ECOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND EPISTEMIC JUSTICE – THE EXAMPLE OF FOOD

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ECOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND EPISTEMIC JUSTICE – THE EXAMPLE OF FOOD

DOCTORAL THESIS

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Summary

In this thesis, I focus on the point of intersection between epistemology and food. To understand the complex food system in our contemporary world, I argue that we must turn to epistemology. Thanks to Alvin Goldman, from the seventies onwards, a new field within epistemology emerged – social epistemology, which focuses on the social aspect of knowing. Consequently, the gates for understanding the process of knowledge acquisition within the social world were opened. When one explores the relationship between human beings and their surroundings, the topic of food emerges inevitably – it is packed with individual and collective beliefs, values, norms, prejudices, stereotypes, cultural representations, and overall collective imaginary related to food production/consumption which is strongly inscribed into the social fabric. Taking into consideration the impact of climate change we are witnessing, the issue of food production, as well as of food consumption, emerges as a burning issue. In approaching this topic, I propose "ecological epistemology" as a relevant tool for a deeper understanding of the complex issue of food. I consider epistemology to be a practical "apparatus", applicable to real-world issues. More specifically, I view ecological epistemology as a branch of applied/social epistemology focused on the analysis of food-related beliefs, both individual and collective, as well as on the tangible social problem of epistemic injustices resulting from the process of food production and consumption. I am interested in how one approaches and estimates information regarding food. Furthermore, how does one choose who to trust and on what grounds when it comes to food? How does one shape or change beliefs about food? Moreover, how does one continue to act upon personal beliefs, make choices, and create habits, thus leaving an actual material footprint in the world? What are the epistemic injustices that occur along the way? As I see it, to grasp the complex issue of food in contemporary society, one must firstly attain the necessary tools for grasping this multidimensional matter. Economics, agriculture, nutrition, or food politics can be used as linear frameworks regarding food, but my intention is to go one step back, right to the source where beliefs are being formed and explore the power of cognition which operates within the multidimensional realm where power, self-knowledge, and epistemic injustice overlap. Therefore, the goal of this thesis is a comprehensive analysis and a layout of foundations for ecological epistemology which I

perceive as a tool for grasping the complex realm of food. My intention is to explore food-related beliefs; understand how the beliefs regarding food production/consumption are generated and eventually changed both on an individual and collective level; and lastly, explore the roots of epistemic injustices based on food production/consumption. The key issue is to understand the realm of food which I will approach by questioning power, self-knowledge, social (in)justice, status anxiety, as well as collective food-related imaginary. Finding ground in applied/social epistemology, I maintain that ecological epistemology is an appropriate tool for understanding the complex and multilayered domain of food, as well as for detecting and understanding epistemic injustice which gives source to wider political injustice. As a solution for this complex issue, I propose virtue epistemology.

Key words: ecological epistemology, food, power, epistemic injustice, self-knowledge, social epistemology, virtue epistemology.

Summary in Croatian

U ovom radu bavim se točkom susreta između epistemologije i hrane. Naime, kako bismo mogli razumjeti složeni sustav proizvodnje i konzumacije hrane u suvremenom svijetu, smatram da se trebamo okrenuti epistemologiji. Zahvaljujući Alvinu Goldmanu, od 1970-ih pojavila se nova grana epistemologije – socijalna epistemologija, usredotočena na društveni aspekt znanja. Drugim riječima, otvorila su se vrata za razumijevanje procesa usvajanja znanja unutar društva. Istražujući temu odnosa čovjeka i njegove okoline, u tom se prostoru neminovno nailazi na temu hrane – vjerovanja, predrasude, stereotipi i cjelokupan kolektivni imaginarij vezan uz proizvodnju/konzumaciju hrane, duboko usađen u društvo. Uzimajući u obzir utjecaj klimatskih promjena kojem svjedočimo, problematika proizvodnje i konzumacije hrane nameće se kao goruće pitanje. U pristupanju ovoj temi, predlažem „ekološku epistemologiju" kao odgovarajući alat za dubinsko razumijevanje kompleksne teme hrane. Naime, epistemologiju vidim kao praktično znanje, primjenjivo na realne probleme i fenomene s kojima se susrećemo i shodno tome, ekološku epistemologiju promatram kao granu primjenjive/socijalne epistemologije usmjerene na konkretan društveni problem epistemičkih nepravdi koje proizlaze iz procesa proizvodnje/konzumacije hrane. Zanima me kako pojedinac pristupa i procjenjuje informacije vezane uz hranu te kako odabire kome vjerovati i na temelju čega? Kako oblikuje ili mijenja vjerovanja vezana uz hranu? Nadalje, kako djeluje na temelju vlastitih vjerovanja, vrši odabire, stvara navike, pritom ostavljajući stvaran, materijalni otisak u svijetu? Koje su epistemičke nepravde koje izranjaju tijekom tog procesa? Da bismo mogli uvidjeti kompleksnost problematike hrane u suvremenom svijetu, prije svega trebamo iznaći alate kojima bismo pojmili multidimenzionalnost same teme hrane. Ekonomika, agronomija, nutricionizam ili politika hrane korisni su alati, međutim moja je namjera ići jedan korak unazad, na sam izvor nastanka vjerovanja te ispitati moć spoznaje unutar multidimenzionalne sfere gdje se moć, samo-spoznaja i epistemička nepravda isprepleću. Cilj ove disertacije je dubinska analiza i postavljanje temelja za ekološku epistemologiju. Namjera mi je istražiti vjerovanja vezana uz hranu: uvidjeti kako se generiraju i mijenjaju vjerovanja društva i pojedinaca prema proizvodnji i konzumaciji hrane te istražiti korijene epistemičke nepravde vezane uz hranu. Temeljno pitanje je razumijevanje teme hrane kroz pitanja moći, statusnu tjeskobu, društvenu (ne)pravdu i samospoznaju. Utemeljenu

u primijenjenoj/socijalnoj epistemologiji, ekološku epistemologiju vidim kao alat za razumijevanje kompleksne teme hrane te za detektiranje epistemičke nepravde koja je sam temelj šire društvene nepravde. Rješenje za ovu kompleksnu problematiku nudim kroz epistemologiju vrlina.

Ključne riječi: ekološka epistemologija, hrana, moć, epistemička nepravda, samospoznaja, socijalna epistemologija, epistemologija vrlina.

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INTRODUCTION

Everybody knows that philosophy is an old discipline - it originated in ancient Greece and over time, many fields developed from it. One such field is the study of human knowledge - epistemology. How do we know what we know and how our beliefs are being formed? This issue has been intriguing human imagination since ancient Greece. A I see it, in today's postmodern time of "post-truth", "fake-news", "alternative facts" or science deniers, we need epistemology more than ever. For centuries, epistemology was centered on individual knower and his/her process of cognition. But from 1970s onwards, epistemology has been undergoing major shifts, creating a branch called social epistemology. One can say that it is opening to the realm of social world taking into consideration social aspects of knowing. It broadens its domain by starting to understand knowledge as a social phenomenon. Important aspects of social world which were not given the attention so far are now being taken into consideration and those aspects are without doubt dramatically influencing one's process of obtaining and shaping knowledge of oneself, as well as the world around.

So far, contemporary epistemology, even social epistemology, did not pay enough attention to connecting the theoretical and applied aspects. Recent important exceptions are works by authors such as Snježana Prijić-Samaržija who connected epistemology with deliberate democracy and Quassim Cassam who talks about "hot topics" such as hate speech, Brexit, Trump and vaccine hesitancy. Those are significant examples of applied epistemology. In this thesis I would like to do something similar for another challenging area which leads us to the second cornerstone of this thesis - food.

I see epistemology as being practically applicable to many contemporary cultural phenomena. It is a great analytical tool for the extraction of truth-sensitive beliefs in the current informational chaos. When exploring food, I see a discourse which is often oppressive and unjust and where epistemology is more than welcome. The contemporary West (however elusive the concept of "the West" may be) has a complex relation with food which is becoming a burning issue. We are currently living in a "golden era" of neo-liberal consumerism: we are bombarded with abundance in every single shape or form,

and our relationship with food has never been more complex in the domain of food production as well as food consumption. Food and knowledge, when observed from the perspective which takes into account power, share a complicated bond. As an illustration how food is an urgent problem today, I indicate the fact that agriculture is one of the main contributors to the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. The summer of 2021 is the summer when I am writing the second half of my thesis and these lines, but it is also a dreadful summer of extreme heat, excessive rains, disastrous wildfires, as well as terrible droughts. A report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that climate change is here (IPCC, 2019). We have passed the point of no return: we are now in “terra incognita” and the fact is that our future is inevitably a hotter one. Climate change is above all a political question: national and supranational governments, institutions and corporations have an immense responsibility to minimize the consequences and ensure that changes go down the sustainability path. Food system is one of the cornerstones. However, I maintain that all of us individually also bear a chunk of responsibility with our choices, actions, and behaviors. All of these practices and habits start with particular food-related beliefs and analysis of those believes, on both individual and collective levels, presents the goal of this thesis. This is where the significance of applied/social epistemology or, more specifically, ecological epistemology as its branch, shows best. I perceive it a useful tool for grasping the complex issue of food which can provide us with new understandings and knowledge necessary for shaping our future actions.

Central point in social epistemology is the influence of the social world forces on the epistemic subject, be it an individual or a group. In other words, this domain of philosophy is concerned with the relationship between humans and the social imaginary. In that context, I believe food plays an important role. If we look back in history, founding of the first cities is intertwined with the rise of agriculture, so as I see it, food production and consumption has by its definition a particular social feature. Food can be observed through many frames and approached from different angles: from the point of view of agriculture, nutrition, economics, or food politics, but in my opinion, we need new tools to capture its multidimensionality because food production/consumption involves much more. It relates to the questions of power, knowledge, status anxieties, self-knowledge,

and all sorts of epistemic injustices rooted in this issue. To grasp the multiple layers related to the realm of food, I propose ecological epistemology to be a tool for the in-depth analysis of food-related beliefs, on individual and collective levels, as well as a tool for understanding formation and change of those same beliefs, along with the analysis of the epistemic roots of food-related injustices manifesting themselves in oppression, discrimination, objectivization or instrumentalization. Climate change is a pressing issue, signaling to us that we are doing something cardinally wrong and that we must change our behavior because our current system and practices are unsustainable. To reach new understandings and knowledge related to food production/consumption and to transform the existing relationship between the human and the non-human world into a more ethical and sustainable one, I see ecological epistemology as a useful apparatus.

