Shkliarevsky Gennady,
Ph.D, Professor of History Emeritus, Bard
College, 5003 Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
USA, tel.: 845-243-4030, shkliare@bard.edu
            ORCID: 0000-0002-2310-5660

Шкляревський Геннадій,
доктор філософії, почесний професор іс-
торії, Бард коледж, 5003 Annandale-on-
Hudson, NY, США, тел.: 845-243-4030,
shkliare@bard.edu
            ORCID: 0000-0002-2310-5660

Шкляревский Геннадий,
доктор философии, почетный профессор
истории, Бард колледж, 5003 Annandale-
on-Hudson, NY, США, тел.: 845-243-4030,
shkliare@bard.edu
ORCID: 0000-0002-2310-5660
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REASON, POWER, AND THE PROJECT OF EMANCIPATION

Abstract. The focus of this article is the project of emancipation — alternately known as the Enlightenment project, or the project of modernity. The principal goal of this project is the elimination of domination and the emancipation of humanity. Having originated during the period of the Enlightenment, this project has powerfully shaped the course of European and world history. Yet despite centuries of progress, the project has still failed to achieve its goal. The article tries to answer one question: Why has the project of emancipation failed to achieve its goal? In answering this question I focus on the work of Jurgen Habermas — arguably the most important contemporary advocate of the project of emancipation — and his proposed solution of this problem. My analysis shows that Habermas, as many of his predecessors, still fails to solve the problem of exclusion. The failure to solve this problem is the main reason why Habermas and the Enlightenment more generally fail to eliminate domination and achieve emancipation. The article argues that in order to solve the problem of exclusion, our civilization must transcend the paradigm of the Enlightenment. It proposes a new theoretical approach that transcends this paradigm. The distinct feature of this new approach is that it is articulated around the process of creation. According to the new approach, the process of creation should be the main focus of our social practice. It also discusses some general principles of the new social practice. Further research

along the lines outlined in this article will be essential for creating and developing new institutional forms that would embody this new social practice.

Keywords: the project of emancipation, the process of creation, Jurgen Habermas, power, domination, and exclusion.

РОЗУМ, ВЛАДА ТА ПРОСВІТНИЦЬКИЙ ПРОЕКТ

Анотація. Розглянуто проект емансипації (також відомий як проект Просвітництва або проект Модернізму). Мета проекту — звільнення суспільства від усіх форм домінування й емансипації людства. Він зародився у період Просвітництва і мав колосальний вплив на хід історичного розвитку як Європи, так і всього світу. Незважаючи на те що людство вже кілька століть намагається здійснити мету проекту емансипації людства, до цих пір вона залишається недосяжною. Чому? У пошуках відповіді проаналізуємо роботи Юргена Хабермаса — одного з найвидатніших сучасних філософів і соціологів. У своїх роботах Хабермас намагається вирішити проблему домінування і накреслити шлях до здійснення проекту емансипації. Критичний аналіз робіт Хабермаса виявляє причину, чому він та його попередники не могли кардинально вплинути на проблему. Висунуто аргумент, згідно з яким у концепції Габермаса, як і концепціях його попередників, присутній виняток, який є основою і головною причиною домінування. Вирішення проблеми винятку і домінування вимагає подолання парадигми Просвітництва. Висувається теоретичний підхід, який дає можливість вирішити цю проблему. Головним у новій парадигмі є те, що на відміну від парадигми Просвітництва, вона не виключає процес творення, а приймає його як головний принцип. Такий підхід дає можливість повністю уникнути виключення, яке служить основою домінування. Розглянуто головні принципи нової суспільно-політичної практики, яка є втіленням цієї парадигми. Вказано на необхідність подальшої теоретичної і практичної роботи для вироблення інституційних форм, що втілюють цю нову практику.

Ключові слова: проект емансипації, процес творення, Юрген Хабермас, влада, домінування, виняток.

