

**THE MEANINGS OF THE CHOSEN CONCEPTS:
EPISTEMOLOGICAL NOTES STARTING FROM THE BOOK
BY TIBOR SZABÓ, *GLOBAL WORLD INSTABILITY*,
Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018**

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Abstract. The intention of this paper is a short review. However, the reading has generated some remarks which concern both some concrete aspects dealt with in the book and the certain methods used to indicate political opinions through the appearance of a “neutral” approach. The book is an expose of some ideas promoted by the papers which have been chosen by the author in order to show the concerns and the problems related to the present world instability. The most important features of the method used by the book is the critical avoidance of tackling the ideas, of confronting alternative ideas and, especially, of developing and confronting the arguments. As a result, the explanatory power of the book (and the ideas contained) is null, the final impression of readers being the same metaphorically expressed worry as the one from the title.

The main idea of the book is that, in the complexity of facets of world instability, the most important are migrations and terrorism. They are related especially to Europe, and thus “global instability” is seen from the standpoint of a specific understanding of the European status quo.

Keywords: *instability, vulnerability, terrorism, race, migrations, epistemological criticism.*

Criticism is always in advantage: because it comes after the piece of writing it is about. And because even the piece of writing is only a moment in the author’s research.

The book we review is conceived of by a philosopher. *Global World Instability*, by Tibor Szabó, long time professor of political and philosophical ideas, mostly Italian, French and Hungarian, in different Hungarian and foreign universities. Therefore, we confront the book’s contents with the concepts considered by Szabó as unifying the problems and giving overall coherence to the “big picture” of the present global political world.

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The main concept is that of *instability*. It is related to *uncertainty*, not as an epistemological concept but as a synonym for instability from the standpoint of difficulty of predicting future developments. The main concept does not represent a novel feature of the world, since there were many unstable periods in the entire history, but describes “*the main and defining ontological phenomenon of our world*”¹.

How is the concept of instability analysed? First, it is not analysed at all, meaning that it is not decomposed from the standpoint of significance, using explicit criteria. It is only described as resulting “if the qualitative and quantitative changes within customary networks of being – in my view, the mark of philosophy is when we use such words as being (not with capital letter, as in Heidegger, but however it is the warrant, is it?) And this reference to being is very frequent – threaten the integrity of the wider structure”².

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However, my criticism begins, since the book relates instability to political relations, what does instability mean in a philosophical view about politics? It is – making a pair with stability – the result of power relations, which are domination-submission relations both from a geopolitical standpoint and an internal standpoint and which, both of them, reflect in different ways what we formulate as class oppositions. Therefore, all of these domination-submission relations are conflicts and, inherently, when the pressure of forces that opposes the dominant stability is too disturbing/strong, the ideologies of stability/“law and order” denounce “instability”. To show the origin of stability and instability in class and power relations – and it is amazing that the author neither questions the ends of stability and instability nor is he troubled by the strong (internal and international) conflicts during the “golden age” of post-war “stability”, or during the pre-Renaissance epoch (considered by him, p. 10) – does not mean “post-modern relativism”, but is a sine qua non for the understanding of their structural causes, beyond the surface of recalcitrant behaviour of the migrants: because, indeed, the book’s object is the phenomenon of migration.

In what sense was the pre-Renaissance epoch “relatively stable”? On a global level? (But let’s remind ourselves that there was no global level before the advent of modernity); in Europe? In different countries or regions? Do we not remember the many wars, revolts and latent/unheard opposition followed by bloody pacification? And can we ignore that the price of “stability” in different post-Renaissance moments and countries was paid for with wars, destruction, and slavery? The price of “stability” is never considered by the book.

Why would the former “stability” be better than the new instability? Did all the classes of the “stable” societies want that “stability”?

¹ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, p. 12.

² *Ibidem*, p. 21.

What were the objective and the subjective conditions of “stability” and why does the present order no longer work so “smoothly” as before?

Therefore, the first task of the political analysis is to explain the concepts used and especially the ordering/central concepts.

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The book does not represent a philosophical reflection, but a display of chosen political ideas about “our present age”³. *Every book makes choices in advance, but after these choices the book deploys logical arguments in order to defend its theses. Here there are no arguments, but only theses.*

The “philosophical challenges of instability” are “the crisis symptoms within Western world” (“the white European populations are diminishing...in contrast with migrant formations where the fertility rate is higher”⁴, an idea revealed and strengthened by Spengler and by Huntington’s clash of civilizations – namely between white culture, even in the form of eventual European/white multiethnic societies and the immigrants who reject assimilation⁵; they occur whenever the migration phenomenon transforms or even breaks up “traditional European structures”⁶. *What kind of relations does the concept of ‘traditional’ cover?*

Also, “philosophical challenges of instability” occur whenever people feel insecure, but this is only a sentiment, while instability is an objective condition and – equating the concept of instability with what does happen nowadays – irreversible⁷. *But since instability is a concept and not a simple feature of the present state of things, how could it be considered as describing a structurally irreversible situation? Do we not know that old instable relations of force have turned stable (and the unstable again)?*

Why would the present instability be more important than ever before? The key elements are the following: 1. the environmental causes, insists the book in a chapter, and 2. the many crises making instability irreversible.

However, the philosophical analysis continues through the emphasis that “the essence of our age”⁸ indicates the centrality of irreversible instability, through the identification of some attributes given to the epoch (such as “post-modern”, or ‘post-industrial’, or “the information age”, or “(the age) of globalisation”⁹, because

³ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 15-16.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 25, 26.