In this thesis my aim is to connect two areas: human knowledge and food, while maintaining the balance between the continental and the analytic tradition. In that process I will try to demonstrate my hypothesis according to which:

(i) Social epistemology can be employed as a framework for questions of self-knowledge because "social" has a great impact in defining the "self", as well as self-knowledge.

(ii) Food is a social factor which strongly influences the constitution of the "self" and self-knowledge.

The thesis consists of **two parts** – the first part of the thesis covers chapters 1-4 and in this section I will focus on the theoretical framework of social epistemology which I use as a foundation for questions regarding the "self" and self-knowledge. Based on this framework, I will later build ecological epistemology as a branch of applied/social epistemology which I view as a great tool for understanding the complex realm of food. Likewise, the "self" with its accompanying self-knowledge discussed in these chapters is the bearer of the epistemically responsible "subject/eater" (epistemic subject with beliefs regarding food) who will be the central figure in the following part of the thesis. The second part of thesis covers chapters 5-6 and in that section my focus will be on food as a social factor connected with the "self", or rather, self-knowledge. In this part I will focus on the

concrete analysis of beliefs related to food, its production, possible shifts on individual and collective levels as well as the epistemic injustices rooted in realm of food. While the first part is more about the theoretical framework per se, in the second part I will try to apply this theoretical framework to concrete questions regarding food production and consumption. This will create a suitable tool for understanding the power of one's cognition regarding food which takes place in the complex collective imaginary, often being driven by oppressive discourse, flawed beliefs, norms, stereotypes, prejudices and practices as well as cultural images and resulting in epistemic injustice.

I shall present my plan chapter by chapter. In the first chapter, **"Shifts in contemporary epistemology"**, I will outline the general framework and shifts which have occurred in contemporary epistemology since the 1970s onwards. This was an interesting and important era in which epistemology started to recognize the importance of the social aspect of knowing, power dynamics within society, as well as the importance of the socio-political identity of the knower. It was a time when social epistemology developed and can be considered as a theoretical preamble to ecological epistemology.

The second chapter, **"The self"**, as the name suggests, brings us towards the elusive concept of the "self" and I am tackle it from the social point of view focusing on the "situated knower". Here I will mostly rely on post-Marxist theory which takes into consideration different power dynamics, as well as structural injustices and oppression which appear within the process of the constitution of the subject. These understandings are the basis for reaching the epistemic "subject/eater": the epistemic subject who is a consumer of food faced with the epistemic injustice present in the social imaginary. These concepts will emerge in the later part of the thesis. To get to the "subject/eater" who is nowadays in an epistemically disadvantaged position, I will begin with the general concept of the "self" which is ultimately the bearer of food-related beliefs, generating opinions, accompanying behavior, actions, and habits, leaving the material imprint in the world. The "self" with its cognitive power(lessness) regarding the topic of food will be the prime object of my epistemic analysis and in this chapter, I will try to establish a comprehensive basis for the epistemic "subject/eater".

The “self” leads us to the third chapter, **“Self-knowledge”**, where I try to delineate self-knowledge as knowledge about the “real” you. The “inner life” characterized by flawed cognition, values, emotions, desires, insecurities, aspirations and capacities is far from perfect and it is heavily influenced by the cultural imaginary saturated with its norms, values, prejudices, stereotypes, cultural images, symbols, and representations. It can be analyzed through atomistic lenses but it is inevitably intertwined with the broader social dimension. Self-knowledge is one of the main points that lead us towards the epistemic “subject/eater” who is a bearer of the “self” with accompanying self-knowledge, that is knowledge about the “real” him/her. This general understanding of self-knowledge is a prerequisite for understanding the complex self-knowledge of the imperfect “subject/eater”.

In the fourth chapter, **“Value of self-knowledge and the importance of epistemic virtues”,** I ask if there is any value in self-knowledge and if there is, what it is. Epistemic virtues have been around since ancient Greece, but they seem to be very important still. I view them as prerequisites for self-knowledge, and in that light, the virtue of epistemic curiosity as an essential epistemic virtue. Curiosity leads us towards profound part of our “inner life” where our beliefs reside, as well as our beliefs and values in relation to food. This is why I perceive self-knowledge as a remedy for epistemic injustice which is at the roots of broader social injustices. Generally speaking, I hold epistemic virtues to be a beautiful framework for questions of the “self”, as well as an essential and useful framework for the burning questions of food and environmentalism present in today’s socio-political context.

The fifth chapter, **“Problems with epistemology and food”**, brings me to the second part of the thesis: the current problems we are facing when we talk about food, grasped through the lenses of epistemology. Here I want to focus on beliefs related to food, formation of beliefs on the individual and collective level, as well as the exploration of the epistemic roots of injustices related to that topic. I will touch upon the complex social imaginary abundant with collective virtues, norms, prejudices, stereotypes, cultural representations, symbols, and images and explore them from the epistemic point of view. People are losing trust in institutions which should generate knowledge and that is an

ongoing process within our current complex “post-truth” or “fake-news” culture. Dominant discourse operates and reproduces on epistemic fuel. There is manipulation and conflicting trends, as well as experts taking opposite stands regarding food. Media play an important role in the production of flawed discourse regarding food, as well as images and representations which are directly connected with self-knowledge of our socially situated subject. Articulations of food-related narratives, much as people’s understanding of food-related issues, is limited and very much impaired. In this process, impaired knowledge, violated trust and lack of transparency puts subjects in an epistemically disadvantaged position, facing epistemic injustice rooted in questions about food. We live in an era of extensive consumerism: there are hard norms regarding “docile bodies”, ideology of “healthy” food and epistemic chaos within the food discourse in general. The dominant discourse is especially harsh and unjust to women and food has a special status here. The power inscribed into knowledge that creates harmful discourse regarding women’s bodies is the same power that resides in the epistemic mechanisms which influence the constitution of self-knowledge. With the excess of information present in the social sphere, we need epistemology more than ever to help us process this information overload. How does the epistemic “subject/eater” approach and select information as truth-sensitive beliefs? How does one handle self-reflection and modification of his/her own food-related beliefs and, consequently, make choices, form habits and act based on those beliefs? What is the power of one’s cognition and understanding in this complex epistemic mess arising from the social imaginary we are immersed in? For the in-depth analysis of this multi-layered topic of food, ecological epistemology presents itself as a valuable tool.

After outlining the problems that the epistemic “subject/eater” faces on a daily basis, it is only fair if I offered some possible solutions to them. **“Solutions”** is also the title of the last chapter**.** Today’s paradigm of food production, as well as food consumption, is unsustainable. We are epistemically imperfect in our process of knowledge acquisition, being immersed in the social imaginary which is hard to navigate through, so epistemic virtues seem more valuable than ever before, and I propose them as a possible solution. We need epistemic “subjects/eaters”, socially situated and cognitively imperfect but nevertheless, consumers who are epistemically “well-trained”, with strong epistemic

virtues of curiosity and open-mindedness, wise, perceptive, and aware of his/her political power and responsibility in everyday life. There are desirable epistemic values that we should strive for as subjects, consumers, and food producers. Critical thinking and epistemic resistance are important concepts which enhance our very cognition when dealing with the complex domain of food. I see epistemic virtues to be in direct connection with self-knowledge (as Socratic tradition has been claiming for millennia). There is an epistemic responsibility placed on a consumer who has the power to change things on a local, micro level. Because what is global than a bundle of "local"? Subjects have epistemic and political responsibility in the domains of food production and food consumption. This is the reason why I see applied/social epistemology in the form of ecological epistemology as an urgent political and emancipatory project where ecological epistemology presents a useful tool for analyzing the complex realm of food.

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My motivation for this thesis is rather personal. This thesis is my personal quest for answers in today's complex world. In doing so, I will balance between the continental and the analytic tradition. One might ask: how do I combine Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Miranda Fricker, Quassim Cassam, and Nenad Miščević with Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, and Louis Althusser? As I see it, Marx, with his philosophy and key concepts of "class", "class consciousness", as well as "ideology" and "alienation", delineated the relationship between the individual and the "structure". Foucault and Althusser, in a meticulous and rather unique way, outlined the structural power and the impact it has on the individual. On the Foucauldian understandings of structural power, Miranda Fricker beautifully articulated systematic character of injustice in the process of understanding problems or situations and Snježana Prijić-Samaržija in her groundbreaking applied epistemology connects social epistemology with democracy by taking into consideration Foucault and his influence in the field of epistemology. Quassim Cassam gave an interesting and valuable understanding of self-knowledge and Nenad Miščević speaks decisively about the value of self-knowledge and the importance of epistemic curiosity. Some of them come from the analytic tradition, some of them are continental philosophers, but I do not uphold

the traditional analytic/continental division and those philosophers and their thoughts I see as valuable and complementing regardless of their philosophical background.

At this point I feel that I owe a brief explanation. My point of view is shaped by several influences. My background is in Cultural Studies (BA) and my motivation for enrolling was the following question: Why does the world function as it does? What are the laws and mechanisms of human behavior and culture that one is immersed in? The dichotomy nature/culture is a complex one but, without a doubt, many fragments of human behavior and its relationship with the environment are not “natural” but culturally constructed and at one point they have become ahistorical and unquestionable and thus “natural”. In reality, very little is really “natural” and we should always question everything, including our relationship towards nature and food. In the quest for an answer to this question I entered the Department of Cultural Studies whose approach towards the analysis of the surrounding social world was beautifully sharp and critical, founded in continental philosophy and mostly in post-Marxist theory.

