charge of the faculty of medicine and refer to '*physical well-being* (a long life and health)' and by them the government makes 'sure that it will have a strong and numerous people to serve its purposes' (SF, VII: 22, CF). Here we should keep in mind that according to the second part of this same work these purposes are almost always connected to waging wars.

²⁰ Let us enumerate some of Kant's critiques of institutionalized religion. In the section "Of the counterfeit service of God in a statutory religion" of the *Religion* work, Kant says that churches' statutes are "arbitrary" and "contingent" (cf. RGV, 167-186), and that they constitute, in the end, the

cause of a “*Religionswahn*”, a “religious delusion”. A delusory statutory religion amounts to a false, “pretend worship of God” (RGV, 168), which Kant then calls “superstition” (using the word “Superstition” instead of “*Aberglaube*”) (RGV, 172). This religious superstition, a direct by-product of institutional worshiping, is then evaluated in moral terms: “Everything, except a good moral conduct, that a human being supposes he can do to please God is mere religious delusion and counterfeit service of God” (RGV, 170). Superstition, then, is not linked merely to the content of dogmas and articles of faith, but to the idea that church rituals can replace a good moral conduct. This definition of superstition attacks, thus, the heart of the very concept of an *institutionalized* religion. In the *Doctrine of Right* (MS, 325-328), Kant presents an argument tailored to protect churches from state power. The argument states that churches “must be carefully distinguished from religion as internal moral conviction, which is entirely outside the circle of influence of the civil power”. But churches, as “institutions for the divine service for the people” are also said here to “have their origin in the people, be it in opinion or strong belief” (MS, 327). Because of this popular origin, the state has no right to “prescribe or command beliefs and ritual forms (*ritus*) to the people (for this must be left completely to the teachers and chiefs it has itself chosen)”. Concerning churches, then, the state has “only the *negative* right to prevent that public teachers have influence over the visible political community, when this influence is detrimental to the public peace”, which Kant suggests amounts to prevent that “the inner conflict” of a church and the conflict “between different churches” endanger civil harmony (MS, 327). Here, we can see Kant defends religious freedom on the grounds that churches may also have a popular origin, but that he also presents a negative view of churches as potential causes of civil war. To my eyes, these positions entail an anti-clerical stance that is moderated only by the idea that the people itself can also wish to maintain its churches. This interpretation is confirmed by the following passage, where Kant analyses whether the state can expropriate churches’ lands: “a church is an institution founded only upon faith, and when the illusion about this opinion [that earthly churches –and not good moral conduct- can grant eternal grace after death] disappears by the people’s enlightenment, then the dreadful power of the clergy, which is based on that opinion, falls away” (MS, 369). When this happens, proceeds Kant, then “the state, with full right, takes possession of the property the church has seized for itself” (ibid.).

Kant ended the *Anthropology* text with a strong reproach, not an approval as it seems to be the case in the *Aufklärung* essay, to Frederick II: “Fredrick II once told the excellent Solzer [...] “ah, *mon cher Sulzer, vous ne connaissez pas assez cette maudite race à laquelle nous appartenons*”. – It also belongs to the character of our species that in striving to get a civil constitution, it also needs discipline by religion, so that what cannot be achieved by *external* coercion can produced by *internal* coercion (of the moral conscience)”. Let us note in passing that the *Religion* work and the *Metaphysics of Morals* teach us that this internal coercion is neither possible nor permissible. But the point Kant is making becomes clear in the next sentences: by this “internal coercion” by religion

based on the simple idea that it promotes superstition and irrationality. Now, Piché correctly notes that there is a way in which “superstition re-emerges in the realm of culture”:

“Phenomena taking place in the sensible world, such as a church ritual, a trial in court, [...] are in fact likely to be interpreted by the common person as having supersensible effects: each can be seen as a substitute [...] for my failing moral conduct”.²¹ This is true, of course: Kant explicitly said that institutionalized religion is prone to being used by laypersons to substitute moral responsibility, and in *Conflict* he notes that people seem to see all learned men as “miracle workers”.²² But this is only part of the problem. Kant raises objections

“legislators use the moral predisposition in human beings politically [...] But when morals does not precede religion in this disciplining of the people, then religion becomes the lord of morals, and statutory religion becomes an instrument of the state power (politics) under *faith despots*. This is an evil that inevitable ruins the character and misguides it to rule by *deceit* (called political prudence). While professing in public to be merely the first servant of the state, that great monarch could not conceal the contrary, sighing in his private confession, although he excused himself by attributing this corruption to the evil *race* called human species” (Anth, 332-333).