⁹ Nowadays, namely, from the 70s-80s of the last century, globalisation consists not in the worldwide sale of the products made by national labour forces in Western countries and neither in the export of capital, as in the last two decades of the 19th century and the entire imperialist period of the *national capital phase of capitalism*, *i.e.* of the relation of national capital with their national labour forces; but in the worldwide selling by trans-national capitals of the products made by international labour forces, *i.e.* the present globalisation is the *trans-national phase of capitalism*. Therefore, we can understand that the same concept – globalisation – has different contents, according to the concrete development of capitalism. Despite the book’s naïve conception of globalisation as specific only to the last decades, it characterised, but with *different* meanings, at least the entire history of the 20th century, as we saw, and especially the “gilded” post-war period, considered by the book as the criterion against which the present is compared. Efforts at *integration* of the regional economic

it is the shaking of the old European values, “such as freedom and stability”¹⁰, by “the rise of anomie and instability within the socio-political system”¹¹; this earthquake led to “relativity, the lack of absolute value, (as) one of the most important characteristics of our age”¹².

Well, if it concerns philosophy, we do not have to bother with the *explanation* of the waves of capitalism, was the book’s assumption, it’s enough to mention a) “imperialism” “following minor changes in forms accompanied by worldwide expansion”, b) a vague “threat of socio-political revolution...very great at the beginning of the 20th century” (my observation, certainly, not the 19th, as in the text, by mistake), c) “in an economic sense, the two destructive world wars of the last century helped capitalism to survive” (my emphasis, *once more, it is a pity the author has avoided any explanation and philosophical analysis of the logic of facts and their significances*), d) the economic boom of the post-war welfare state, together with the agreement between the two super-powers, and a unified Europe in the shape of the European Union¹³; because all of these are exterior to the concept of stability, are they?

And “the essence” consists not only in relativity, but also in the “vulnerability” of the world order¹⁴; a feature manifested with the destruction of Twin Towers in 2001¹⁵; and because “the US became one of the main targets of global terrorism”, the ‘War on Terror’ was legitimate (*ibidem*); this essence, visible in 2001, is underlined again, consisting in the “break in the socio-political network of being”, and especially (*sic*) of Europe’s¹⁶.

However, besides “other phenomena such as ecological problems”, the “political crisis” was the most important¹⁷; from the 2001 moment onward scientists have emphasised uncertainty, with the resulting wars and, considered the most important, “the waves of migration toward the European Union”; why was it the most important? Most certainly, “we have had to adapt ourselves to real change in the historical network of being” and to decide “whether and how we are able to accept modifications to traditional ways of life in Europe”¹⁸. A real shock

processes have started already from the Marshall Plan. This one was motivated not only by political reasons but also by economic ones (the need of American industries to have markets in Europe, so a rising European purchasing power, possible only through the economic development). Marie-Laure A. Djelic, *Exporting the American Model: The Post-War Transformation of European Business*, Oxford University Press, 1998, has shown that even the Marshall Plan has involved the transfer of American corporate model, and also the production-line of Fordism and, generally, the new American principles of management. And this meant also a *convergence of national systems of industrial production*.

¹⁰ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, p. 27.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 25.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

¹⁵ It’s interesting that a philosopher and historian of political ideas – accustomed to the dialectic of evolution – could consider the 2001 event to be an as inflection point.

¹⁶ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, pp. 35, 36.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

occurred, generating political responses, when the European Union underwent the mass migration from 2015 onward¹⁹.

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Therefore, there are enough doubtful aspects: 1) how can a philosopher speak about “absolute” values? What example of absolute value could he offer? Did the dethroning of the absolute domination of the church not occur before then, related to the advent of modernity? And which are – besides “freedom and stability” – the “essential (mainly European) values”? And what are the meanings of “freedom and stability”? But does the deciphering of values not lead to the understanding of their extra-axiological causes, leaving aside that neither the axiological/cultural/super-structural characterisation is explained at all? And since no concept is explained, the addition of new and new ones only confuses the picture. The text jumps from values to (only) an examination of the economy and public policies, and back, or from geopolitics to culture and back, but this examination does not explain the logic of revealed facts.

And this is because the book is careful to not go beyond the frontier of what is acceptable to and from the standpoint of mainstream ideology, and some ideas which might unwillingly appear in the course of the writing. When Marx is quoted – from Dahrendorf²⁰ – or something Marx didn’t say is attributed to him²¹: the “misery predicted” by Marx²², Nietzsche, Spengler, Ortega y Gasset, Durkheim and Simmel, it means not only timorousness but also insufficient carefulness towards the accuracy required by a scientific text.

In their turn, the values he uses are not abstractions, “freedom and stability” must be analysed according to their concrete content: this is already from Hegel, really? And the phases of capitalism must be explained – and this can be done briefly – for otherwise the readers will not infer the features of present instability. The more so because this started before 2001²³ if not long before it.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 30, 31.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

²² Marx did not “predict misery” in the vulgar meaning supposed by this phrase, since he has insisted on the development of the productive means as a structural factor of the social evolution; instead, he explained not only the *roots* of the misery of the workers during the first industrial revolution, but especially the *economic function* of misery in the capitalist economy – to allow to enterprisers more money for the acquisition of machines and to constraint the labour force – with all the contradictions generated by the reduced capacity of industrial workers to buy goods and thus to fuel profit –. Do not forget that Marx was a contemporary of the post 1850 universal exhibitions in England and France. And generally, Marx predicted nothing; he only demonstrated the *economic mechanisms* from which the inference was social polarisation and alienation. Polarisation meant that as the profit share is agglomerating at the “pole” of bourgeoisie, so the misery overwhelms the pole of working people, but he did not forget the historical and social character of concepts (as, here, misery).