Second rather strong influence was my MA in Gender Studies, an interdisciplinary program at Central European University in Budapest, with firm ground in continental philosophy as well. There I understood how gender, class, race, as well as other anchors shape the human race and in significant portion, how we, as subjects, are inevitably products of strong social forces. Ultimately, I enrolled into the PhD program at the Department of Philosophy which strongly endorses the analytic tradition.

Therefore, my background is in both continental and analytic tradition although I do not uphold that division. In my opinion, those domains are intertwined and complement one another. I am aware of the common animosity between those two traditions, but to me, they are a perfect match. The analytic approach is meticulously carved with logic. This is a diligent approach where a philosopher breaks down the text until the last comma. Sentence by sentence, at the end of the text all is clear. Argumentation, intelligibility, meticulousness and comprehensibility here pose as rather precious tools. Logic and argumentation usually don’t go hand in hand with “continentals”. As one of my friends, Edi, a sharp logician said: “I can’t read it, I simply can’t! I can’t read one page of a book

without finding five contradictions. It's killing me!" I understand him and his instant allergic reaction to "continentals" whose writings are sometimes hermetically encrypted, resisting argumentation, and often wrought with word play, irony and implied references. In general, such texts can sound poetical and mystical because they are usually written with passion and call into question the truth, science or knowledge. Sometimes one really needs time and patience to understand what the author wanted to say, but to me, it does not matter because in some cases, the goal, vision and ideal are far more important. I think that "continentals" usually write with an open heart and pure enthusiasm. Their texts are written with a "higher" purpose and nothing is humbling in their mission to change the world. Continentals share their thoughts on culture, society, art, people, human nature, overall critical points of human civilization and armed with high romantic ideals. For this reason, I see them as utterly uncompromised. In their quest for a better world, they write somewhat chaotically and sometimes they are on the verge of intelligibility. But what would the world be like without Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, or Foucault? Contrary to my experience with "continentals", texts and topics of "analysts" are usually boring and their writing is oftentimes dry and mechanical. Nonetheless, I think that every "continental" could benefit from training in the analytic approach to text and argumentation. As for me: I appreciate both camps. But as has been said previously, I think that the division between those two traditions is artificial and both sides can benefit one from another. I grew up in the continental and matured in the analytic tradition so, to me, there is no clear cut. There is just "philosophy".

Besides my training in Cultural Studies, Gender Studies and a PhD in Philosophy, the last strong influence is rather unorthodox: it is my work on the land, producing vegetables. It includes my path and education in food production, actual contact with soil, vegetables that I grow and sell, and people who buy my produce at green markets, attend my workshops and lectures, ranging from kids, young people to senior citizens, as well as my co-workers at green markets. All of this provided me with a unique perspective as well as priceless and valuable insights and understandings. Work on the land gave me a new, extraordinary perspective. In my garden I have become part of a greater system with its own logic and intelligence which I did not know existed. This experience yielded me new understandings and knowledge which can arise solely on the land. If allowed, nature

changes the dominant Western hierarchy where humans with their “ratio” are on top, whereas nature has purely instrumental value for the satisfaction of our needs. Metamorphosis is possible on the land and “power over” (as a dominant paradigm of the Western understanding of nature) can become “power with”, where cooperation, respect and coexistence are nurtured.

Likewise, I would like to add that I write from the context of a “situated knower”. My intention is not to claim pretentious global solutions. I write from a position of an educated middle-class woman from Croatia who likes philosophy as well as physical work, with her hands buried in the soil. Compared to many disadvantaged parts of the world and lived experiences, I am aware that I live a privileged life and my intent is not to sound condescending by giving “big and smart” solutions. Furthermore, I inhabit a land with a beautiful geographical position, where there is abundance of water and sun and a mild, seasonal climate excellent for all-year-round food production. And yet, big chunk of food is being imported, while the land is overgrowing in thicket and weeds. People are discouraged from cultivating the land, there is general disappointment in society, distrust and indifference towards institutions and, when it comes to food, there is no real national strategy to revitalize agriculture and shift it towards sustainability. As I see it, hand labor, like food production, is generally looked down upon from a middle-class position. My intention is not to patronize and my goal is strictly local. I support direct action in a particular local context. In any case, “global” is a completely abstract term. As anyone else, I am also deeply rooted in my own locality and I see one’s local setting to be the frame for change. I cannot change the world, but I can make change in my local context. Ultimately, what is “global” than a conglomerate of local stories? All things considered, both of these theoretical and practical influences are intertwined, and in my case, land is the place where applied philosophy arises. Epistemology shapes the way I see and understand my garden and my garden shapes the way I understand epistemology. This was a long process. I perceive ecological epistemology as a strong tool for the analysis of the current beliefs regarding food and a possible change for the better.

FIRST PART: APPLIED EPISTEMOLOGY

1. SHIFTS IN CONTEMPORARY EPISTEMOLOGY – GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND APPROACHES

In the quest for intersectionality of epistemology and food, social epistemology stands as my theoretical framework and a base for "ecological epistemology". My two critical points are the "self" and self-knowledge and social epistemology connects with them by asking how one selects whom to believe and on what grounds. How does one shape or change beliefs and continue to act upon them in a world with a demanding social environment? I will start this story with current and important shifts within the field of epistemology. This step is really a theoretical prerequisite for ecological epistemology which I will use as a tool for understanding beliefs, both individual and collective, as well as epistemic injustices rooted in the realm of food. Initially, to delineate those shifts I will rely mostly on **Snježana Prijić-Samaržija**'s recently published book, "**Democracy and Truth: The conflict between political and epistemic virtues"**, in which the author discusses new approaches within social epistemology as well as the coexistence of epistemic and democratic values which sometimes come in collision.

To delineate the disciplinary framework, I will begin with **epistemology** – a vast domain of philosophy concentrated on the questions regarding **knowledge** and **justified beliefs**. What is knowledge? How do we know what we know? As Steup, in his article "Epistemology", says, epistemology asks:

> "What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits? As the study of justified belief, epistemology aims to answer questions such as: How we are to understand the concept of justification? What makes justified beliefs justified? Is justification internal or external to one's own mind?" (Steup, 2018).

Snježana Prijić-Samaržija offers a narrower and a wider definition of epistemology. According to the narrower definition, epistemology is focused on the "conceptual and normative questions of defining knowledge, truth, justification and the necessary

conditions for asserting that someone is in the possession of knowledge", while in the wider meaning, epistemology "evaluated the processes of belief formation (perception, inference, memory, intuition, testimony or like) and inquired about the sources, processes and scope of acquiring and maintaining knowledge" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 21).

Through centuries, the center of epistemology occupied an isolated and rational subject who was not placed in real-life situations in the analysis. The whole social context of the subject was not considered nor his/her socio-political identity. Epistemic subject was analyzed as an asocial being in idealized circumstances. So, the focal point of traditional epistemology is the evaluation of the truth or justification of a particular proposition without taking into account the subject and his determination by the social world surrounding him/her. In the last two decades of the 20th century, mostly owing to Alvin Goldman, epistemology had a major breakthrough in real-world issues. As Prijić-Samaržija states in her book, unlike the traditional epistemic approaches which are focused on the questions of knowledge in highly idealized circumstances as well as on the doxastic attitudes (beliefs and disbeliefs) of the individual who is extracted from any social context, social epistemology is interested in the **social aspect of knowing**. Insofar as social epistemology grasps epistemic situations within the "real world", it can be seen as **"applied epistemology"** or "**real-world epistemology"** (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 12). In short, social epistemology encompasses the vast overlapping space between two areas: human knowledge and social interactions.

Before immersing deeper into its spheres, it seems important to delineate the **three different approaches characterizing social epistemology** in order to better navigate through the normative framework. As Prijić-Samaržija states, one can distinguish between **revisionism, conservativism,** and **expansionism** (2018: 23). I will begin with **revisionism**. Well-accepted in the theories of postmodernism, deconstruction, and social constructivism and having emerged in the 1970's, is Richard Rorty's notion of the "death of epistemology". His work can be seen as the foundation stone of the revisionist approach. Rorty dismissed the idea of knowledge as a reflection of nature: according to him, beliefs are not objective representations of the external world and concepts like "objective" and "cognitive" are nothing more than a matter of "conversational practices"

among scientists (Rorty, 1980: 372). With this idea of the truth as something disconnected from the real world and reduced to a mere social construction of a particular elite which has a privilege and power to claim something to be the truth, Rorty stands as a prominent representative of the revisionist model of social epistemology. Postmodern view on epistemology is basically nihilist, due to their rejection of concepts such as “objective knowledge” or “truth” but nevertheless, as Prijić-Samaržija notes, revisionists have brought many important topics into the spotlight, such as social power and its connection to knowledge which came to be invaluable in social epistemology, as I will show later in thesis. Furthermore, according to Prijić-Samaržija, there is a second approach: **conservativism**. In this view, historically important and well discussed epistemic topics connected to society are transferred to social epistemology and are revisited in a contemporary context; more specifically, the epistemic problem of testimony which is an inexhaustible topic from John Locke, David Hume and Thomas Reid, or epistemology of science which was problematized by Karl Popper (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 25-29). As a third direction within social epistemology, Pijić-Samaržija indicates **expansionism** which encompasses new topics of cognition and society not yet discussed in the domain of social epistemology (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 29). Here the focus is on both individual as well as group agents and social epistemology can cross paths with sociology, social psychology, political theory and other areas of social science. As I have mentioned earlier, I will rely on Prijić-Samaržija’s book “Democracy and Truth: The conflict between political and epistemic virtues” as a cornerstone in this thesis. Examining the intersection of epistemic properties and democracy as a system, this book also belongs to the abovementioned expansionist model of social epistemology. With my dissertation, I hope to give my modest contribution to this vast area of social epistemology by correlating epistemology with the complex domain of food.