²¹ Piché, “Kantian Enlightenment as a Critique of Culture”, p. 209.

²² SF, 129ff. In *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, in line with the *Religion* work, Kant explicitly explained that it is “unjust” to demand that laypersons do not use their own reason in matters of religion. Given that religion is to be considered from a moral point of view, it could not be properly exercised as such if it the believer does not use his own reason. See, for instance, Anth, 200: “It is unjust to demand that the so-called layperson (*laicus*) do not use her own reason in religious matters, that she ought to follow instead the appointed cleric’s (*clericus*) reason, that is, an alien reason, because it must be considered as moral. For regarding morals, each one has to be responsible for his own doings and omissions, and the cleric will not assume accountability for that at his own peril, and indeed he cannot. But in these cases, human beings are inclined to seek for more security for their persons by renouncing to all use of their own reason and by submitting themselves passively and obediently to the propositions established by holy men. However, they do this not so much because of a feeling of their incapacity to understand (for the essence of all religion is moral, which soon becomes clear for every human being), but out of bad faith, partly to be able to throw the guilt on someone else, partly and especially to elegantly avoid what is what is essential, the change of heart, which is more difficult than mere cult”.

against churches not only because they supply excuses to remain morally immature. His opposition to them is due to the part they play in conveying doctrines that are *ad hoc* designed by a command of the government to impose ideas of the good, that is, a certain heteronomous morality, on the people. This state of affairs that did take place in Kant's contemporaneity is reproachable not only because this imposition is a flagrant violation of autonomy. It is also a situation pervaded by political illegitimacy, for the ulterior motive of this imposition is to shape citizens' judgements and conduct so that they fit the "need" of the government to have them under control.

As to the faculty of law, Kant repeats the disapproval he had already expressed against jurists in *Doctrine of Right*²³ and against political moralists, who accommodate to the existing government in search for their private advantage, in *Perpetual Peace*,²⁴ to wit: that jurists do not think for themselves because they do not evaluate whether positive laws are just or not. They study law only on the command of the government to adapt their doctrines of the "civil well-being" to produce certain "incentives" "to maintain their [that is, the subject's] external conduct under the leash of public law".²⁵

From these reflections we can gather some conclusions pertaining to Kant's concept of enlightenment. A first point to highlight is that the doctrines of the higher faculties

As I read it, this entails an attack against institutionalized religion, and not merely to the self-incurred immaturity of believers. We should consider this critique of parishioners together with the idea that as appointed "officials", clerics are not allowed to use their own reason. In other words: clerics do not use their own reason even when the matter they treat is moral, and thus demands autonomy, while laypersons are demanded to use their own reason concerning those same matters. But if those doctrines are not produced by an autonomous and free use of reason, then using one's reason could demand disregarding institutional dogmas in their entirety.

²³ Cf. MS, 229-230, §§ A and B.

²⁴ Cf. ZeF, 374

²⁵ SF, 22.

emanate from heteronomous, merely empirical sources, that is., the Bible, the official positive legal corpus, and sanctioned medical protocols.²⁶ Therefore, we can say that their purpose is not even knowledge. What is their proper aim, then? Kant is explicit about this: learned men from the higher faculties aim to accommodate theories about those empirical sources so that they can assure the government a strong and lasting control over the people. Now, this gives us another key to understanding why these learned men do not exercise free reasoning: the government they obey is not the rule of the united will of the people, but of someone who needs to *hegemonize* the people. Put in other words, these learned men obey a regimen that is not republican, but a despotic one, for under it “the public will is manipulated by the ruler as if it were his own private will” (ZeF, 352). This is, then, the main reason why these learned men are not *stricto sensu* enlightened: they act on the command of a contingent, arbitrary authority whose legitimacy they do not even question.