²³ In a book and chapter, with direct applicability, Michel Crozier, «La crise des régulations traditionnelles», pp. 371-387, in Henri Mendras (sous la dir. de), *La sagesse et le désordre. France 1980*, Paris, Gallimard, 1980, has shown (p. 373) that “in the last fifteen years, breakdowns were the essential elements of the social control in religion, education, science, and at the level of judges, doctors, technicians and managers...the authority relationships are no longer by themselves...and three crises manifest: the crisis of the decision system, pertaining to government, the crisis of the authority and human relationships, and the crisis in values and culture” (my emphasis).

The concept of *vulnerability*²⁴ requires the identification of this characteristic and of the efficient cause (in Aristotle's term) of the present vulnerability. So, it is about "Western history and civilisation"²⁵, which suffer because of "terrorism" and the huge wave of immigration²⁶.

All of these are presumed to be old phenomena, and the thinkers the book is taken as legitimating authorities/theories emphasize

- 1) the environmental problems (Ulrich Beck),
- 2) the process of globalisation, not explained from an economic and social standpoint, while the political one is a simple waving of "freedom" – and seen through an optimistic lens (Dahrendorf) that nevertheless mentions the "pitfalls" of "the worldwide circulation of people and drugs, the globalisation of mafias and terrorist organisations"²⁷; or through a pessimistic lens (Richard Sennett, *The Culture of New Capitalism*) –,
- 3) the international character of the economy – leading either to a 'democratic deficit', formula taken over from Chomsky²⁸, or manifesting through the domination of finance capital generating a 'global casino', a collocation borrowed from Wayne Ellwood who "cites Karl Polanyi's prediction about market economy"²⁹ –
- 4) the loss, by the state, of its traditional importance (Badie and Smouts)³⁰,
- 5) the 'liquid' state of institutions (Bauman), no longer "models of acceptable behaviours"³¹,
- 6) the fragmentation of communities, "with the consequent break up of national unity", because of the crisis of the classical social model (Touraine)³²,
- 7) therefore, the 'runaway' character of the world (Giddens)³³.

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The theories only name/in the best case, describe (in fact, only recall) some characteristics of the world and their logic appears difficult. Not that the author explains the world instability, the references being only a support, but these references are considered to be a substitute for this job. The text unfolds as if the reader already knows all the concepts which overwhelm the reader. Or, philosophy re-explains things permanently, starting from the standpoint of the new experiences it faces. Actually, no one remembers the quotes, just the logic of the ideas developed in this new text. And just this logic must be assumed and clearly shown by it. If this doesn't happen, why was it written? Neither the logic of capitalism nor of the phases where the state's role can be seen more clearly appear. Nor: 8) Wallerstein's

²⁴ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, p. 28.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 32.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

assertion that the present economic crisis would be “the ‘last crisis’ of the ‘new capitalism’”³⁴. Nor: why the previous institutions – specific to the temporal framework of “the second half of the 20th century”³⁵ – were “models of acceptable behaviour”. And nor: why the thesis “stability requires peace; peace requires stability”³⁶ would be derivable from the above-mentioned aspects, since not a word about the present permanent and escalating warfare – continuing the former permanent wars – was expressed. Actually, in the Western world – for which the author appears as an apologist – there is no war: except the social one, about which the book says even less.

Only the constitutive relations between phenomena outline a coherent image about them/about the inner causality relating them. But at the end the coherent/unitary image of so many phenomena, concepts, and theories is no richer than at the beginning, i. e. at the beginning with the title; the reader concludes that so many thinkers presented just the idea of world instability, eventually pointing some of its facets. And these facets are known. The book should have highlighted the logic/the inner causes/the entelecheia (Aristotle’s concept) of social (economic, political) instability and of its present form. Only through this critical examination of the logic – and the theories about this logic – of instability would the *raison d’être* of the book have been apparent.

Or, the book has rather a “post-modern” look with only its apparent insistence on criticism/critical aspects and theories, but with the message of “pluralism”. From an epistemological standpoint, although it’s normal and accepted that we cannot know everything linked to the texts we write, the reason of a book is to explain something. But if in place of explanations it offers sketchy descriptions and “who knows the answers” to the “questions concerning our present-day and immediate future life conditions”³⁷, it’s difficult to understand why it was written at all. The only way to understand the (controversial) ideas is by critical/logical analysis – and by confronting them with each other – and not by “peaceful pluralism”, i. e. the undisturbed existence of the most contradictory and irrational ideas next to each other –.

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The ecological problems (chapter 3) are correctly identified, *through theorists* who emphasise 1) the necessity of “radical government intervention” in order to stimulate and speed up the *change of mentality and behaviours*, 2) the urgent need for a new economic model, because technology as such cannot solve the ecological impact of the present one³⁸.

But for the author the most acute problem is that of *migration*. It’s significant that from the 15 theses expressed in the book, five and a half concern migration.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 45, 46.