This thesis is based on the premise of the interconnectedness of the process of knowing and the social world around us. In regards to the relationship between one’s process of knowing and society, Prijić-Samaržija gives another juncture point where social epistemology can be placed, firstly articulated by Miranda Fricker. On one hand, we have traditional epistemology which is focused on the pure cognition of the individual epistemic agent who has unlimited logical ability and is deprived of any social context. We should

have in mind that truth and rationality are not analyzed in connection to social power or social identity of the knower. On the other hand, we have the reductionist postmodern approach where the epistemic subject is banished to another extreme where he is stripped of any agency whatsoever and is completely determined by the social power. Given the fact that social epistemology is concerned with the social aspects of knowing, or rather situations in a real world, Prijić-Samaržija uses the term **"applied"**, "**true"** or **"real-world" epistemology**, according to who,

> "true or 'real' epistemology tries to position itself within traditionalists and reductionists: the social dimensions of cognition are accepted without compromising the central clues of traditional epistemology – epistemic values such as rationality, justification, truth, truth-conduciveness, problem-solving and like. Epistemic agents (individuals, social groups, institutions and systems) form, retain and revise their beliefs/judgments/decisions under the influence of society. However, their beliefs/judgements cannot be reduced to mere social constructions, but should instead be assessed as rational, justified or truthful, evaluated in accordance with their epistemic quality or their ability to efficiently resolve problems" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2008: 41).

I find Prijić-Samaržija's concept of true/real world epistemology to be essential because for so long traditional epistemology was focused on the individual epistemic agent and the impact of society was completely ignored, much as power dynamics within society. Afterwards, with the reductionist postmodern approach, the pendulum swung in a completely opposite direction with claims of a total determination of the individual by social power. As I see it, "true" or "real world" epistemology stands in the middle. This kind of epistemology I deem valuable because it gives us a valid frame of reference in which we still have objective epistemic value, yet acknowledge the fact that society influences our process of knowing. Bearing this in mind, such epistemology can be beneficial for the existing real-world problems. It can and should address the current troublesome trends which are arising globally, such as science denialism and a parallel increase of pseudo-science, conspiracy theories and fake-news phenomena which is evident in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In the vast ocean of different information with regard to food coming from all sorts of sources, whom should one trust? How to select certain beliefs as truth-oriented? Whose judgments are aligned with an objective epistemic value such as truth-

conduciveness? These are prevailing global topics which have drastic consequences, not just epistemic but political ones and this is a serious “real-world” issue that should be addressed by epistemologies.

1.1 First shift in epistemology: Alvin Goldman talks veritistic epistemology

Whereas in the last section I tried to give an overview of the scope of social epistemology in order to highlight its social dimension and to generally outline it, in the following lines I will try to address the characteristics of social epistemology in more depth. Probably the most significant philosopher in social epistemology is **Alvin Goldman** who shifted the attention towards the impact of the social in the process of obtaining knowledge and justification. As Goldman and Cailin O'Connor address in their text “Social Epistemology”, epistemology – the domain of philosophy focused on knowledge and justified belief – was massively individualistic and focused on doxastic attitudes of individuals, or rather the attitudes regarding the truth or falsity of their propositional contents. Consequently, those attitudes as a function of genuine truth-value of its propositional content, could be evaluated as right or wrong, that is, as accurate or inaccurate (Goldman and O’Connor, 2019). Within individual epistemology, the individual knower seeks the truth all by himself/herself, ignoring the social environment and its role. In other words, the spotlight is turned towards the internal states of the knower. Contrarily, in social epistemology, the focus on “how people can best pursue the truth (whichever truth is in question) ‘with the help’ of, or ‘in the face’ of, others” (Goldman and O’Connor, 2019: para. 2). That is to say, the human epistemic process is undoubtedly greatly shaped by social interactions and social systems and it is of interest to observe how this process occurs.

To contour the background of social epistemology, as Goldman and O’Connor note, in a long history of philosophy there were several hints of social epistemology (e.g. the discussion of testimony by Hume and Reid), but social epistemology had to wait until the second half of 20th century for philosophers and theorists to start to question the principles of traditional epistemology. They continue by claiming that those theorists did not call themselves “social epistemologists”. However, Thomas Kuhn with his influential

book “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” (1962), Michel Foucault and the members of the “Strong program” in the sociology of science in the 1960s and 1970s were “doing” social epistemology by reexamining the concepts of “truth” and “objectivity”. Theoreticians like Bruno Latour, Steve Wooglar and Richard Rorty went one step forward and rejected the notions of “objective truth”, “fact” and “knowledge” claiming that they are not revealed by science but are nothing more than a mere product of cultural construction or fabrication (Goldman and O’Connor, 2019: para. 6).

After this harsh criticism of epistemology, in the mid-1980s Alvin Goldman gave a positive form of social epistemology. In his work he advocated for a truth-oriented**, “veritistic” approach** to social epistemic evaluation which, as the name alone suggests, is concerned with “the pursuit of truth” (Goldman, 1999b: 4). In his famous book “Knowledge in a social world”, he states that veritistic epistemology, individualistic or social, “is concerned with the both knowledge and its contraries: ‘error’ (false belief) and ‘ignorance’ (the absence of true belief)” (Goldman, 1980: 5). His veritistic social epistemology questions social practice by taking into consideration their effect on knowledge acquisition. The main question for veritistic epistemology is: “Which practices have a comparatively favorable impact on knowledge as contrasted with error and ignorance?” (Goldman, 1999: 5). Furthermore, Goldman asks “is a given social practice ‘good’ from a truth-acquisitional point of view? Does the operation of that practice ‘improve’ or ‘impair’ the level of knowledge of those who use it or who are affected by it?” (Goldman, 1999: 5). Consequently, he describes intellectually good social practices as the ones that increase the truth-possession of the subjects and the ones that decrease the truth-possession of the subject as intellectually bad social practices (Goldman, 1999: 9). With his concept of veritistic epistemology which harmonizes epistemology with its social aspect, Goldman demonstrates that it is possible to employ classical epistemology and its focus on the values of truth-possessions and error avoidance on social matters such as testimony, argumentation, the internet, science, law and democracy. In other words, on social practices or “practices of speakers and practices of speech regulators – that have a causal influence on true or false beliefs, whether or not these practices affect the justificational status of hearers beliefs” (Goldman, 1999: 5). In other words, Goldman shows how one can employ epistemic strictness present in his “veritistic” framework to

“real-world” issues. Thanks to Goldman and the writings of C.A.J. Coady, Edward Craig, Phillip Kitcher and Margaret Gilbert in the 1990s, in the new millennium social epistemology enjoys mass interest and many different aspects of analysis.

As core topics of social epistemology, Goldman and O’Connor firstly specify **testimony** – an activity in which one individual interacts with another in order to determine the truth-value of a proposition (testimony as a source of beliefs will be very important in later parts where food is discussed). The second topic is **peer disagreement** or the question of adjustment of an initial belief about a particular proposition upon learning that a peer has an opposite position on the subject in question. Another important topic concerns **collective agents**, or, in other words, collections such as juries, panels, teams, governments, where the question is what it takes for a group to share a belief. Another interesting topic for social epistemologies refers to the relation between the **member beliefs** and **group beliefs**. **Justification of group beliefs** and **identification of experts** as a source of accurate information are also ground topics of social epistemology. An important social institution which interestingly intersects with epistemology is **democracy**. This convergence is also a focal point of Snježana Prijić-Samaržija’s book mentioned above. How does the political influence the epistemic and vice versa, and how to harmonize those two values?

This first shift moved from the traditional epistemic topics of defining knowledge or assessing the normative framework used to evaluate the justification of our beliefs. With this switch, epistemology proliferated and opened the doors for the social factors and their impact on our process of knowledge acquisition. We build our beliefs on other people’s testimonies. We read newspapers but even more the social media stand as the main source of information and truthful beliefs for many people today. How to differentiate between false- and truth-oriented information in an era of “post-truth” and “fake-news”? Which expert to trust if there is peer disagreement on a particular issue? How to identify an expert? How is it possible to have strong and advanced science that takes us into space coexisting simultaneously with an increasing number of people who claim that the Earth is flat? Is all science “bad” and is everything driven by profit? What does the highly polarized debate about GMO suggest? What will be the political consequences of the

growing anti-vaccine movement and how will it affect the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic? All of the above are questions for social epistemologists. In the informational overload that we are witnessing, I think that the world is craving for some philosophical explanation of these up-to-date phenomena. The realm of food very much belongs here. Society, media, social networks, troublesome trends are all social factors influencing one's process of beliefs-formation with regarding to food production/consumption. Our food-related beliefs are not being formed in a vacuum: society undoubtedly influences one's process of cognition and it is hard to navigate daily through the informational and hectic social landscape.

1.2. Second shift: Value shift, virtue epistemology and why curiosity is an important virtue

In the second shift we are dealing with the **status of truth**. In epistemology, truth stands as a constitutional epistemic aim and value. Traditionally, epistemology was focused on the rigid monism of truth and the truth-value of the proposition. Normativity focused on the objective truth of a particular belief belongs to the narrow definition of epistemology. As Prijić-Samaržija claims, this narrow definition of knowledge in its scope has the truthfulness of belief. Consequently, questions in one's focus are the criteria of justification and the analysis of a particular concept of knowledge. But there is a wider understanding of epistemology centered on the broader field of the process of cognition (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 61). If we look at things from the perspective that exceeds the evaluation of truth and justification of propositions, we will see that there are epistemic values such as knowledge, understanding, wisdom, rationality, empirical adequacy that are not just instruments in the pursuit of truth but are separate epistemic values (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 63). I like very much Prijić-Samaržija's definition of epistemology which broadens it by defining it as a discipline that "analyses and epistemically evaluates doxastic states, cognitive processes, epistemic acts and general events, instead of limiting the area of its concern to analyzing the concepts of truth, justification or knowledge" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 64).