УМ, ВЛАСТЬ И ПРОСВЕТИТЕЛЬСКИЙ ПРОЕКТ

Аннотация. Рассматривается проект эмансипации (также известный как проект Просвещения или проект Модернизма). Цель проекта — освобождение общества от всех форм доминирования и эмансипация человечества. Он зародился в период Просвещения и имел колоссальное влияние на ход исторического развития как Европы, так и всего мира. Несмотря на то что человечество уже несколько столетий пытается осуществить цель проекта эмансипации человечества, до сих пор эта цель остается недостижимой. Почему? В поисках ответа на этот вопрос, проанализируем работы Юргена Хабермаса — одного из самых выдающихся современных философов и социологов. В своих работах Хабермас пытается разрешить проблему доминирования и начертать путь к осуществлению проекта эмансипации. Критический ана-

лиз работ Хабермаса выявляет причину, почему он и его предшественники не могли разрешить эту проблему. Статья выдвигает аргумент, согласно которому в концепции Хабермаса, как и концепциях его предшественников, присутствует исключение, которое является основой и главной причиной доминирования. Решение проблемы исключения и доминирования требует преодоления парадигмы Просвещения. Выдвигается теоретический подход, который дает возможность решить эту проблему. Главным в новой парадигме является то, что в отличии от парадигмы Просвещения, она не исключает процесс творения, а принимает его как главный образующий принцип. Такой подход дает возможность полностью избежать исключения, которое служит основой доминирования. Рассмотрены некоторые главные принципы новой общественно-политической практики, которая является воплощением данной парадигмы. Указывается на необходимости дальнейшей теоретической и практической работы для выработки институциональных форм, воплощающих эту новую практику.

Ключевые слова: проект эмансипации, процесс творения, Юрген Хабермас, власть, доминирование, исключение.

Problem statement. From the early stages of civilization, dreams about a just order have been at the core of human history. Much have changed over the course of centuries but these dreams preoccupy us today just as much, if not even more so, as they have millennia ago; and as in the past, they revolve around the issue of power. What is an equitable distribution of power? What political order can achieve such distribution? How can we organize our life so as to achieve such equitable distribution? These and similar questions have preoccupied us for a very long time. There have been repeated attempts to achieve this goal in numerous upheavals and revolutions. Yet despite much suffering and many human lives lost, we are still no closer to this goal than we were centuries ago.

Few traditions have devoted more attention to this monumental task than the tradition of the Enlightenment. This tradition has dominated and continues to dominate our civilization for the last two and a half centuries. The belief in reason — our capacity for rational thought — is the focal point of the Enlightenment tradition. Those who embrace this tradition hold firm to the conviction that the power of our mind is infinite, that there are no problems we cannot solve, no limits that we cannot overcome. Humans, in their view, can and should use this power to organize social life in way that is rational, equitable and just, and that would bring freedom, prosperity, and happiness to all members of society. Such was the dream that inspired the Great French Revolution, the American Revolution, and many other revolutions that have followed since.

Considering the main preoccupation of the Enlightenment project with politics and society, power has, naturally, been one of its major foci. Thin-

kers of the Enlightenment argued that using reason and rationality to control and guide power was the essential condition of human emancipation. The pursuit of this goal has been relentless. It has produced many remarkable theoretical breakthroughs and has, in many ways, shaped our current political and social order. Yet despite many significant achievements, the project of the Enlightenment has failed to achieve its goal that has proven to be very elusive. Reason and power do not appear to be any closer to each other today than they were during the Age of Reason. Moreover, some even argue that the Enlightenment tradition is degenerating into some earlier forms of social organization. Michel Mafessoli, for example, argues that post-postmodernity is characterized by the abandonment of individualism and a reversion to neo-tribalism and nomadism [1].

The Goal of the Article. By analyzing the works of Jurgen Habermas, one of the most important contemporary advocates of the Emancipation Project, the article will show the reasons why the Enlightenment tradition has failed to resolve the problem of emancipation. It will also outline a new approach that makes the solution of the problem possible.

Analysis of the works of Habermas. Habermas, as many others [2], sees domination to be the principal obstacle to the realization of the emancipation project. Like many others [3], he sees exclusion as the main source of domination. As Kahn observes, for example, one persistent theme in Habermas's oeuvres is that "the state has deeply 'sedimented rules' which, largely through legislative, judicial, and administration regulation and reform, force the exclusion of interests, that is to say, the political articulation of the aims and desires of the whole population, in ways which are not readily apparent" [4]. Therefore, determining conditions that constrain exclusion is Habermas's major preoccupation.