From this point it also follows that, as a call to use one’s own reason, Kant’s *Aufklärung* targets public culture itself as it is produced by men of learning. We should further note that the members of the higher faculties do not act irrationally; they use, on the contrary, an instrumental reason oriented to heteronomous ends; they incarnate that very means-to-ends rationality Adorno and Horkheimer ascribed to enlightenment. The point I wish to stress here is that the despotic aim of manipulating the people pervades public culture in a counter-enlightened fashion, by orchestrating the production of public doctrines which are designed as instruments to secure political domination.²⁷ This, in turn, sheds light on the

²⁶ See SF, 23: “The biblical theologian (as member of a higher faculty) elaborates his doctrines not from reason, but from the *Bible*; the professor of law, not from natural law, but from the *Landrecht*; the medical specialist does not elaborate *his therapeutics to be applied to the public* from the physiology of the human body, but from the *medical protocols*.”

²⁷ The distinction between public and private or particular uses of reason receives thusly a further qualification. Under a political regimen that is not republican, the *res publica* and also public culture

controversial idea of a “self-incurred” immaturity and allows us to see that emerging from tutelage is not entirely nor exclusively up to an individual’s courage. For contrary to what we could think if we only payed attention to the definition of *Aufklärung* in the 1784 essay isolated from Kant’s political philosophy, Kant did think that there was an entire social and political culture that hindered the decision to emerge from our immature situation because it inhibited our very awareness of it. I analyse some corollaries of this in the following concluding section.

III: Enlightenment and popular sovereignty

The definition of enlightenment as using one’s understanding without guidance of tutors within the public realm has led the specialized literature to link enlightenment and public use of reason to the three maxims of thinking Kant enumerated in the third *Critique*, in his *Logic* and in his *Anthropology*.²⁸ These maxims are: “1) Think *for*

itself are considered as the private matters of the ruler. In an annotation to the § 110 of Achenwall’s *Iuris naturalis pars posterior*, Kant had characterized despotism as the ‘patrimonial government’, because the head of the state considers the country as his own ‘assets and property’ [‘haab und gut’]. (Refl. 797, XIX: 571). The idea that a despotic ruler sees the land and its inhabitants as things of their property appears also in MS, § 55, and in the second part of *Conflict*.

²⁸ This definition is found in WiA, 3536. The conception of autonomous use of reason emerging from these principles is not merely descriptive of human cognitive capacities. It is a critical conception that states the conditions of possibility for an autonomous use of reason. In Log, 57, Kant calls these maxims “general rules and conditions to avoid error in general”, and enumerates them as follows: “1) think for oneself; 2) think in the place of others, and 3) always think in consistence with oneself. The maxim of thinking for oneself can be named the enlightened way of thinking; the maxim of locating oneself in the point of view of others when thinking, the extended way of thinking; the maxim of always thinking consistently with oneself, the consequent or convincing way of thinking.”

oneself. 2) In communication with human beings, think into the place of *every other*. 3) Always think consistently with oneself”.²⁹ From her analysis of these maxims, Deligiorgi concludes that “the interpretation of intellectual freedom as rational autonomy brings to light the relation between three elements: the individual’s judgement, the universal horizon of reflection about the criteria underpinning the judgement, and communicative relation between individuals”.³⁰ Following O’Neill’s influential work on Kant’s public reason, and based on this linkage between enlightenment and communication, her thesis on Kant and the culture of enlightenment consists in that this culture is universally inclusive in two senses: because the scope of the “*sapere aude*” motto includes every human being and because participation in the public use of reason is opened to all.³¹

Piché has contended that although Deligiorgi is right in that the call to use one’s reason is universally inclusive, inclusion in the public communicational sphere is not, for it

In Anth, 228-229, Kant says they “lead to [practical] wisdom” and that they “can be made unchallengeable commands for the class of thinkers”: “1) Think *for oneself*. 2) In communication with human beings, think into the place of *every other*. 3) Always think consistently with oneself. The first principle is negative (*nullius addictus iurare in verba Magistri*), the principle of a way of thinking free of coercion; the second one is the positive principle of the liberal way of thinking that makes room for the concepts of others; the third is the principle of the consequent (coherent) /229/ way of thinking”.

In KU, § 40, 294, Kant calls them “maxims of the common human understanding”: “1) think for oneself; 2) think into the place of others; 3) always think consistently with oneself. The first one is the maxim of a way of thinking free from prejudices, the second one, of the extended way of thinking, the third one, of the consequent way of thinking. The first is the maxim of a never passive reason.”