The value turn from the truth-oriented proposition to the epistemic agent and his/her virtues gave rise to **virtue epistemology**. As Turri et al. note, virtue epistemology

is an assemblage of various approaches to epistemology with two apparent views according to which epistemology is a normative discipline and secondly, epistemic agents and communities are in the scope of epistemic evaluation (Turri et al., 2018). The normative concept is “virtue” which stands for intellectual virtues that can be defined as “characteristics that promote intellectual flourishing, or which make for an excellent cognizer” and they are commonly divided into **virtue reliabilists** and **virtue responsibilists** (Turri et al., 2018: para. 12). While in virtue reliabilist approach (e.g., Goldman, Greco, Sosa) intellectual virtues include faculties such as perception, intuition, and memory (“faculty-virtues”), virtue responsibilists (Battaly, Code, Hookway, Montmarque, and Zagzebski) claim that intellectual virtues include cultivated character traits such as conscientiousness and open-mindedness (“trait-virtues”) (Turri et al., 2018: para 13.). Virtue epistemology is an expanding domain of epistemology where epistemologists focus on a number of questions. As Turri et al. write, besides the above-mentioned questions regarding the understanding of epistemic norms, value, and evaluation, they also focus on questions concerning intellectual agents and communities as an essential source of epistemic value as well as on the evaluation and the nature of intellectual virtues. Other questions include topics such as deliberation, inquiry, understanding, wisdom, profiles of individual virtues and vices, or the social, ethical and political dimension of cognition. Some of them ascribe to “virtue contextualism” and question the context-sensitivity of the cognitive verb “to know”, some of them are focused on intellectual vices and stereotype threat, while others question the essential role of environment in the acquisition of knowledge or take their interest in epistemic emotions such as curiosity, fascination, hope, trust, mistrust, boredom, confusion, skepticism etc. With regard to the method, many virtue epistemologists answer the questions by offering a standard analysis or definition of knowledge and justification while others use non-standard methods (“standard” meaning contemporary Anglo-American epistemology) (Turri et al., 2018: para 18.).

Within virtue epistemology, the value shifted from the proposition towards **the agent**, a subject**,** who is part of the social world and therefore the cognition of a particular epistemic agent is seen as a social process. As Prijić-Samaržija claims, every decision, be it individual, group or institutional is part of a larger picture and their ethical or political

background play a factor. According to her, standard analytic epistemology, its insistence on normative epistemic purism and focus on the individual knower distanced from any social layer that could influence his/her belief or decision resulted in the marginalization of epistemic values in the analysis of the legitimacy of real-world social practices and institutions. This gap enabled the development of postmodern nihilist approach to epistemology (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 71). While in ideal scenarios the perfect knower has an impeccable process of cognition, in real life people or epistemic agents have different intellectual traits: some of them obtain virtues such as curiosity or open-mindedness, while others develop intellectual vices such as prejudice or gullibility. Nevertheless, those traits affect the cognition of the epistemic agent in question. The cognition of a knower who is set in real-life circumstances is more complex, "dirtier", and imprecise compared to the ideal knower whose cognition is straightforward and impeccable. With the abovementioned model those aspects are taken into consideration. The switch from the rigid monism of truth as an exclusive epistemic value to a pluralist account of values is a valuable shift that contributes to epistemic quality. For example, take into consideration how open-mindedness as a virtue has an immense influence on the process of forming or, even better, changing a particular belief. The same line of reasoning applies to stubbornness or closed-mindedness, prejudice or intellectual insolence which also represent important factors in the acquisition of knowledge or even more so in the process of changing one's beliefs. It seems that there must be a great amount of curiosity, open-mindedness and intellectual modesty in firstly, evaluating our own beliefs and secondly, realizing that we have some false beliefs that require change. I see the virtue of curiosity as a vessel for revision and refinement of one's beliefs, values, and aspirations. More precisely, I aim to connect epistemic virtues with the "self" and with general self-knowledge, as well as with knowledge and self-knowledge about food choices and current environmental issues. In that sense, my focus will be on the epistemic conduct of the subject in question – an average, imperfect cognizer, situated in a complex, epistemic informational chaos – who I find vitally important in relation to food or any other issue.

1.3 Third shift: Epistemology is political

As you have seen by now, epistemology underwent two major shifts. In the first shift, with regard to knowledge and justification, epistemology started to take into consideration the social aspect of knowing. In the second shift, the focus was no longer focused merely on the truth-value of the proposition but on the epistemic virtues (and vices) of the epistemic subject. Hereafter my aim is to focus on the third shift which refers to the break that epistemology has in **the domain of politics and justice**. Unlike traditional epistemology where the epistemic subject is connected to endless logic and rationality and operates in purely theoretical imaginary beyond real-life situations, the epistemic subject in social epistemology is very much related to the social world and its influence on the epistemic subject in question. As Prijić-Samaržija notes, virtue epistemology is not just a productive framework for the epistemic analysis of the acts conducted within the social world, but it has an additional value which is evident in the ability to connect itself to political, ethical, and similar evaluations (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 69). Thus, social epistemology has deeply set foot in the area of the political: there is a great potential for a hybrid platform of values connecting epistemic, political and ethical assessments (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 72).

When do the “epistemic” coincide with the “political”? Basically, in every situation where one’s social status or belonging to a particular social group provides that person with a surplus or a deficit in the assessment of their epistemic authority and rationality. In other words, every time when someone thinks that, for instance, a woman is not suited for a particular job because she is “by nature” irrational or mentally weaker, or when someone thinks that a person coming from a privileged background deserves more epistemic authority just based on his/her privileged status. Both of those subjects are epistemically deprived. Every time when a stereotype about a particular group of people influences judgment regarding a member of that group, epistemic discrimination is in action. To define it in a more refined way, I will use Prijić-Samaržija quote in which she defines **epistemic discrimination** as “a situation in which social and epistemic injustice combine to attribute individuals with unjustified excess or deficits of credibility in accordance with stereotypes about their social belonging and identity” (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 76). Women

are hysterical, men are not emotional (or if they are, it is seen as a signal of weakness and endangered masculinity), black people are thieves, fat people (and people from Dalmatia) are lazy – to mention some of the most common ones within the social imaginary.

When discussing the intersection between the epistemic and the political, it is essential to recall the concept of **"epistemic injustice"** and the name of Miranda Fricker. Thanks to her and her groundbreaking book, "Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing", the concept of epistemic injustice came to light. The concept of "epistemic injustice" I find quite relevant because it explains the importance and far-reaching consequences of different stereotypes and prejudices which do harm to people as epistemic knowers. But it seems that consequences surpass the epistemic dimension and do harm in the political way as well. Therefore, it is in order to devote some time to further explain the subject in question. "Epistemic injustice" refers to the problem of "distributive unfairness in respect of epistemic goods such as information or education" (Fricker, 2007: 1). It can be manifested in two forms: **testimonial and hermeneutic**. In the testimonial form "someone is wronged in their capacity as a giver of knowledge" (as Fricker notes, for example, when police do not believe you because you are black or a woman), while in the hermeneutic form "someone is wronged in their capacity as a subject of social understanding" (for example, a woman experiencing sexual harassment in a culture lacking the concept for that particular experience) (Fricker, 2007: 7).

In a social imaginary there are a number of conceptions that govern what it means to belong to a particular category: woman, worker, poor, gay, men, black, immigrant... When one displays some kind of prejudice, it can go in two directions: one can give a person more credibility than needed in which case we talk about **credibility access** and the other direction is **credibility deficit**. Basically, Fricker is saying that our credibility judgments are inevitably infected by our prejudices, precisely by **identity prejudice** "for or against people owing to some feature of their social identity" (Fricker, 2007: 28). Prejudice enters through **stereotypes** which Fricker defines as "widely held associations between a given social group and one or more attributes" (Fricker, 2007: 30). Some of them include, for instance, women are emotional, blondes are stupid, men are rational,

black people are lazy, poor people are thieves, athletes are stupid… Prejudices are essentially wrong judgments about a particular group of people which have roots in stereotypes floating in our social bubble. For example, if a white upper-class man with a great CV from a prestigious university comes to a job interview, because of his privileged background he can be in credibility excess and one could say that his identity ensures him with more identity power than a Roma girl who comes at the same interview with great grades and references as well, but due to her background and identity prejudice surrounding the Roma ethnic minority, she could face credibility deficit. Both of the epistemic agents are experiencing **testimonial injustice**, describes Fricker (2007: 17-29). In the case of testimonial injustice, a subject is subjected to a wrong as a knower as much as he/she is degraded as a human (Fricker, 2007: 44). Secondly, this experience can have far-reaching consequences on the subject: she can lose confidence in her own belief and justification and eventually, in her intellectual abilities.

According to Fricker, there is another case of epistemic injustice connected to social power. Before any further inspection into the complex domain of epistemic injustice, let us stop briefly at the term **"social power"**. What kind of power is that? Fricker defines social power as a "practically socially situated capacity to control others' actions, where this capacity may be exercised (actively or passively) by particular social agents, or alternatively, it may operate purely structurally" (Fricker, 2007: 13). So, it can operate actively or passively, and due to the fact that is a capacity, it exists even when it is on "hold" or not set in motion. Speaking of power in the context of social agents, Fricker distinguishes between two forms of power: the **agential power**, exercised by an agent in a way that one party controls the actions of another party or parties, and the power which operates purely structurally without a subject, that is, without a particular agent exercising it, but with an object whose actions are controlled by that power. This latter form of power is crucial for understanding hermeneutical injustice which stands as another case of epistemic injustice besides the testimonial epistemic injustice mentioned above. While agential operations of social power, exercised actively or passively, are carried out by one or more social agents, in **"structural power"** one has a purely structural operation of power which is subjectless (Fricker, 2007: 9-13). In discussing "structural power", Fricker relies on Michel Foucault and his well-known understanding of power. Due to his (early)

understanding of epistemology, Foucault can be situated in the postmodern context, but his contribution to social epistemology is unquestionably immense since his focus contained meticulous analysis of structure and its power impact on the epistemic agent.[1]

Until Foucault, **power** was usually understood as functioning hierarchically, from top to bottom. As opposed to that widespread understanding, Foucault saw power as a force that runs through the whole social body: power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1990: 93). Contrary to an understanding in which power runs vertically, according to Foucault "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 1990: 93). An omnipresent power runs through the social body and is exercised from innumerable points: its effects are divisions and inequalities (Foucault, 1990: 94). Furthermore, power shapes every aspect of human life in a way that, when joined with something which is presented as **"knowledge"**, thus truthful and neutral, it constitutes different **discourses** or "tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations" (Foucault, 1990: 101). We can say that "power", "knowledge" and "discourses" are the fundamental units in the process of the **production of "truth"**. Power needs discourses which are grounded in it and this power systematizes a particular truth through institutions: the truth needs to be produced (Foucault, 2004b: 24-26).[2] According to this understanding of power, nobody is deprived of power which consequently gives a different perspective on the concepts of resistance, autonomy and responsibility.