In his solution of the emancipation problem, Habermas places his hopes on what he calls "communicative action" — the concept he borrows from Hannah Arendt but considerably rethinks — and communicative reason that embodies the logic of such action. According to Habermas, communicative action and rationality permeate intersubjective relations that populate the domain that Habermas calls the lifeworld, or the public sphere of interactions among the equals [5].

In his view, discursive opinion- and will-formation that take place in the lifeworld should constrain the sphere of strategic subject-oriented action and serve as the source of its legitimating [6]. Habermas seeks is to insulate the sphere of communicative action from any attempts by strategic reason to colonize it. The two spheres should be completely separated "with positive law functioning as the mediator and translator between the two [6, p. 10]. Thus by creating conditions for unimpeded and unfettered exercise of communicative reason, by securing control of communicative reason and power over other forms of power and rationalities, Habermas seeks to fulfill the promise of the Enlightenment project — creating social and political order in which human reason would reign supreme.

At first glance it may seem that Habermas's theoretical perspective with its strong bias for radical democracy and the emphasis on communicative reason provides a solution to the problem of exclusion and domination. However, on close analysis, his theory reveals a paradox of the lingering subtle and persistent presence of exclusion. As it turns out, Habermas predicates his solution to exclusion on ... exclusion. He seeks, for example, to exclude strategic subject-oriented action and reason from the realm of communicative action. This fact has not escaped the attention of several critics [7]. Amy Allen finds, for example, that Habermas's attempt "to attempt to insulate communicative action and power from the pernicious influence of strategic power" to be "unreasonable and unattainable *even at the conceptual level*" [6, p. 4].

Habermas's insistence on insulating the sphere of communicative action from strategic reason indicates that he views strategic reason as a diametrical opposite of, indeed a threat to, communicative rationality. The question is: why does he see the relationship between strategic and communicative reason in this way? Or, rather, under what conditions one will see this relationship as antagonistic?

It is not difficult to recognize in the dichotomy that Habermas constructs between communicative reason, with its orientation toward the object, and strategic reason, which is subject-oriented, the analogy with the traditional subject-object dualism [8].

The appearance of the subject as completely separate from the object and diametrically opposed to it is possible only if there is a gap between the two. Indeed, this gap is present in Habermas's theoretical perspective. It is foundational, or constitutive of his theory. It is not logically derived from some other proposition, nor is it a product of empirical observation. It is what Kant has defined as synthetic a priori judgment, or self-evident truth. It is an axiomatic organizing principle that Habermas uses to organize his knowledge about reality. Habermas does not justify the positing of this gap. On the contrary, he uses this axiom to justify all other propositions in his theory. Habermas accepts this axiom uncritically and without proper consideration.

Habermas's acceptance of this axiom is hardly unique. The traditional dualistic approach toward the subject-object relationship has been and still remains prevalent in our civilization. But challenges are not uncommon. One important challenge came from Jean Piaget. In contrast to Habermas who bases his conclusions on theoretical considerations, Piaget draws his observations from the groundbreaking empirical studies in child development that he conducted over the years [9]. These studies show that the subject and the object are not separate from each other; in fact, they are intimately related: both emerge as a result of the process of creation. This process of creation is the main focus of Piaget's studies. He has forcefully argued, for example, that as the child constructs reality, the child also constructs his/her own mind. As one changes, so does the other. In other words, the two are interconnected. They are two poles of one continuum formed by the process of creation. And, as such, they complement rather than oppose each other [10, p. 20–22].

Habermas' philosophical and sociological views have been strongly influenced by the theoretical legacy of Jean Piaget. In his essay "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," for example, Habermas recognizes his debt to the father of genetic epistemology when he writes: "Only the genetic structuralism worked out by Piaget, which investigates the developmental logic behind the process in which structures are formed, builds a bridge to historical materialism" [11].