²⁹ Anth, 228.

³⁰ Deligiorgi, *Kant and the Culture of Enlightenment*, p. 85.

³¹ For Deligiorgi, Kant’s “austere definition of enlightenment in terms of a particular use of one’s reason” necessarily leads to examining the principles guiding this use, which in turn leads us to acknowledge the “material conditions of enlightenment, or the sort of substantive commitments we undertake when we seek to abandon our self-incurred immaturity” (Deligiorgi, *Kant and the Culture*

would be opened only to learned men. Although I do not agree with this latter statement, Piché has a valid point concerning the *target* of enlightenment, for his thesis about the narrow conception of the public use of reason implies that learned men ought to reflectively apply enlightenment to their own way of thinking and producing knowledge. His argument could be summarized as follows. In the first place, Piché rightly reminds us that Rousseau's critique of culture has deeply influenced Kant and distanced him from the mainstream enlightened thinkers of eighteenth century Prussia.³² Indeed, in his 1786 intervention in the *Pantheismusstreit*, the essay "What is Orientation in Thinking?", Kant states that enlightenment is not about merely gaining knowledge and information for its own sake, but about the way we use our own reason.³³ Moreover, we could add, enlightenment is essentially a matter of practical philosophy, given the pre-eminence of the practical use of reason over the theoretical one. Thus, Piché highlights the fact that, for Kant, "cultural progress does not necessarily go hand in hand with moral progress, as the seventh Proposition of the essay on Universal history reminds us", to conclude that "if Kant is to maintain a conception of

of Enlightenment, 76). These commitments and material conditions form the culture of enlightenment, which "is not hierarchically structured in the manner of guardianship, but inclusive and egalitarian because what vouchsafes this sphere are the freedoms of participation and of communication" (ibid.). The majority of the positive receptions of Kant's Aufklärung within the Kantian research focus on the communicational aspect of enlightenment and on the conception of freedom of communication included in it. In the line of O'Neill, Deligiorgi correctly differentiates Kant's defence of freedom of speech on the basis of the participatory conception of rational autonomy from the liberal tradition: "In contrast to contemporary liberal defences of free speech, Kant proceeds on the basis of what he considers to be the essential requirements for rational autonomy, and not from a notion of basic individual rights. The introduction of a communicative element alongside the principles of inclusion and of publicity indicates that autonomous reasoning is not something a thinker can do on her own. This is not because of a limitation implicit in the principles of public reasoning, but rather because of a limitation suffered by the thinker" (Deligiorgi, *Kant and the Culture of Enlightenment*, 85).

³² Piché, "Kantian Enlightenment as Critique of Culture", 205ff.

³³ See WDO, 146-147, footnote.

enlightenment, it will have to include a flexible stance toward science and culture. It will have to be an enlightenment of the enlightenment”.³⁴

Now, if we apply the maxims of thinking to the way the members of the higher faculties produce their doctrines, we will see they do not comply with them. The problem Kant detects is, then, that the very production of culture within the educated realm is vitiated by a private and instrumental use of reason. As the consequent products have a strong influence over the way the people thinks, the *gelehrte* world itself must be put under the all-crushing inspection of critique. But the aporia is that intellectuals would hardly undertake this task themselves *qua* intellectuals, that is, as men on letters and members of the higher faculties. For could we really expect that they would say something in the public use of reason and then the contrary as culture professionals, that is, as complying with one and the same function, as the *Aufklärung* essay candidly seems to suggest? As I see it, the only solution at hand is that enlightenment must be carried out by the people itself. There are two main reasons for this. First, the learned world is not, for Kant, in the position to enlighten itself, since they would not exercise an autonomous use of reason *even as intellectuals*. Second, because enlightenment involves a certain “way of thinking”, and, by definition, this cannot be *imposed* on someone from above.

In his *Anthropology* text, Kant stated that “*wisdom*, as idea of the practical use of reason in perfect accordance with law, is probably too much to demand of human beings. However, not even the minimum grade of it can be infused in them by someone else, but they must bring it out by themselves”.³⁵ As practical wisdom, enlightenment is something we must do by ourselves, otherwise it would not enlightenment in the first place. This is why in this

³⁴ Piché, “Kantian Enlightenment as Critique of Culture”, 206.