According to Foucauldian understanding, power is a force which runs through the social body and creates divisions and inequalities within the society. This is the base of Fricker's approach to power. However, she goes one step further and within the Foucauldian framework of power clearly articulates a particular kind of injustice: **epistemic injustice** (lack of fairness regarding epistemic goods such as information).[3]

[1]On Foucualt's relationship with epistemology see more in Prijić-Samaržija, 2018.
[2] For now, I leave open the troubling issue of interpreting the "truth" in Foucault. I will focus on it in more detail in the following chapters.
[3] I find Fricker's notions on subjectless "structural power" and Foucault's idea of power which runs through the social body and consequently creates divisions and inequalities very similar. Fricker points out Foucault's famous claim that "power is never localized" which she comments as "a piece of exaggeration"

Unlike testimonial epistemic injustice where a subject can get too much or too little credibility due to a particular prejudice that comes from a shared stereotype, and additionally, as I see it, those wrong judgments have epistemic as well as political consequences, hermeneutical injustice tackles different problems. Regarding hermeneutical injustice, Fricker sets examples in which women could not articulate their experience because a relevant concept did not exist in a collective social experience; for example, postpartum depression or sexual harassment. Those things were being experienced by women but in a collective understanding there was a gap: the experience was not "named" and with that lack of articulation (giving name to a particular social experience), women experienced hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007: 147-152). How could a woman make sense of her experience if she could not articulate it since the relevant type did not exist in and for the collective hermeneutical pool?

The birth of the concept of "epistemic injustice" was far from being purely intellectual. A woman named Carmita Wood experienced inadequate sexual behavior from her colleague at a time when the concept of "sexual harassment" did not exist. Consequently, she lost her job, suffered medical as well as financial problems and at the end decided to break the silence about it with her lawyers coining the term "sexual harassment" (Fricker, 2007: 149). Today we have that term, we know what activities it encompasses and what the consequences for such actions are. Before the articulation of the term, women faced that experience which was unjust but were powerless to do anything. They experienced emotional and mental problems, suffered financial consequences, probably lost their job and undoubtedly, underwent epistemic harm. Not to mention "postpartum depression": an experience that was also just recently articulated. Immediately after the childbirth, many women suffer from depression, sadness, anxiety, or similar mental and emotional states. Such women were usually shamed and labeled as

(2007: 12). I must agree with her. Power does run through the social body, but nevertheless, it seems to me that there are "nodes" where the power is accumulated: in institutions which produce a particular kind of knowledge and discourses, such as media, corporations, governments, family, medicine, law, etc. And Foucault analyzed some of those institutions in depth. Therefore, his claim that the power is never localized I see as a contrast with his astonishing research of structures in which the power seems to be concentrated and which are responsible for the production of concrete discourses. For now, the idea that there is a subjectless power which runs through the social body (different structures and mechanisms) and is manifested onto objects, I find to be shared by Fricker and Foucault. Consequently, this kind of power is hermeneutically problematic, as I will try to show further in the thesis.

bad mothers and women, as failures. One can only imagine how it harmed them epistemically and lowered their self-esteem. Although common to so many women, only of late can women seek medical help for “postpartum depression” without feeling shame.

Likewise, PTSD exists as long as combat does and soldiers experience it regularly after returning from wars. Much like the concept of “sexual harassment” or “postpartum depression”, this experience was articulated not long ago and soldiers experiencing that severe state could reach towards specialists who can help them. All those examples witness that without the articulation of a particular experience, people stay in the position of misunderstanding and injustice. Articulation of an experience is the first step towards the amendment of injustice. To go a bit deeper into this issue, Fricker offers a more generic definition of hermeneutic injustice which she explains as: “injustice of having some significant area of one’s social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization” (Fricker, 2007: 158). This definition covers the possibility of two different cases of hermeneutical injustice: **systematic** and **incidental cases**. The difference is that in incidental cases, hermeneutical injustice is not part of a common pattern of social power but is more of a one-off experience of powerlessness where we don’t have structural inequality of power but a one-time experience of powerlessness which cannot be communicated because there is no tool in communication to grasp that experience (Fricker, 2007: 156-158). On the other hand, in systematic cases, one is disadvantaged because a prejudice in question “chases” the subject through different social dimensions: economic, educational, professional, sexual, legal, political, religious (Fricker, 2007: 27). In systematic cases, “the lacuna [in the collective hermeneutical resource] is caused and maintained by a wide-ranging and persistent hermeneutical marginalization” and that is the example of the abovementioned Carmita Wood (Fricker, 2007: 158-160). Fricker also opens the possibility of experiencing double epistemic injustice. Take the example of the said Carmita Wood: firstly, she experienced injustice because she could not even articulate her experience because “sexual harassment” as a concept was lacking in the collective hermeneutical pool, and secondly, Fricker adds the risk of identity prejudice based on gender/ethnicity/class which opens the possibility for testimonial injustice and, in turn, a person faces the possibility of experiencing double epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007: 154). If Carmita Wood was a

member of a minority, her testimony would be scrutinized even more than a testimony of a middle-class white woman.

How does hermeneutic injustice occur? As stated by Fricker, it relates to **powerlessness**. When we have an unequal hermeneutical participation in some kind of a social experience, members of that particular group face hermeneutical marginalization which is a form of powerlessness (Fricker, 2007: 153). What is the cause of marginalization? According to Fricker, it can be an effect of social-material power (someone's socio-economic background) or it can be an effect of identity power (prejudicial stereotypes), but usually it is a combination of both (Fricker, 2007: 153). In essence, if you are a woman, furthermore, a poor woman, also belonging to any kind of a minority group, it will be much harder to gain the trust. "Black Lives Matter", a social movement fighting racism and violence, especially police brutality towards black people, clearly shows how socio-material powerlessness combined with prejudicial stereotypes towards black people generates epistemic and political injustice till this day.

This leads us to the definition of hermeneutical injustice based on social justice. Fricker defines **hermeneutical injustice** as "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to a structural identity prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource" (Fricker, 2007: 155). Hermeneutical marginalization here entails marginalization of a socio-economic sort and when one has identity prejudice which mark the subject through different spheres of the social world. Besides hermeneutical, we speak of systematic injustice which has in itself the aspect of oppression and comes from the structural inequality of power and can be seen as a type of structural discrimination (Fricker, 2007: 155-156). In case of testimonial or hermeneutical injustice, the subject experiences **epistemic deficit**: in the testimonial case a **deficit of credibility** and in the hermeneutical case a **deficit of intelligibility** (Fricker, 2013: 13-24).

I think it is very important to connect prejudices, stereotypes, marginalization and powerlessness with social power and social injustice in order to show the inseparability of the epistemic from the political domain. Let us say that there is an opening for a high

managerial position and a person conducting the interview has a prejudice which implies that a woman does not handle pressure well. The woman being interview can be wronged in an epistemic as well as a political way. If, for instance, she does not get that job because she is a woman, she can be wronged in an epistemic way and lose confidence in her intellectual abilities. Besides epistemic injustice, there is political injustice due to the fact that she is experiencing gender discrimination because she is not getting a job not based on her references but on her gender. Socio-economical background, as Fricker has shown us, also plays an important role. Generally speaking, epistemic injustice is in the roots of political and social injustices and our social imaginary is saturated with all kinds of prejudices and stereotypes generating epistemic injustice. Miranda Fricker's great contribution is in recognizing and articulating these persisting phenomena. If we focus on epistemic injustice as a problem of distributive fairness with respect to epistemic goods such as information, one can argue that this kind of injustice is very much connected with food and injustice, oppression, discrimination, as well as objectification and instrumentalization, as will be shown later in the thesis. For now, the aim was to outline the existing theoretical framework that operates as a base for ecological epistemology.

So far, I tried to sketch out the critical importance of interconnectivity of the epistemic and the political dimension which is present in everyday life to a great extent. Fricker opened this Pandora's box and gave meaning to many experiences of injustice that people are commonly facing. Furthermore, Fricker's concept of epistemic justice Prijić-Samaržija sees as a pragmatic **hybrid virtue** which consolidates epistemic, ethical, and political values and she further discusses it in her book (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 73). **Hybrid perspective** is a concept proposed by Prijić-Samaržija as a necessary platform for the harmonization of epistemic and ethical/political virtues. In her words, "a social practice or entity can and should be justified only if it fulfills ethical/political requirements while respecting or generating the epistemic quality of beliefs/judgments/decisions" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 96). She adopts a **situationist hybrid model** according to which, in cases of imbalance between justice and truth, that particular situation should be contextualized and optimally harmonized vis-à-vis both epistemic and political/ethical virtues in order to preserve social justice, by no means should it be determined by automatically deciding in favor of one particular value, either epistemic or political/ethical

(Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 90). For example, the decision whether to involve a woman in politics, science or high management should be guided by questions of epistemic benefits and social justice. Does the inclusion preserve social justice and does that inclusion improve epistemic outcomes? Or more relatable to the topic of food: what would be the example of balancing between epistemic and political/ethical virtue?