However, in appropriating Piaget's legacy, Habermas has significantly deviated from the original. According to the theory of communicative action, communication constitutes the basis of social life. It is, in Habermas's view, predicated on the ideals of truth, objectivity, and rationality. These ideals are implicit in formal logical operations that, according to Piaget, are characteristic of the later stages of the child's development [12]. In his discussions of the development of formal logical operations, Piaget has emphasized that they evolve from concrete operations that are ultimately rooted in the organism's physiology and biology, that is, in the sphere of unconscious functions of the organism. In other words, by inverting Piaget, Habermas has excluded from his frame of vision the entire process of creation emphasized by Piaget. With the removal of the process of creation, the subject and the object have emerged as irreconcilable and diametrically opposed to each other.

The unresolved dualism in Habermas's theoretical perspective is the inevitable result of his failure to embrace the process of creation discussed by Piaget. The view of the relationship between the subject and the object as antagonistic sets the subject-oriented action, or assimilation (to use Piaget's terminology) in opposition to the action oriented toward the object, or adaptation (in Piaget's vocabulary). Thus, Habermas's theoretical perspective has set instrumental/strategic reason against communicative rationality.

The exceptional importance that Habermas attributes to rational consensus puts the emphasis on commonalities at the expense of differences. Despite his acknowledgement of race, class, gender, and minorities issues for constituting more equal and autonomous relations, Habermas tends to downplay if not outright diminish their role in the sphere of communicative action. Many feminists, for example, criticized Habermas for paying too little attention to gender differences [13]. Jean Cohen, an observer undoubtedly sympathetic to Habermas, reproached him for his "peculiar blindness to gender issues" [14]. Many researchers have expressed their skepticism about Habermas's "confidence in abstract reason" as one-fits-all cure to address social and political issues particularly relevant to gender, race, and ethnicity [15, p. 12]. There is, however, very little that Habermas offers to dispel this skepticism [15, p. 12]. He is hardly oblivious to the fact of these exclusions from his analysis but insists that they can only be discussed in "the light of declared standards [of communicative reason]", thus reducing them to precisely the abstract rationality that the proponents of these issues criticize and doubt. According to Habermas, one can assess the oppression of ethnic, cultural, gender, and

other groups only "in the light of this one basis standard [16, p. 466–67]".

Also, according to Habermas, the adoption of communicative attitude should serve the purpose of producing consensus based on "criticizable validity claims." Reaching consensus requires the emphasis on commonalities and the exclusion of differences. Commonalities, as useful as they may be in maintaining social stability, generate stasis. Differences, by contrast, are very productive and play an important role in enriching our life and producing new levels of organization of reality. The suppression and exclusion of differences, again, voluntary or not, will certainly constrain the capacity and pace of evolution.

The exclusion of the gender, race, ethnicity and minority issues is indicative of a more general tendency to exclude social power — the power of money, connections, and privilege — from the list of potential threats in Habermas's idealized view of the communicative sphere. Amy Allen has provided a detailed analysis of this tendency in her essay "The Unforced Force of the Better Argument: Reason and Power in Habermas' Political Theory" [6]. She concludes that given "the pervasiveness, depth, and systematicity of asymmetrical social power relations — along lines of class, gender, race, and sexuality, for example — and given the ways in which such power relations are constitutive of the identities of their targets," Habermas's expectation of blocking the communicative sphere from the asymmetries of strategic social power as unrealistic, to say the least [6, p. 18].

One cannot omit from this rather long list of exclusions that Habermas introduces, the exclusion that one may find particularly disconcerting. This particular form of exclusion has to do with the stringent conditions that Habermas imposes on his communicative agents. According to Habermas, those who act in the communicative sphere must possess a special attitude and a number of competences required to produce rational understanding and consensus. First and foremost, they should adopt the communicative attitude, that is, they must abandon their orientation toward the subject:

[C]ommunicative rationality carries with it connotation based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants *overcome their merely subjective views* and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld [17, p. 10].

Communicative agents, according to Habermas, have a responsibility to "behave rationally."

"[O]nly those persons", he writes, "count as responsible who, as members of a communication community, can orient their actions to *intersubjectively recognized validity claims*" [17, p. 14].

Habermas recognizes the stringency of the demands that he articulates. "My position", he writes, "is that those who understand themselves as taking part in argumentation mutually suppose, on the basis of the pre-theoretical knowledge of their communicative competence, that the actual speech situation fulfils certain, in fact quite demanding, preconditions" [18, p. 255]. But it is on-

ly if these conditions and demands are fulfilled that the lifeworld "would gain a singular transparence, inasmuch as it would allow only for situations in which adult actors distinguished between success oriented and understanding-oriented actions just as clearly as between empirically motivated attitudes and rationally motivated yes/no positions" [19, p. 145].