³⁵ Anth, 200. This also means that enlightenment, as wisdom, is not a matter of acquiring scientific knowledge or elaborating it, about learning or producing theoretical and doctrinal contents.

same passage Kant calls the “exit from one’s self-incurred immaturity” “the most important *revolution within the human being*”.³⁶ To attain wisdom by ourselves, we must adopt, he continues, the three maxims of thinking. Now, in a cultural context pervaded by an instrumental reason at the service of political domination, what do these maxims, taken as necessary principles to attain an emancipated way of thinking, demand us? As I see it, the “thin for oneself” maxims requires us to gain awareness of our intellectual and vital location within this culture and of how it determines our vision of the world. The second maxim, “think into the place of others”, asks us to communicate our thoughts reciprocally in the public use of reason. The third and properly practical maxim of “thinking consistently with oneself” demands us to assume and maintain a certain stance regarding the current cultural and political configurations of reason.

But clearly it is not that simple to comply with these maxims in a cultural context where culture products themselves are sources of discursive distortions. Kant states this explicitly:

It is difficult for the individual person to work her way out from this immaturity which has become almost natural. She has even become fond of it and for the time being she is incapable of using her own understanding. For *she has never been allowed to try to do so*. Dogmas, statutes and formulas, those *mechanical instruments of a rational use or, better said, of a misuse of her natural gifts*, are the iron fetters of a permanent immaturity (WiA, 36, my emphasis).

Once we notice that the tutors from which we must free ourselves are “institutions”, “dogmas, statutes and formulas” that *do not allow* us to think for ourselves, and not mere

³⁶ Anth, 200, my emphasis.

arrogant individuals who take it upon themselves to teach us something we can simply reject learning, we see that emerging from immaturity demands, first of all, realizing that *one's free thinking is being deliberately hindered by a complex system of institutions and cultural phenomena*. As a consequence, when we consider ourselves as individuals, our immaturity is not fully self-incurred. It is indeed self-incurred when we see ourselves as free rational (finite) beings, as human collective, in the sense that this immaturity is the outcome of a human doing, not something for which we could blame nature. But emerging from immaturity is not a simple matter of having inner courage and leaping alone.³⁷ It is first and foremost a matter of realizing that there are many hindrances to that very internal coming of age, and that these obstacles are external and produced under and by certain political conditions. Since its main object is culture, this awareness of cultural facts can only be brought about by a communal public effort.

Regarding this point, Piché contrasts Hamann's critique to Kant's position. He states that "Kant cannot agree" with Hamann when this latter hold that "it is not permissible to accuse the masses of being responsible for their immaturity. They are literally held in a state of submission by an absolutist regime and they cannot be accused of not breaking the chains in which the guardians hold them. Immaturity cannot be said to be self-incurred; it is imposed from the outside".³⁸ Piché suggests that these guardians cannot be accused for keeping ordinary people in an immature condition, for "enlightenment is precisely a matter of courage

³⁷ Bartuschat also emphasizes the significance of the fact that, for Kant, it is not that simple to emerge from immaturity and makes this fact central to his analysis. He points, for instance, that emerging from tutelage "demands clearly more of the individual than merely mobilizing the subjective vital forces of one's determination to which the Horatian formula, already familiar in the enlightenment before Kant, alludes" (Bartuschat, Wolfgang, "Kant über Philosophie und Aufklärung", in Klemme, Heiner, ed. *Kant und die Zukunft der europäischen Aufklärung*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, 7-27, 8).

³⁸ Piché, "Kantian Enlightenment as Critique of Culture", 213.

and personal decision, and therefore it cannot be understood as a top-down process”.³⁹ The learned ones, however, do have a task in this, as for them “enlightenment means adopting a critical attitude toward the products of culture and especially toward the sciences taught in the higher faculties in order to prevent this knowledge from being fetishized by the people”.⁴⁰ But let us note that the culture and knowledge produced by these learned men are precisely designed to be fetishized by the people. So, against Piché, and getting Kant closer to Hamann, the question arises: Does the great influence of priests and jurists depend entirely on the people’s giving them that power? It certainly implies that the members of the higher faculties and also of priests and officials in general do accept to play the role the existing political power asks them to play. They do not exercise their own reason since they agree to use it in an instrumental way, to promote the need of the government to influence the people’s way of thinking. They are surely completely responsible for their immaturity, which is self-incurred *stricto sensu*. However, the manipulation of the people’s capacity of judgement in which these learned men take part cannot be attributed to the people for a simple reason: it is the greatest intended hindrance to its emancipation. Kant’s views on the production of culture lead us to ask: How could isolated individuals use their own practical reason if their way of thinking itself is being shaped by cultural doctrines that respond to an instrumental reason?