1.4. Conclusion

In the first chapter, I tried to give a general disciplinary framework for my research. Thus far I outlined the scope of traditional epistemology and its actual shifts. Social epistemology, primarily the work of Miranda Fricker, demonstrated the importance of the concept of epistemic (in)justice in regard to epistemic goods such as information. Prijić-Samaržija took it a step further by connecting epistemology with politics and social justice. As I will show in the following chapters, social epistemology can also be employed as a framework for questions regarding the self and self-knowledge: the two essential concepts in the analysis of the beliefs related to the multilayered topic of food. It all began in the seventies when Alvin Goldman opened epistemology to social forces which influence human cognition. From there on, the theoretical framework proceeded and Snježana Prijić-Samaržija outlined three different approaches in contemporary social epistemology. Firstly, we have revisionism which was exploited in the seventies and is seen as a postmodern, nihilist approach which abandons the traditional normative epistemic framework and relies on a key normative concept of “social construction”. As I see it, the complete rejection of concepts such as truth or objective knowledge leads to a dead end but nevertheless, revisionism gave rise to many interesting and valuable points such as the role of social power and its impact on the process of the constitution of knowledge. As a second approach which marks social epistemology, Prijić-Samaržija outlines conservativism which invokes well-known epistemic topics and revisits them from a contemporary standpoint. Thirdly, there is expansionism which delivers new topics of cognition and focuses on individual epistemic agents, as well as on group agents. It also can be seen as an interesting multidisciplinary approach which gathers different disciplines such as political theory, gender and cultural studies, as well as law, postcolonial and literary studies, sociology, etc.

Established connection between one's cognition and society's role in that process broadened the scope of research within epistemology. Within the first shift, with his groundbreaking veritistic social epistemology, Alvin Goldman opened the door for understanding the impact of social forces on the process of knowledge acquisition and justification. In the second shift the scope was widened and the focus was not just on the evaluation of truth and justification of a proposition but on the virtues of the agent in question. The rigid monism of truth as an exclusive epistemic value in this shift is alternated with a pluralist account of values which can be seen as contributors to epistemic success and epistemic quality. It seems important to stress that this expansion does not go towards the reductive and nihilistic approach seen in the postmodern revisionism but it holds the traditional normative framework: the objective validity of epistemic values and virtues (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 96). Epistemic virtues such as epistemic responsibility, curiosity, courage or integrity owned and trained by an epistemic agent, as opposed to epistemic vices such as laziness, intellectual dishonesty, prejudices or gullibility, in my opinion have a profound effect on the process of cognition. Lastly, in the third shift the connection is established between epistemology and the sphere of politics and justice. I find this shift to be very important and, hopefully, it can affect the processes of decision making in society on many levels. Here the questions of epistemic injustice, powerlessness, marginalization and discrimination are being addressed. This shift shows how intellectual vices such as prejudices and stereotypes can have powerful consequences in both epistemic and political ways and can stand in the way of social justice. As a society in general we have achieved legal equality. All people have equal human and civil rights regarding sex, gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or any other social marker. But as we see, there is more intangible injustice present in society which we must address. How to address the concrete situations in which ethical/political virtues do not correlate with desirable epistemic outcomes? These are the questions for epistemologists.

Do programs for the greater involvement of women into male dominated areas of science (STEM) accomplish epistemic as well as ethical/political outcomes? Or to go more local, the law that enables the children of army soldiers of the Croatian war for independence to have advantage in the process of enrollment into university: is that

decision ethically/politically and epistemically successful? In the evaluation of situations where on the one hand there are ethical/political questions at stake and on the other epistemic ones, Prijić-Samaržija proposes a situationist hybrid model according to which, in the process of evaluation, each case should be contextualized and the deliberation should take into consideration the values of both epistemic benefits and social justice; that is, a fine calibration between epistemic outcomes (epistemic benefits and damages) and the preservation of social justice should be done in estimation of every particular case (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 90-95).

I consider Miranda Fricker's concept of "epistemic justice" groundbreaking. How people are epistemically impaired when knowledge or information are not justly transmitted? And what about all kinds of "epistemic bugs" like stereotypes and prejudices or different cultural norms, values, images and representations which inhabit the social landscape as well as personal ones? I find these questions crucial and fundamental in our society today and, as will be shown in the later part of the thesis, important and applicable to the questions regarding food production and consumption where unjust transmission of knowledge puts epistemic subjects in a disadvantaged position. My aim to trace and analyze the power of one's cognition as well as "epistemic bugs" occupying our social landscape and fueling epistemic injustices. For now, I will emphasize the importance of the "social" being recognized within epistemology and the social aspect of knowing being taken into consideration, much as the broader context of power dynamics within society where epistemic injustice occurs. As I will show, questions regarding power, knowledge and injustice are recognized within epistemology and moreover, those questions are valid in approaching and understanding our contemporary food system. With that in mind, I perceive social epistemology as very much a "real-life" discipline or a framework which can be applied to many day-to-day practices and to important procedures concerning public decision making. It represents a tool for understanding the process of human cognition in its totality. Likewise, the expansion of virtue epistemology, a subdiscipline of a broader field of social epistemology, is immensely important in my opinion and I will focus extensively on it further in the thesis. I consider epistemic virtues to be in direct connection with the "self" and self-knowledge and, more generally, social epistemology an important emancipatory project.

2. THE “SELF”

After I have delineated social epistemology as my theoretical scope as well as the relevant expansions within the domain, in the next task I will focus on the questions regarding the “self”. “Self” is the base: he/she is the bearer of beliefs related to food meaning that he/she selects beliefs coming from the collective imaginary and modifies his/her belief system and based on those beliefs he/she handles self-reflection and acts in the world. Therefore, what is this “self” like?

The shifts in epistemology made room for questions regarding the epistemic agent/subject or, more precisely, the analysis of the epistemic conduct or his/her actions. Every epistemic subject is the bearer of the “self” with the accompanying self-knowledge, so the shifts in epistemology opened up space for understanding the “situated knower”, who will, in the second part of the thesis, be placed within a contemporary socio-economic context and become the epistemic “subject/eater” (epistemic subject who forms food-related beliefs) seen as a part of the food system.

The social realm has a great impact on the “self” and consequently on self-knowledge or our knowledge about our own values, desires, emptions, norms or character traits. We are immersed in the “social” which shapes our wider understanding of the world and undoubtedly our self-knowledge which determines our further choices, practices and habits. So, in a broader sense, my knowledge is not just “mine”: it is shaped by many different notions coming from the vast cultural imaginary we are rooted in. This broad cultural imaginary is saturated with different collective beliefs, norms, symbols, images, representations and values, as well as prejudices and stereotypes. Undoubtedly, cultural imaginary has its role in the way one understands himself/herself and the surrounding world with all its realms, food being one of them.

How does the “social” shape the “self” and what is the importance of the socio-political context of the “self”? How does power mold “the self” and how do the axes like class, gender, race or ethnicity influence the “self” in question? “Self” is an essential concept: “self” is the one who comes across different food-related beliefs within the social sphere and approaches them, estimates them and selects them as truth-sensitive or false,

handles self-reflection and reevaluation of one's own beliefs, perhaps reshapes them or completely changes them, and finally, continues to act upon them leaving the material trace in the world. Therefore, the question is the power of one's cognition harbored in every "self" operating within the challenging social sphere.

In this thesis I am exploring beliefs and consequential epistemic injustices related to food and in this chapter I will focus on the "self" which bears this complex cognitive apparatus which constantly has to deliberate internally about the beliefs coming from the social environment, including the ones related to food. In this chapter my focus is on the scope of the concept of the "self": it is not unified but a complex and a multi-layered concept with so many determining factors that go into shaping it. People who consume and produce food are also not unified but embodied and socially situated with different experiences and understandings. This chapter is an attempt to grasp the width and the complexity of the "self" and an attempt to approach it from as many angles as possible with further intention of understanding better the mere process of cognition occurring inside every "self" imbedded into the social realm where power and knowledge intersect. In tackling the topic of food, I find it essential as a first step better to understand the "self" which is the bearer of one's beliefs related to all domains of one's life, including food.

2.1. The "self" and the social world

With the intention to reach towards the epistemic "subject/eater" who extracts and appropriates beliefs related to food from the social surroundings and acts accordingly, I will begin with the general concept of the "self" and the fundamental question: what is "self"? How is "self" shaped by the social world? Furthermore, how does this process of shaping the "self" affects one's self-knowledge? How does the social world affect my understanding of myself and the world around me? How is it connected with beliefs coming from the social world which I accept as truth-oriented? The "self" can be analyzed in an atomistic context with focus purely placed on the individual, as is the case in traditional epistemology. Due to the fact that humans are social beings, I see the self as always being accompanied by other "selves": we are operating within the inevitable **social**

domain of the self and this interconnectivity is the focal point of this thesis. The self is inseparable from the social world:

> "'The Self' is a misleading term. It suggests that there is such a thing, essentially enclosed, a child in a garden with no gates and a high wall. But in the picture of many of us, a Self is not born, but made. The earliest mind grows slowly into a Self only through its communications with other people. The child identifies with other people, and these identifications become part of her self-image. She needs other people for concept maturation and for learning to speak, and for virtually every other human capacity. 'The Self', then, is embedded from beginning in a social world, which changes as the child grows." (Cavell, 2011: 4).