The requirement to adopt a special kind of attitude, acquire particular competences, and "overcome" subjectivity certainly appears as a limitation imposed on the individual. This constraint on free expression creates a problem with regard to the freedom of the individual to which Habermas remains strongly committed. Habermas, however, deftly resolves this problem by emphasizing the voluntary nature of this renunciation of subjectivity. According to Habermas, the individual of his or her own free will subordinates himself or herself to what Habermas defines as the "unforced force of the better argument."

The idea of a voluntary renunciation of one's own subjectivity is vulnerable on two counts: theoretical and empirical. The self is a product of our creation. The process that we use in constructing reality around us also constructs our self. Therefore, any changes that take place in our mental operations also necessarily lead to changes in the way we see or approach reality. Consequently, any attempt to suppress or limit our own self, voluntarily or not, must constrain our understanding of reality. Can we impose such constraint on ourselves? Can we undo what we have already constructed? Can we unlearn what we have already learned?

The obvious answer to these questions is "no, it is impossible." Therefore, a voluntary or involuntary adoption of a limiting constrain on our own self is incapable of limiting anything. The self is unlikely to be affected even if we decide to adopt this attitude. It will simply be foreclosed, bracketed, and forced underground, to use Dostoevsky's potent metaphor. Such voluntary bracketing will simply remove the self from our radar of conscious control, which will render the self uncontrollable. The self is likely to reemerge with vengeance and all the arrogance of righteousness for making an effort to deny itself.

The psychological qualities and discursive competencies that Habermas requires for his communicative agents are extremely demanding. Many practitioners who have witnessed real deliberative forums have to acknowledge that the Habermassian communicative agent is a far cry from real participants in such events. Numerous empirical studies in psychology, politics, democratic theory and practice, and other cognate areas lead to one inevitable conclusion:

"...compelling evidence that the maintenance of coherent beliefs and preferences [that Habermas's theory stipulates] is too demanding a task for limited minds". Limited minds are exactly what human agents possess ... Quite simply, Habermas is reliant on agents who, while explicable in theoretic terms, are practically unavailable in psychological terms [20, p. 316, 328, 774].

This and similar conclusions suggest that many real people do not fit the image of a communicative agent

that Habermas has conjured. Therefore, there is a very real possibility that a large number of individuals will have to be excluded from the communicative sphere.

As Habermas himself has recognized, exclusion is the source of domination. The above discussion shows that Habermas's theory presupposes not one but a number of exclusions: the exclusion of the process of creation from the frame of vision, the exclusion of the irrational and subjective from the communicative sphere, the exclusion of instrumental reason and strategic power from the lifeworld, the exclusion of differences and social power, and finally the exclusion of many real people who may not qualify to graduate as Habermassian communicative agents. Exclusions, as many believe, do not solve problems; they merely force them underground from where they manifest themselves in some distorted and perverted form. Habermas's exclusions are no exclusion, and like any other exclusion they must create an opening for domination. As noble as Habermas's intentions are in completing the project of modernity, the preceding analysis indicates that the path he charts is unlikely to meet these expectations precisely on the terms that Habermas himself accepts as necessary.

The main argument. The preceding analysis shows that there are several forms of exclusion that plague Habermas's theoretical perspective. As all exclusions, these also open the path toward domination. As one can see, Habermas does not solve the problem of exclusion and domination and without such solution the realization of the Enlightenment project remains very much in question. But is there a way of resolving this problem? Is there a way to avoid exclusion? Can we create society where there would be no exclusion and no domination?

As the preceding discussion also shows, the persistence of exclusions in Habermas's theory is traceable to one fundamental cause: Habermas's failure to integrate the process of creation into his frame of vision. If that is the case, then the path to solving the problem of exclusion and domination lies through the integration of the process of creation into our frame of vision. What effect will this integration have on our view of reality, the choices that will become available to us, and the actions we can take? What social and political forms will emerge from our new vision? It is impossible to provide detailed answers to all these questions in one even a very long paper. No one person or even a group of people can accomplish this task. It will require creative efforts in theory and practice by many individuals. The best this paper can do is to provide some basic observations regarding the main contours of such solution.