Against one of the main theses of *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, the previous analyses lead us to conclude that Kant’s enlightenment is not a rationalizing, instrumentalizing process of knowledge at the service of the *statu quo*, intended to deceive the masses.⁴¹ On the contrary, Kant’s *Aufklärung* is the political and normative evaluation of the historical and present

³⁹ Piché, “Kantian Enlightenment as Critique of Culture”, 213.

⁴⁰ Piché, “Kantian Enlightenment as Critique of Culture”, 213.

⁴¹ Cf. Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Continuum, 1989, 42.

configurations of reason itself in all of its uses (scientific, technical, pragmatic, moral and juridical), and the aim of this evaluation is to denounce that these deceiving rationalizations of the Westphalian political powers hamper popular emancipation.

Adorno's and Horkheimer's central thesis concerning Kant's enlightenment is that it is a closed system.⁴² The vision of enlightenment as a closed system explains the rest of the traits these authors ascribe to it as a process taking place in history and as an idea they find it in texts of the Western culture. Indeed, it explains why enlightenment would be destined from the start to self-destruction, to relapsing into what it was supposed to be its enemy: mythology.⁴³ But to declare that the self-destruction of enlightenment consists in its becoming a mythology implies that enlightenment deliberately assumes to fight mythology. Adorno and Horkheimer start from a prejudice, at least as far as Kant's *Aufklärung* is concerned. For as we saw, Kant did not see an enemy in irrationality, but in the subversion of the relationship between reason and authority and in the separation of reason from both its normative constraints and its proper agent. Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of Kant's *Aufklärung* is permeated by two false premises, one concerning (a) *the target of reason's critique*, a second one (b) relating *the agent who exercises that critique*.

⁴² Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 81ff.

⁴³ Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 24: "enlightenment is as totalitarian as any system. Its untruth does not consist in what its romantic enemies have always reproached it for: analytical method, return to elements, and dissolution through reflective thought; but instead in the fact that for enlightenment the process is always decided from the start". The "self-destruction of the enlightenment" is the declared topic of their reflections; cf. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xiii. The thesis that enlightenment entails a mythology was not first advanced by Adorno and Horkheimer. It was, indeed, the main counter-enlightened critique of Hamann. For Hamann's attack to the Prussian enlightenment in these terms, see Laestition, "Kant and the End of Enlightenment in Prussia", p. 70.

(a) For Kant, the public use of reason applies to a specific object, reason itself.⁴⁴ The need to apply reason's critique to the products of reason lies in the fact that our reasoning is the only source of any legitimate authoritative claim. But, as O'Neill noted, "reason's authority, like other human authorities, is humanly instituted".⁴⁵ Since there is no such a thing as a reason independent of real reasoning and no real reasoning outside of the community of reasoners, the institution of reason's authority must fulfil certain conditions to be legitimate. The most important one is that everyone's reasoning is granted freedom "to set out for judgement our thoughts and doubts [...] without being denounced as an agitator and dangerous citizen. This lies already in the original right of human reason, which in turn recognizes no other judge than the very universal human reason in which everyone has a voice".⁴⁶

To explain why freedom of public communication is necessary, Deligiorgi focuses on the relationship between our cognitive fallibility and the epistemic virtues of public reasoning.⁴⁷ But against giving so much justificatory force to our fallibility, against an epistemic justification of freedom of communication, we must notice that if our immature

⁴⁴ Cf. KrV, A738 B 766-767: "In all of its undertakings, reason must subject itself to criticism and cannot harm its freedom without damaging itself and without drawing upon itself a suspicion to its own detriment. There is nothing so important regarding benefit, nothing so sacred that could elude this scrutinizing and examining inspection, which knows of no personal authority. Upon this freedom is based the very existence of reason, which does not have a dictatorial authority; its sentence is always nothing more than the agreement of free citizens. Each one of them must be able to express his objections and even his *veto* / B767 / without reservations".