Why “and a half”? Because: in the fifth thesis, the problem of “illegal migrants who threaten to modify the present political, economic and cultural network of being” is equated with the “anti-globalisation protesters” (p. 139), these being considered only in the form of left-wing type movements³⁹. *Of course these two types of problems do not overlap at all*. Rather, the treatment of migrants in the manner the book deals with it is consonant with “right-wing xenophobic populism” in the formula of Will Kymlicka⁴⁰, ideologically far from the “Christian” standpoint, or, more dryly, consonant with the type of policy specific to the concept of a national capital: that it is opposed to any alternative to capitalism in the name of the defence of “its” state from alien ideas and foreign “invaders”. The “anti-global protesters” which the book considers also had at the beginning national capital type illusions, in the form of social state policies. But they have quickly got rid of such illusions, remaining only anti-capitalist, therefore protesting against capitalism and not only against its globalised form. But even the idea of *national sovereignty* (the defence of the “national” state in the name of the assumption that, without foreign influences and power to change the rules, it would defend the population/the ruled) has *different* political meanings – and is subordinated to different policies – some of them supporting the dignity and rights of the majority as *the primary* political goal, as in the some countries in Latin America⁴¹, other considering the goal of control of the state by local/national economic and political ruling strata as the only means to assure their power and to also assure the loyalty of the population through social redistributive policies, and others simply considering control of national state as the means of ensuring the power of the rulers. Here is not the place to elaborate on this problem, but it cannot be solved with cultural arguments – such as those the book deals with – but only by the analysis of (worldwide) class structures, economic and social interests and geopolitical relations.

The problem of migration is seen through their order destructive consequences. For this reason, the author has opposed the human rights to security⁴², *prioritising the latter* because of the illegal and mass character of migration from 2015 on. After presenting the standpoints of politicians and journalists insisting on ‘pity’ and ‘solidarity’ or on the threat posed by the migrants searching for a better life (towards the accepted asylum seekers/refugees), the author concludes with the thesis that the illegal mass migrations, mostly Muslim, change “the entire structure of ethnic being in the European Union”⁴³, including through the low demography of native Europeans, and that the irreversible instability – for these reasons! – is not good at all.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 47, 49.

⁴⁰ Will Kymlicka, *Is there a Christian Pluralist Approach to Immigration?*, April 19th 2018, <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/is-there-a-christian-pluralist-approach-to-immigration/>.

⁴¹ Or as in the popular mentality of France, where the national flag is related to the 1789 revolution, and the promotion of the national, under the form of republic (and social republic), may be an element of popular resistance. Obviously, this resistance may be channelled in left-wing or right-wing directions, therefore the slogan of national sovereignty cannot be analysed separately from the social/political goals.

⁴² Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, pp. 57, 130.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

And – *without any comment* – the last section of the chapter about migration has as its title *Why We Still Need To Talk About Race?*⁴⁴ And it gives a long quote finishing with “avoidance of race undermines our ability to engage in clear and meaningful measures of differences...”⁴⁵, once more, *without saying a word about the historical significance of the concept of race as “legitimizing” subjugation* and that the *present* focus on race as well as the *present* racial consciousness are the result of a *persistent subjugation* and *substitution* of membership of people of the human *species* with the *appurtenance* to “*races*” *allowing the differential treatment of humans*. And if from a history of a history political ideas the reader expects some passages addressing the history of the concepts/ideas advanced in this history – the book fails to meet this expectation – in any way *the transmission of a concept like ‘human races’ ought to have been based on the present data given by science and their theoretical synthesis*⁴⁶: the manner in which the author has absolutely ignored this data and synthesis is incredible. Instead, in an absurd deduction (that we must suppose he made since he treated the problem in such a manner), he equated “race” with cultural differences: which are used by those involved in “racial studies” as “reasons” to exclude some groups of humans from human treatment, long ago transposed as human rights.

Both the ethnic phenomena and the concepts of *race* and *ethnicity* are *culturally* forged and *not innate*: consequently, they cannot substantiate discrimination and subjugation. The possible genetic differences between human groups relate only to biological facts – as health related features – while the *social* (cultural, educational etc.) conditions are the causes of intellectual and, generally, cultural performances. If an old (European) joke asserted that stupidity is largely prevalent, overwhelming intelligence, we have to not neglect the fact that science has *demonstrated the genetic similarity* of all human groups⁴⁷ – forming a single species, *homo sapiens* – and their *heterogeneity*, in spite of some visible traits⁴⁸ borne by genes which have been formed also as a result of natural selection⁴⁹ in the course of the

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 83. The new race and ethnic studies consider that people have “racial consciousness” – Michael Banton, *Ethnic and Racial Consciousness* (1988), second ed., London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 6, exemplified also by “the mass migration of non-European peoples to industrial societies across the world”... “race and ethnic issues as key facets of contemporary societies” (Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, “Introduction”, p. 2, to *Ethnic and Racial Studies Today*, Edited by Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, London and New York, Routledge, 1999).

⁴⁵ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, p. 83.

⁴⁶ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981) Revised & Expanded edition, New York, W. W. Norton & Company; 1996.

⁴⁷ See R. A. Sturm, “Molecular genetics of human pigmentation diversity”, *Human Molecular Genetics*, 2009 Apr 15;18(R1):R9-17. doi: 10.1093/hmg/ddp003; N.G. Crawford, D.E. Kelly, M.E.B. Hansen, M.H. Beltrame et al., “Loci associated with skin pigmentation identified in African populations”, *Science*, 2017 Nov 17;358(6365). pii: eaan8433. doi: 10.1126/science.aan8433. Epub 2017 Oct 12.

⁴⁸ Michael Yudell, Dorothy Roberts, Rob DeSalle, Sarah Tishkoff, “Taking race out of human genetics”, *Science*, 05 Feb 2016, Vol. 351, Issue 6273, pp. 564-565, DOI: 10.1126/science.aac4951.