The first observation one should make is that in contrast to Habermas's communicative model, the process of creation does not work on the basis of consensus, that is, by emphasizing commonalities and excluding differences. On the contrary, differences play a very important productive role in this process. In the course of creation, differences are not suppressed or eliminated. The creation of new and more powerful levels and forms of organization require the integration of differences, not their exclusion. The early development of a child provides a good illustration [9].

Children are born with several reflexive functions — visual, audio, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory — that are rooted in the organism's physiology. These functions have nothing in common (except for the fact that they belong to the same child); they are, one could say, totally incommensurable to each other. Yet few months after birth, the child succeeds in creating the level of neural organization that coordinates and integrates all these initially incommensurable functions and create the level of organization that is much more powerful than any of these functions or their sum total. This new level of organization offers much more powerful tools that the child can use in his or her relationship with reality. The process of creation plays the key role in accomplishing this enormous task.

Let's take, for example, two functions: audio and visual. These two functions are initially totally independent of each other. In order to conserve themselves, these functions have to stay active: the more they are active the better they are conserved.

Initially, these functions have their own specific activators: photons of light and sound waves. As the child develops, he or she coordinates these two functions and eventually connects them, that is, the child begins to "see", when s/he hears, and "hear", when s/he sees. In other words, when the child hears mother's voice, the sound activates not only neurons related to hearing but also neurons related to vision. The child begins to look around searching for a familiar image. When the two functions are combined, they are activated twice as often than prior to their combination. As a result, each function is twice

as active than before and, therefore, is much better conserved. The mode that conserves them better is selected for fitness.

This advance in child's behavior is not a product of integration on the basis of commonalities — in fact, the two functions have nothing in common; it is a result of the integration of their differences. There is no equivalent here of Habermas's "consensus-seeking" in this integration. The process that creates this new and more powerful level of organization — the level of symbolic thought — integrates differences between the audio and the visual function, and thus conserves them. As this example shows, the process of creation works by creating new and more powerful levels and forms of organization that include less powerful levels and forms (in this case the audio and the visual function) as its particular cases. It conserves differences, rather than discards them.

It has been argued elsewhere [21] that the process of creation is also a system. It is a system that includes other systems; its level of organization includes all other levels and forms of organization of reality — past, present, and future. These new and more powerful levels of organization create new possibilities and provide more powerful tools for realizing these possibilities. In other words, the process of creation creates power and this power empowers us. Thus the process of creation is the source of power.

If inclusion is the source of our power, then by excluding differences and creating conditions for domination, we diminish our power. Power and domination have nothing in com-

mon. They are actually opposed to each other.

The exclusion of people and ideas inhibits the process of creation and reduces power that could be otherwise produced by integrating differences into new and more powerful levels and forms of organization of reality. The power generated by the process of creation offers new possibilities and new choices that enhance our freedom. It is for this reason, as some argue, that power is integrally connected with freedom, while exclusion and domination are not [22; 23].

Since exclusion and domination do not produce power, they cannot compete with inclusion that generates power. By enhancing the process of creation and generating more power through inclusion, we can eliminate exclusion and domination — these two principal obstacles to the realization of the Enlightenment project.

The above suggests that the first step toward the realization of the emancipation project should be the recognition of the crucial distinction between domination and power as two totally different species. We should embrace the process of creation as the process that empowers us and incorporate it into our frame of vision. This process should become our main focus of our social practice.

As this paper also suggests, when we exclude the process of creation from our frame of vision, we focus entirely on particular product or products of this process to the exclusion of all others. Such exclusion opens the path to domination. And domination makes the process of evolution and the generation of new and more powerful levels of organization of reality more difficult, less efficient, and often wasteful. The focus on the process of creation works against the preoccupation with specific products. With the focus on the process, we will be less likely to absolutize these products at the expense of the process. We will try to conserve the process first and foremost. The process of creation, its unimpeded and uninterrupted evolution should become our main preoccupation, the most important product by which we will judge our productivity. We must unshackle the process that increases our power and realizes our potential.