⁴⁵ O'Neill, Onora. "The Public use of Reason", *Political Theory* 14, 4 (1986): 523-551, 539.

⁴⁶ KrV, A 752, B 780.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Deligiorgi, *Kant and the Culture of Enlightenment*, 86: "in this passage [KrV, A 752, B 780], Kant links what he calls 'the original right of human reason' with the fallibility of human reasoners". Free public reasoning serves, in this framework, to improve our condition as reasoners, provided that publicity implies a series of constraints which counterbalance our fallibility as individual reasoners.

condition is self-incurred, then it is not due to a flaw in our natural constitution. Freedom of communication in the public use of reason cannot be justified only as a way to avoid the shortcomings of our finite reasoning. It is also and mainly *normatively* demanded by Kant's idea of omnilateral justification. For even if we could find someone whose reason is perfect, this person would still not be authorized to unilaterally impose her thoughts on us. (b) So I think these passages from "The discipline of pure reason regarding its polemic use" mean that the agent of rational criticism is a concrete collective subject, not some abstract transcendental ego. Kant's ideas of omnilateral justification and of an "original right" of reason do not entail some hypostasized faculty whose main activity is the mathematization of nature, as Adorno and Horkheimer,⁴⁸ but demand, on the contrary, a concrete communication of thoughts by concrete people.

Kant expounded his thoughts on the task of philosophy as problematization of present-ness not in the void, but as response to a despotic political situation. It is essential to grasp the connection between Kant's critical analysis on university policies in terms of the relationship between reason and authority and his republican ideal. By failing to see the intrinsic connection between Kant's *Aufklärung* and the autonomy of the public will, Foucault is lead to believe that Kant's enlightenment can be reduced to a sort of application of the critique of pure reason to history. I think that the main cause for this is that Foucault treats the subject from a too narrow and not fully pertinent selection of Kantian sources, which prevents him to acknowledge the full scope of Kant's *Aufklärung* as well as its true political meaning. This seems clear when Foucault contrasts his view of Kant's criticism and his own proposal: "if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, [...] the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by

⁴⁸ See Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 82-ff.

whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary consensus?”⁴⁹ However, this very transgression of the contingent and arbitrary consensus is what Kant meant when he stressed the difference between the private use of reason by the members of the learned world, who merely serve to guarantee a solid influence of the government on the people, and the free and public use of reason exercised by philosophers. For the problem with the higher faculties is not merely that they produce doctrines that pretend to appear as universally valid truths, but chiefly that they are mere vehicles of dominance. If we simply assume, as Foucault and Adorno and Horkheimer did, that Kant’s criticism reduces itself to the limits of knowledge, then we will not understand the critical potential of his concept of enlightenment. Finding the limits of scientific knowledge is the task of the first *Critique*, that is: it is only one part of Kant’s wider enterprise.

In a political present of despotism and manipulation of the general will, the motto “*sapere aude!*” should be translated into political terms: emancipation is not to be expected from above. Therefore, only the people can take the reins of enlightenment as the free use of autonomous practical reasoning. Kant’s concept of enlightenment can serve as a political criterion to dismantle discursive and coercive distortions that obstruct political emancipation; as such, it can only be applied by the people in its public willing and judgement. In turn, emancipation by enlightenment can only be achieved by communities, and individually only by one’s membership in a concrete collective subject. On this essential feature of Kant’s enlightenment lies its potential for political emancipation.

Acknowledgments

⁴⁹ Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”, 45.

This paper is product of research financially supported by the National Agency for Scientific and Technological Promotion of Argentina, which granted me a research fund to study Kant's reception of modern natural law theories ("La recepción kantiana de las teorías modernas iusnaturales y del contrato social", PICT-2014-0669, 2015-2017), and by CONICET. Some of the results expounded here have been discussed at the International Interdisciplinary Conference "The Enlightenment from a Non-Western Perspective", University of Sophia (May, 23rd to 25th, 2016). I warmly thank all the colleagues who attended my lecture in the beautiful Sophia and also the anonymous reviewer for their insights on my work.

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