⁴⁹ Jing Guo, Yang Wu, Zhihong Zhu, Zhili Zheng, Maciej Trzaskowski, Jian Zeng, Matthew R. Robinson, Peter M. Vissker, & Jian Yang, “Global genetic differentiation of complex traits shaped by natural selection in humans”, *Nature Communications*, pp. 1-9, 14 May 2018, DOI: 10.1038/s41467-018-04191-.

historical experience of humans: even the history of this species – from Africa and, further, back – has showed the *general genetic mixture*⁵⁰. This happened because of large and constant *migrations* of populations crossing the entire world, the early human civilisation developing in Africa, and not in “white European territory”, the first European themselves having dark skin. If we cannot annul this *genetic* inheritance and biological organisation – and if we cannot annul the *epigenetic* development – once more we can understand that *social and cultural conditions cannot be erased in the name of genes or genetics. Identity is a cultural phenomenon*, not biological/genetic, and thus it is not productive in the health problems of individuals.

Philosophy cannot consider as an argument for the “legitimacy” of “races” the simple existence of racial ideologies, but, on the contrary, has to question the reasons and substrates of these ideologies. Neither the *causes* of immigration, nor the concerns related to the models of “how the state should govern diversity”⁵¹, thereby including immigrants, are the preoccupation of the book: but only the utterance of laments about the negative results of migration. And this development does imply the freedom to treat the migrants in a manner which places them outside the remit of human rights, does it?⁵²

The book preferred to base on a “scientific racism”⁵³ (*i. e.* racist suggestions⁵⁴, such as the ones from “ethnic and racial studies”, to engage in differential treatment, and not merely to “neutrally” “search for differences” between human groups) that

⁵⁰ See, for the up to date references, *Early human migrations*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_human_migrations, and *Recent African origin of modern humans*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recent_African_origin_of_modern_humans#Admixture_of_archaic_and_modern_humans, (accessed 9 December 2019); Jason Hodgson, Connie J. Mulligan, Ali Al-Meerri, Ryan Raaum, “Early Back-to-Africa Migration into the Horn of Africa”, *PLoS Genetics*, Volume 10, Issue 6, June 2014, pp. 1-18, DOI: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1004393, Source: PubMed; Marcos Gallego Llorente, Anders Eriksson, John Arthur, Matthew Curtis, E. R. Jones, V. Siska, K. W. Arthur, J. T. Stock, M. Coltorti, P. Pieruccini, S. Stretton, F. Brock, T. Higham, Y. Park, M. Hofreiter, D. G. Bradley, J. Bhak, R. Pinhasi, A. Manica, “Ancient Ethiopian genome reveals extensive Eurasian admixture throughout the African continent”, *Science*, pp. 1-7, October 2015, DOI: 10.1126/science.aad2879; M. Hervella, E. M. Svensson, A. Alberdi, T. Günther, N. Izagirre, A. R. Munters, S. Alonso, M. Ioana, F. Ridiche, A. Soficaru, M. Jakobsson, M. G. Netea, C. de-la-Rua. “The mitogenome of a 35,000-year-old Homo sapiens from Europe supports a Palaeolithic back-migration to Africa”, *Scientific Reports*, 2016; 6: 25501 DOI: 10.1038/srep25501; Jean-Jacques Hublin, Abdelouahed Ben-Ncer, Shara E. Bailey, Sarah E. Freidline, Simon Neubauer, Matthew M. Skinner, Inga Bergmann, Adeline Le Cabec, Stefano Benazzi, Katerina Harvati, & Philipp Gunz, “New fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the pan-African origin of *Homo sapiens*”, *Nature*, 546, 2017, pp. 289-292; Vicente M. Cabrera, Patricia Marrero, Khaled K. Abu-Amero & Jose M. Larruga, “Carriers of mitochondrial DNA macrohaplogroup L3 basal lineages migrated back to Africa from Asia around 70,000 years ago”, *BMC Evolutionary Biology*, 19 June, 2018.

⁵¹ Kymlicka, *quoted work*.

⁵² Sherene H. Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*, University of Toronto Press, 2008; but see also a page from Italy - a country seen by Szábo as sharing the same troubles because of immigration, as well as the same policy of rejection of immigrants –: Caitlin L. Chandler, *Rome: Where Migrants Face Eviction as Fascists Find a Home*, January 28, 2019, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/01/28/rome-where-migrants-face-eviction-while-fascists-find-a-home/>. Even from a liberal multiculturalist standpoint, the analysis has demonstrated that this liberal treatment of immigrants is more productive and involves less infringing of the law, see Will Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure and the Future*, Transatlantic Council on Migration, Migration Policy Institute – Europe, 2012.

⁵³ Gavin Evans, *Skin Deep, Journey in the Divisive Science of Race*, Oneworld, 2019.

⁵⁴ Kayla Costa and Nancy Hanover, *Seattle schools propose race-centric “ethnomathematics” curriculum*, 6 December 2019, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/12/06/ethn-d06.html>.

extrapolates statistical correlations and equates some biological correlations with cultural facts, deducing the latter from the former.

But it seems that the author considers it necessary to repeat all the above direct and indirect “arguments” for the rejection of migrants: the significance of migration “is that the ‘Third World’ is penetrating the ‘First World’, definitively transforming traditional European economic, social, political, cultural and ideological networks of being...”⁵⁵.

Even the topic of the future of mankind is marked by the decline of European Union as a result of “socio-political and ethnic” reasons⁵⁶, and by the presumption that the problem of migrations cannot be omitted from the books referred to by the author (“though Brzezinski does not refer to migration as such, it is evident he includes it in his calculus”⁵⁷), and by reference to the “official” position of the European Commission in 2017 about the refugee crisis in 2015⁵⁸. Not a word about the “techno-populist”⁵⁹ responses from above to the general crisis of the system.