Since the process of creation works on inclusion and empowerment, the greater the number of people who are empowered through their engagement in the process of creation the more powerful we all are. The broader our approach to empowerment and inclusion is the closer we are to the realization of the Enlightenment project. This conclusion resonates with a variety of perspectives that have become increasingly visible and vocal lately in connection with the perceived deficit of democracy in the world. These perspectives (such as, deliberative, direct, and participatory democracy) critique liberal democratic theory and the elitist practices of modern representative democracy. They also advocate broad empowerment of all members of society and their inclusion into the process of democratic decision-making [24].

Demands for broad empowerment and inclusion are not unproblematic. They raise a number of important theoretical and practical issues concerning the relationship between broad participation in decision-making and

hierarchies; in other words, between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions, between leaders and those they purport to lead. These issues have been examined in detail elsewhere [25] and do not need to be examined here. There is one question, however, that should be addressed for the purposes of this article: Is the continued existence of hierarchies an impediment to the realization of the Enlightenment project and the elimination of exclusion and domination?

There are quite a few theoretical perspectives that address the issue of the continued existence of hierarchies. While these perspectives serve as valuable sources of ideas, most, if not all of them have one common problem: they do not incorporate the process of creation in their frame of vision and, as a result, they see hierarchies and networks as ontologically separate and opposed to each other [25].

In discussing the problem of hierarchies and leadership, one should keep in mind that hierarchies and leaders are not fortuitous and arbitrary phenomena; they are not some tragic aberration in human evolution, as many opponents of hierarchies argue. They are a product of this evolution. Non-hierarchical interactions require regulation. Regulation represents a level of organization that is more powerful than that of the entities it regulates or their sum total. And a more powerful level of organization means hierarchy.

The principal function of regulation is reflective. In other words, it is non-local and capable of detaching from and reflecting on the entire system and all the interactions among its subsystems. Because of their location in the liminal space between the system and its environment, hierarchies and leaders that perform this function are in the position to reflect critically (that is, observing at the same time the system and also themselves as a part of the system) on all interactions among the agents and subsystems of the system. The latter, by virtue of their position, can reflect only on local interactions. For this reason, leaders are in the position to perceive new and more powerful levels of organization created by all interactions within the system, as well as recognize, promote, and facilitate the consolidation of these new levels of organization. Their role in this capacity has nothing to do with command and control, that is, transmitting decisions from above to those below and overseeing their implementation. Leaders must appreciate the enormous creative power of local interactions and be closely attuned their variations. Since they rely, or supervene, so much in what they do on these interactions, they should promote, regulate, and facilitate them, not obstruct and disrupt them by trying to dominate them. It is a sensitive and delicate, and highly creative role that involves both cooperation and two-way adaptation. This role also has an enormous creative component. Since systems constantly evolve, they require integration of their local and global operations. This integration is a function of leadership. In order to integrate local and global levels, leaders must express operations on the global (regulatory) level in terms of local interactions. This task requires the creation of a level of organization that has sufficient power to incorporate both local and global operations of the system as its particular cases. It is

a highly creative role that ensures the continued evolution of a system.

The relationship between the leaders and those they lead cannot be one of domination. It requires cooperation and close interaction in the common creative work that sustains the evolution of the system. Such cooperation can only be effective if there is a balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions, between hierarchies and networks[25]. Leaders should not see their role as that of ultimate arbiters whose word is decisive and final — far from it. The notion of a leader as the ultimate arbiter without whom there will be chaos and instability is due to a fundamental flaw in the current view of reality that excludes the process of creation from its frame of vision. In this perspective, there are no clear and rational validity criteria that can help make an informed and objective selection of the choice that offers the most power. As has been argued elsewhere, this approach largely relies on subjective choices of those at the top of the hierarchy [25]. The reason why we tend to defer decisions to leaders is precisely because we do not have objective and rational criteria of validation. In the absence of such criteria, all decisions are subjective and equal. Recognizing all decisions as equal is likely to lead to chaos and instability and nobody wants to argue for disorder. As a result, the common current default is to defer to the decision of those at the highest levels of the hierarchy because even a bad decision that preserves order is deemed better than chaos and instability. How many times have people ultimately paid the price for limitations of their leaders?