* * *

This is not a philosophical approach to treating the problems. Aristotle has long before insisted that a scientific approach – namely, rationally constructed – focuses on the “why” of things. But nowhere in the book there is any such type of question. How can a philosopher only describe the results (and the political positions associated with them), without a word about their deeper causes? Do the migrants not have in their native countries only wars, destruction resulting from the savage neo-liberal exploitation of their natural resources and the destruction of their ways of living and means of life? Can a philosopher speak only about the sovereignty of European states and USA but never about the infringement of the sovereignty of so many countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America?

It is a *Europe-centric / West-centric* standpoint, seeking world stability for the sake of “*the world*” equated to “*we, the Europeans*”. Adopting a theoretical approach, we might say that one of the book’s sub-textual/implicit suppositions is “orientalism”, *i. e.* in Said’s words, “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’”⁶⁰: meaning that, from an *epistemological* viewpoint, it would be acceptable to treat the “rest” differently from the “West”, while from an *ontological* point of view the latter is admittedly “superior” to the former. The reason for this present standpoint is now not a separation founded on spatial distance, as before,

⁵⁵ Tibor Szabó, *Global World Instability*, Budapest, CEPoliti Publishing House, 2018, p. 88.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 91.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 92.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 105-106.

⁵⁹ Christopher J. Bickerton & Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, “‘Techno-populism’ as a new party family: the case of the Five Star Movement and Podemos”, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 2018, pp. 132-150, showing the mixture of technocratic ideology and populist ideologies, by transposing the only solution considered by technocrats into the populist language of “only this solution represents the will of the people”.

⁶⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979, p. 2.

but just the cancelling of the former distance: the immigrants would invade “our space”/“they don’t want to and cannot integrate”, nor “accept our values”.

It is, also, a *conformist* standpoint – *i. e.* that of the dominant political theories, irrespective of their real or imaginary critical stance –. But this standpoint generates a deep epistemological weakness: indeed, not that all of the concepts mentioned in the book are, inherently and normally, ideological – the topic requires this – but this is not assumed: on the contrary, the book presupposes a common viewpoint between the author and the readers; but by only presenting the standpoint of the dominant social forces the author generates both a *reduced information and explanatory image*. If we do not mention also the ideas of the subaltern classes – which are nowadays more visible than when the world was “stable” – and we consider only the “traces” (as Ginsburg said⁶¹), indeed, more prominent, of the dominant groups, we fail to understand, not an abstract contradictory essence of politics, but the *logic* of the phenomena outlining its “instability”.

The scholarly reference to different theories has in this framework a subsidiary epistemological weakness: that of discussing (without causes, without analysis) only *models*, and not reality⁶². The political theories which do not confront themselves with opposing theories – and this means which do not insist on arguments and their distillation, since they do not need to bother with logical difficulties and truth – arrive at a discussion of the complexity of things reduced to their models.

But as we know from the theory of models, the models are selective/select only some aspects. Some such models may well have explanatory power if they clearly assume their reduction/synthetic view about only some aspects, no matter how general. But when the political models are biased and *do not assume this bias – on the contrary, ignore and refute any mention about the bias* – they offer truncated theories. *This amputated appearance comes from amputated premises: because from amputated premises we can only infer crippled conclusions.*

Another aspect is the embracing of only the *dominant political* theories – which are weak because of their absolute separation from/ignorance of *economic* theories and logic⁶³. In this way, these political theories describe only political regimes – and do not discuss, so do not understand their rationale, beyond the historical and political occurrences in their competition related to the struggle for power within the usual competitive rituals⁶⁴. *The book transmits what some writers have said in their*

⁶¹ Carlo Ginsburg, «Traces. Racines d’un paradigme indiciaire», in *Mythes, emblèmes, traces. Morphologie et histoire*, [1986], Paris, Flammarion, 1989, pp. 139-180.

⁶² Every scientific theory is a model. But this theory confronts itself with facts – this meaning, including with other theories – and thus it transforms itself. A model that is not made in this manner is only “ideology”, *i.e.* a cliché.

⁶³ See the history of capitalism, and not only the present neoliberal economy, as revealing a system which included fraud on a structural basis, Jean-François Gayraud, *Le nouveau capitalisme criminel: Crises financières, narcobanques, trading de haute fréquence*, Préface par Paul Jorion, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2014.

⁶⁴ And thus the languages and means of persuasion seem to be the new object of political theories: Elías J. Palti, “The ‘Theoretical Revolution’ in Intellectual History. From the History of Political Ideas to the History of Political Languages”, *History and Theory*, 53, 2014, pp. 387-405.

works but does not explain the processes referred to by these works, and retains from the works only brief descriptions and optimistic or pessimistic messages.

The chapter about consumerism and its critique does not annul the conclusions which, highlighting the “hidden character” of the present society – but, letting aside that, as usual, there are not even suggestions concerning the causes of this feature, the examples enumerates different types of hidden areas as “every nuclear researcher and experiment, new secret technologies, some important facts on the spy satellites in orbit, or what are the real intentions of global terrorist networks, some biological projects menacing humanity”⁶⁵ – remain in the banal dominant pattern where evils, social models, values cannot be distinguished from one another⁶⁶.

* * *

From the standpoint of concrete content, the book’s main argument for the present instability is not the structure of capitalist contradictions but the destruction of the “European identity”. Leaving aside the problems related to the above attribute, *the concept of identity is reduced to some cultural aspects* (or to one, religion?, since the immigrants learn and speak the languages of the countries they aim to settle in): for this reason the book has avoided the problem of human rights: because *these rights involve citizenship, not the cultural identity*.

[Or, on a democratic view, cultural identity is preserved by and, at the same time, subordinated to human rights considered in their 1948 form, and not in their neo-liberal form; in the absence of these human rights, cultural identity is used as an instrument by culturally different dominant layers (namely, remaining at both positions on the immigrants), by transforming it into the “reason” for the insecurity of both the receivers and the immigrants⁶⁷. By the same token, the problem of national sovereignty may be understood in a positive manner, as defence of the social rights of the citizens, or in a negative manner, as defence of the politics of the rulers, including imperialism].

Unfortunately, the book did not treat the problem of cultural identity in relation to humanist values (never was it troubled by problems such as displacement and belonging, the historical reasons of openness and tribalism, of walls and borders), *it has not referred in a critical manner to the books/theories it chose*; thus, the big problem of distorted discourses – as both political tools and representatives of the political actors – was ignored.

* * *

The concepts are *tools of interpretation* and the choice of some or other such tools is not a neutral moment anterior to the scientific demarche as such. On the

⁶⁵ Tibor Szabó, *quoted work*, p. 125.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 166.

⁶⁷ See Jakub Nalichowski, Wrocław University, “On the fetish-character in culture and the regression of community-belonging”. Falling rate of profit, ever-expanding market and multiculturalism, ExCit Conference, Exclusive citizenship and contemporary theories of transnational justice. Multiculturalism, Neutrality, Contract, Free Speech, Neo-racism, Deliberation. Wrocław 23-24 October 2013.

contrary, the choice reveals the ideological assumptions of the author. In the book discussed here the choice of instability as main feature and explanatory factor of the present era of modernity, “post-modernity”, uncovers the deep belief that stability is not only the strongest ordering characteristic of society but also that it is the only thing that could defend man in the face of so many phenomena seen as “inevitable natural occurrences”. Thus, the fear of instability is not a simple rejection of “chaos” towards the “order” given by stability, but also the position of a frightened man behaving at the level of emotions. But this position is different from that of a philosopher, because philosophy has always a *meta* view about things.

Also, the concept of instability, highly relational, cannot be approached only from the standpoint of one of the parts in relationship. Or, differently put, if a relation may be approached from the perspectives of both its parts, actually, it must be approached from both perspectives.

The researcher *chooses* the problem, the view, the references, but at the same time he is *obliged to evaluate* the representation/theory he configures, from the standpoint of its accord with the real facts. Truth results – as we know – from the *correspondence* theory-real facts and from the internal *consistency* of the theory as such. But the *theory sketched here is not demonstrated, neither confronted with the real facts and nor with alternative theories*⁶⁸. Consequently, neither the phenomena and nor the theory (and theories) are questioned.

By the choices he makes, the researcher is both part of the research, involved in it – as in the anthropological demarche – and separated from it, as in an art critique, standing at a distance from his object, the research. But this latter position is that which is more important/ specific to scientific research: the former position is somewhat “natural”, inherent, but the latter imposes *the permanent self-critical and critical tackling, as clear assumption of the presumptions embraced, as analysis of the accuracy of the assumed theory, as confrontation of theory with facts and alternative theories*. The valuable, objective conclusions of a piece of research follow from this “art critique” position.

If one does not *interpret* the *significances* of the concepts – such as race and identity, for example – and theories, supposing that they would be of a separate order from reality, so not having practical consequences, one may arrive at aberrant attitudes, such as the one that subordinates the standards of knowledge to ethnicity⁶⁹ or the one that equates the different *use* of knowledge tools – disciplines, theories, methodologies – with the truth / *logical coherence* and with the effectiveness of these tools, or the one that, in a “post-modern fashion”, deduces the racial and gender fantasy characteristics of science from its historical and social construction, negating the logical criteria of scientific truth

⁶⁸ See a very transparent disclosure: Ajamu Baraka, *Syria: Exposing Western Radical Collaboration with Imperialism*, 28/10/2019, http://www.defenddemocracy.press/syria-exposing-western-radical-collaboration-with-imperialism/?utm_source=Delphi+Initiative+Newsletter&utm_campaign=04aa0e9b05-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_10_27_11_25&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_cca18be42a-04aa0e9b05-173789881

⁶⁹ As described in the note 17.

and theories⁷⁰, irrespective of the problems these criteria raise⁷¹. Because *the real influence of social factors – generally, the history of science – does not annul the criteria of scientific analysis and truth* (historically relative, in a certain epoch/according to certain scientific information and theories, they are scientific analysis and truth): *since these criteria and truth are emphasised in practice. To negate the social factors of science is as absurd as to negate universal human logic and methods of knowing. And when the social factors are almost reduced to ethnic identity, things are more problematic.*

* * *

The manner in which the book is written is not unique or new. It is a sign of post 1945 mainstream thinking, and especially of the post 1990 moment when it seemed, especially to the Eastern intellectuals, that liberal democracy is “the end of history” and its global triumph undisputed. Political scientists – leaving here aside both the tradition of most intellectuals to serve in different ways the dominant layers and the sociological and psychological reasons of this fact – have enrolled into the cohort of subservient tools of the economic and political system. They knew how to do this: even the criticism/the reproduction of criticism – of apparatuses, of culture, of phenomena, of results – is/are respectable when ultimately the causes, the structural relations are not questioned. (Therefore, *criticisms are not equal to each other; not all criticisms are the same*). And since before the 80s, in the mainstream ideology the liberal/social-democratic positions were important, after 1990, the mainstream became neo-liberal, to the right of the former liberalism and with a strong flavour of conservative/even extreme-right accents⁷². Political science has developed in this atmosphere as one of its vectors. Thus, it is the science of *forms* (of political regimes, of political institutions and their relations, of models of politicians and concepts as political goals), *avoiding their critique from outside* (sociology, social psychology, economics): but, as Gödel has demonstrated, the truth of a system is always outside it, in a more encompassing system.