The evolution of human systems vitally depends on mechanisms and procedures for making decision on the basis of rational and objective criteria. The perspective that incorporates the process of creation offers such criteria. This perspective offers the approach towards validating knowledge and making decisions that is non-exclusive and, at the same time, non-relativistic.

There is an extensive literature that discusses inclusive ways of approaching validation of knowledge and decisions. Although there are numerous differences and even disagreements, the contributions on this subject provide the general contours for such approach [26]. As has been indicated earlier, the combinatorial power is what distinguishes one level of organization of reality from another. Therefore, we can use combinatorial power — or in other words, inclusiveness — as one important criterion for validating knowledge and decisions. The more inclusive a decision, an approach, or a theory is, the greater is its combinatorial capacity and, therefore, the greater is its validity.

Legitimate disagreements should not trigger power struggle where one perspective seeks to de-legitimate and eliminate another. Rather, they should motivate a search for another, more inclusive (even if orthogonal) perspective that would construct the level of organization that would dissolve dissonances; competing positions will become particular cases in such comprehensive whole.

Such approach stands in stark contrast to the dominant current practice of knowledge production and decision making that tends to be exclusive. Hierarchies seek control over knowledge

production and decision-making and silence alternatives. Control over funding, exposure, publishing, appointments, and simply brute force provide ample opportunities to enforce orthodoxy. More often than not, knowledge production turns into an exercise of power.

We can no longer afford a system of validation that depends on conformity and access to power. An efficient, democratic, and open system of knowledge production and decision-making should be based on a better understanding of what constitutes knowledge and how it is produced. Such system requires the institutionalization of more open, inclusive, democratic, and, ultimately, more rational practices in validating knowledge and allocating resources. As has been stated earlier, the more inclusive a knowledge system is, the more extensive is its combinatorial capacity the more powerful it is. Inclusiveness and power (in the Gödelean sense), not conformity to dominant trends, should be the most important criteria in assessing knowledge and decisions.

Critical awareness and introspection is another important criterion. We often pay lip service to critical judgment and just as often forget that critical judgment concerns, first and foremost, our capacity to examine critically our own premises, organizing principles, and self-evident truths. We should exercise a conscious and deliberate control over our own 'truths' and unconscious biases rather than allow old and tired ideas that hinder knowledge production to dominate. Critical awareness is essential for the efficiency of knowledge production.

Decisions we make — be they about managing our enterprises, organizations, or governments — should always be guided by one and only one consideration: they should be always focused on the continued evolution of the process of creation of new and more powerful levels and forms of organization of reality. Our decisions cannot be based on power derived from the authority of a hierarchy. Such approach is hardly rational. There is only one source of power for us humans and that is the new and more powerful ways in which we organize reality, including our own mind. The organization of human systems, including our civilization, the structuring of our public space should reflect this understanding.

The above describes only some of the aspects of the realization of the Enlightenment project. We can realize this project only by going beyond the Enlightenment. This paper has only touched on this rich subject full of internal complexities. We are still at the very beginning of the path that leads to the implementation this grandiose task. As we advance along this path, we will encounter many new problems, identify new issues, and offer new solutions. As this paper has argued, the project of the Enlightenment is, by definition, by the very fact that it must be based on inclusion, cannot be the work of one individual or even a group of individuals. It must involve the entire human race.

Conclusion. This paper argues that our civilization can realize the emancipation project and eliminate domination. As this paper has shown, power and reason are intimately related; and both are related to freedom. In fact, all three have the same source: they all

originate in the process of creation of new levels and forms of organization of reality. We have inherited this process from the evolution that preceded the emergence of the human race. The realization of the current and future possibilities that this process has to offer still awaits its fulfillment. The most powerful tool that we have, our consciousness has not yet grasped the full import of this process. It is our task and the task of future generations to embrace this process fully and use its enormous capacities for our benefit and the benefit of the world in which we live.

Just like any other system, our civilization can only sustain itself by continuing to evolve, creating new levels and forms of organization. A system that does not evolve disintegrates. As has been argued elsewhere [25], reality does not tolerate status quo. In the process of continued creation we must produce new and increasingly more powerful tools for reconstituting reality in eternal cycles of renewal.

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