This is the reason why in the pattern of political science generally⁷³ (and especially in the former East-European socialist countries) there is no room for

⁷⁰ Richard C. Brown, *Are Science and Mathematics Socially Constructed? A Mathematician Encounters Postmodern Interpretations of Science*, World Scientific, 2009.

⁷¹ Stephen G. Brush with Ariel Segal, *Making 20th Century Science: How Theories Became Knowledge*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁷² See Felicity Lawrence, Rob Evans, David Pegg, Caelainn Barr and Pamela Duncan, *How the right's radical thinktanks reshaped the Conservative party*, Fri 29 Nov 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/29/rightwing-thinktank-conservative-boris-johnson-brex-it-atlas-network>, with references.

⁷³ It's interesting to note the opposition of mainstream political scientists to the influential – and based on empirical testing and location within the accredited scientific political patterns – Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens”, *Perspectives on Politics*, American Political Science Association, Vol. 12, Issue 3, September 2014, pp. 564-581 –. See, also some opposing articles, Dylan Matthews, *Remember that study saying America is an oligarchy? 3 rebuttals say it's wrong*, May 9, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/5/9/11502464/gilens-page-oligarchy-study>. The article by Gilens and Page measured the American political regime from the standpoint of responsiveness of decisions to the will of the majority of citizens: (p. 576) “our findings indicate, the majority does not rule – at least not in the causal sense of actually determining policy outcomes. When a majority of citizens disagrees with economic

emphasising the *consequences* of the theories it displays and, obviously, *the search for alternatives that would shake the dominant tenets*. It *refuses the questioning of premises and concepts*. When political science does not clone into gender studies, identity studies and geopolitics – and all of these disciplines see their objects as absolutely independent from any other concerns or consequences and relations external to their objects –, it consists in the presentation of several authors/books, ignoring *their social functions which congregate around one unique truth but, at the same time, issuing axiological relativism*. In this way, the reasoning provided by the dominant political science is similar to judgements of taste (if we remember Kant), avoiding their logical analysis and criteria. The prudent political scientists have assumed this show of theories, this “neutral” position of not being the followers of any theory, actually of not being the adepts of some uncomfortable critical theories, and thus of not discussing their truth value.

What must be pointed is that in this pattern of thinking, it’s easy to deduce from historical determinism – that no one rejects nowadays – an axiological relativism. *The “antidote” is to deconstruct the historical theories in order to see what the concepts represent. In the above pattern of thinking, the analysis of concepts is made on the basis that the assumed ideological position is the Truth: this is the axiom of every such analysis*. For this reason, in this framework social systems are reduced to political regimes, conceived of as liberal democracy or non-liberal dictatorship.

* * *

These remarks came automatically just because the method used by the book allowed and even requires the transformation of the methodological aspects into a *problem*. The remarks are necessary, just as the approach given by the book is.

elites or with organized interests, they generally lose. Moreover, because of the strong status quo bias built into the U.S. political system, even when fairly large majorities of Americans favour policy change, they generally do not get it...collectively – ordinary citizens generally know their own values and interests pretty well, and that their expressed policy preferences are worthy of respect. Moreover, we are not so sure about the informational advantages of elites...we see no reason to think that informational expertise is always accompanied by an inclination to transcend one’s own interests or a determination to work for the common good”. But Matthews stated: “In a democracy, if 80 percent of people want universal health care, shouldn’t there be universal health care? But this contention relies on a rather literal, and implausible, definition of democracy”. The counter-arguments gathered by Matthews comprised the political passivity of the average citizen, the non-existence of its technical political expertise, the good governance: *but neither of these criteria contradicts the necessity of responsiveness of political decisions to the interests of the majority*. Put more technically, if the responsiveness of government concretises somewhat the “correspondence” between facts and decisions, the theory of good governance, insisting on the impartiality of institutions (Bo Rothstein and Jan Theorell, “What Is Quality of Government? A Theory of Impartial Government Institutions”, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 2008, pp. 165–190), is a type of internal consistency theory; but as we know, *the truth – the raison d’être of the process of knowing and of the human discourse – is realised by respecting both the correspondence and the consistence criteria*. (In this respect, see Pavel Dufek and Jan Holzer, “Democratisation of Democracy? On the Discontinuity Between the Empirical and Normative Theories of Democracy”, *Representation*, Journal of Representative Democracy, Vol. 49, Issue 2, 2013, pp. 117-134; Andrew Sabl, “The Two Cultures of Democratic Theory: Responsiveness, Democratic Quality, and the Empirical-Normative Divide”, *Perspectives on Politics*, Volume 13, Issue 2, June 2015, pp. 345-346 – although the author seems to oppose to empirical theories, like the one of Gilens and Page –). The problems seem complicated only to “neutral” political scientists.

This approach shows that it is not the end point of the research, but only a preliminary display of some theories about the present instability. At the same time, the book gathered these theories and put the problem of instability to the readers, contributing to their *awareness* of the present-day world. A certain – undisputed – bias is easily discernible in the book. However, just this bias and the simple collection of theories (without deconstructing them) suggest that they will be deconstructed. Once more, not the sociological analysis of how and when the theories appeared, but their *logic*: especially, from the standpoint of the *conclusions* they present.

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