It seems as if Marcia Cavell is invoking Simone De Beauvoir by claiming that we are not born as "selves" but we are growing, emerging as "selves" by being situated in a social world. Living in the same culture, we share the "epistemic grid" that we are exposed to: we share common culture, that is, beliefs, norms, behavior, as well as knowledge. Children learn from social activities such as games, reading, talking, but mostly by observation. We respect customs and share a common language used for interaction. We are undoubtedly social beings and learning has an immense social aspect. As Friedrick Schmitt notes, our common system of epistemic evaluation is social. The concept of "knowledge", as well as the standards of epistemic evaluation, are learned from others (Schmitt, 2017: 439). The abovementioned Cavell's quote ends with an important concept – **"growth"** – reaching a goal set for oneself. For Cavell, "self" is not timeless or unchanging; on the contrary, **"becoming a self"** means growing up, taking responsibility for one's life. "Growth" to her is a fundamental characteristic of being human and this capacity for growth – spiritual and moral – is a central figure of the "self" (Cavell, 2011: 7). Cavell has an almost poetic understanding of the "self" which involves perpetual change and a never-ending process of one's lifetime journey which we start as children immersed into the social world.

The amount of philosophical literature concerning the question of the "self" is intimidatingly extensive and due to the fact that I am operating within the domain of social epistemology, my position is situated in the intersection of the "self" and the social. Cavell asks:

> "What is the Self? Or is there no such thing? Is it present from the beginning of life? Or is it something that comes to be? When we speak of 'the lost Self', or of 'finding one's Self', what do we mean? What are the conditions under which the Self may fall apart? What does 'falling apart' mean? Is the Self continuous or discontinuous? Are there many selves, or just one? Does the Self have anything essential to do with other selves?" (Cavell, 2011: 1).

With all these difficult questions, Cavell points out how tough it is to talk about the "self". Why is it so hard to grasp and define the concept of "self"? Cavell gives several options. Firstly, the "self" is a "deeply ambiguous" term: it can stand for "person", "the I" (syncategorematic expression) or "the subject". Secondly, there is no consensus on the issue of the formation of the "self": is "self" formed from the birth or is it formed after several developmental stages? Lastly, according to Cavell, the "self" is like "truth", "knowledge" or "reality": it stands as a core concept, hard to identify because we use those concepts in order to define other concepts (Cavell, 2011: 8). So far, the self is sort of an ambiguous concept. Yet, every human being is "situated" in relation to the "self": we are "selves" and consequently, the "self" stands as some kind of a base-concept crucial in the perception and the understanding of the world around us with all its beliefs, images, symbols and the overall cultural imaginary. The thinking about "self" is usually connected with **subjectivity**: self-image can be defined as a capability to self-reflect, a quality which enables us to recognize ourselves as persons, individuals or subjects. As Kim Atkins says, the talk about "the self" is usually a common denominator for a range of concepts which relate to self-reflection; for example, "consciousness", "ego", "soul", "subject", "person" or "moral agent" (Atkins, 2005: 1). The topic of subjectivity can be seen as the nucleus of philosophical thinking and as a subject matter reflected upon throughout history from different perspectives. The history of philosophy is intertwined with questions regarding the "self" and subjectivity. For the sake of better orientation, I will give a very short chronological overview for the purpose of delineating a broader philosophical landscape of the "self" in an attempt to grasp the historical topology of the "self".

In the quest for better understanding of the "self", Kim Atkin's book came as helpful. Atkins begins with Early Modern Period, marked with Descartes (1596-1650) who is seen as an architect of mind/body dualism and a philosopher who centered subjectivity as a

philosophical issue connecting it with the expression of God. There appears another big name, John Locke (1632-1704), whose “person” is self-reflexive, has reason and his personal identity is framed around moral responsibility. Yet one more pillar was embodied in David Hume (1711-1756) who contributed to the matter with his notions of knowledge and perception (Atkins, 2005: 19-33). All these great thinkers laid philosophical foundations. Later Modern Period was characterized with Kant (1724-1804) who was emblematic for this period and, as Atkins claims, articulated the basis for what will become known as two different philosophical directions. His notions on conditions regarding knowledge primarily paved the way for analytical philosophy of language and philosophy of mind, but also, his notions on the subjective nature of understanding opened the doors for what will later be known as phenomenology and, looking broader, for continental philosophy: philosophical course less focused on logic, language, clarity, and precision than analytical philosophy (Atkins, 2005: 2, 47-59). In this historical time, known as the late Modern era, besides Kant, there is another important thinker who laid the foundations for continental philosophy and whose ideas are still incredibly influential – Hegel (1770-1831) – well known for his notions on transcendental idealism where the constitution of objects is connected to consciousness (Atkins, 2005: 60). His notion of master-slave dialectic stands as a realization of us as subjects in the world. This dialectic is essentially a struggle for recognition and this relation shows that subjectivity is mediated precisely through relations with others. Hegel’s notion of intersubjectivity is an important element which will influence further social conceptions of the self. His claims about freedom and subjectivity as negotiated through relations with others stand as the cornerstone for further philosophies of Marxism, phenomenology, existentialism, feminism to this day (Atkins, 2005: 60-70).

In the continental tradition, apart from Hegel, there is one more esteemed mind in Late Modern Philosophy who influenced many ideas regarding the self and subjectivity: Nietzsche (1844-1900). He despised Christian morality and rejected the Enlightenment’s ideal of progress and reason. He saw subjectivity as decentralized and humans as driven by creative and destructive impulses (Atkins, 2005: 71). His subjectivity was holistic and embodied, the inner world was characterized by pain, but what was lending light to these dark notions of subjectivity was his “will to power” which he saw as transformative energy

through which “Übermensch” will triumph over his own pain and recreate himself through complete “re-evaluation” of his own values (Atkins, 2005: 71-84).

In this overview of the concept of the “self”, phenomenology imposes itself as an important part of continental philosophy where questions of subjectivity are in focus. The key name of phenomenology is Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who, in his anti-essentialist notions of human existence, was influenced heavily by his mentor, Edmund Husserl and his phenomenology (theory focused on how subjects practically experience objects). Heidegger’s famous concept “Dasein” means “being-in-the-world”. “Dasein” stands for self-reflectivity, a subjectivity lacking the essence and represented only with potentiality. “Dasein” introduces the task of becoming whoever we will be: the meaning of one’s life is not up to God or nature; it is sheer potentiality to make one’s life one’s own (Atkins, 2005: 113-124). Heidegger highly influenced Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) who developed the notion of embodied subjectivity: one is connected to reality through one’s own body. He is known for his notions of “body-scheme”: one’s body is not detached but immersed in the world and through the body one is capable to articulate a perspective on the world (Atkins, 2005: 102).

Important work on the self and subjectivity is that of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), whose existentialist philosophy also belongs to the corpus of continental philosophy. Inspired by Hegel, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, according to Sartre’s understanding of subjectivity, there is no human nature and man is what he makes of himself. To him, relation to Other is fundamental – interpersonal contact with Other transforms one’s world. His notion on Other’s gaze is very much important for Foucault, as we will see later. Sartre’s Other’s gaze becomes tangled with one’s sense of “self”: the gaze of Other is being internalized (Atkins, 2005: 87-101).

Another acclaimed scholar who gave a new and unique perspective in questioning the subjectivity is Freud (1856-1939). His theory of psychoanalysis opened the door for the sphere of unconsciousness which stands as a means of reflection, a tool for insight and rediscovery of the subject (Atkins, 2005: 196). He postulated a famous tripartite conception of the mind: the “id” represents the unconscious drives and desires; “ego” is a

kind of a storehouse for our sensations and the realm of our moral agency, free will and choices, a sort of a mediator between the “id” and the “super-ego” which stands for our conscience. His theory was hotly debated, especially among feminist philosophers who criticized his misogynist notions on women’s sexuality present in his notorious concept of the “penis envy” stage in girls’ psychological development. He heavily influenced post-structuralism and philosophers like Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva and one can say that from Freud onwards, understanding of the self has never been the same (Atkins, 2005: 195-205).

Two more important philosophers emerge within the domain of the “self” and subjectivity, which Atkins places in the post-structuralist drawer next to Freud: Michel Foucault and Paul Ricoeur. Foucault (1926-1984) adopted Nietzschean genealogical method and his work can be understood as a history of thought (Atkins, 2005: 206-219). He thoroughly outlined his ideas on social construction of subjectivity which will be focus of this thesis later on. For now, let us say that for Foucault introspection is not a method for understanding the “self” because introspection is also a result of a certain kind of thought characteristic for a particular historical period. For Foucault, subjectivity is not something “natural” but rather produced, constructed through discursive practices of a particular time and place (Atkins, 2005: 206-219). Foucault can be seen as one of the forerunners of social constructivism, which will come into focus shortly. Likewise, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) has subjectivity as a focal point in his work but in a different sense. He writes from a phenomenological position: in his “hermeneutic of the self”, our self-understandings are “fictive”, that is, “subject to the productive effects of the imagination through interpretative processes which take a narrative form” (Atkins, 2005: 220).

After this brief outline, it should be clear that the vast amount of writings within the continental tradition indicates that questions concerning the “self” and subjectivity were and still are essential topics. Nevertheless, the analytic tradition also poses questions regarding the subject matter. I dare to note that the analytic approach is much more concise, argumentative and clear in writing: attributes which often lack in the continental tradition. Personally, I like the argumentation coming from the analytic tradition, but at the same time I am educated in continental philosophy with its sharp and extensive cultural

critique. I would like to think that those two traditions can be merged: the continental emancipatory and almost poetical passion for changing the world with the analytic clarity, structure and precision of thought.

With respect to philosophers coming from the analytic tradition who are preoccupied with the questions of the self and subjectivity, I will continue to lean on Kim Atkins who singles out Peter Strawson (1919-2006) and his concept of “basic particulars” which constitute essential entities of our concepts of reality (Atkins, 2005: 127). To him, a person is “a basic material entity to which are ascribed both physical and mental predicates” (Atkins, 2005: 127). According to Atkins, Harry Frankfurt (1929), who will be mentioned later in the thesis for his interesting notions on “bullshit”, also stands as an important name in the analytic tradition and is known for his writings on moral responsibility. For him, the defining component of a person is freedom of the will. He distinguishes persons from wantons: wantons can perform only instrumental reason but not critical judgment, so they lack freedom of the will, whereas persons, since they critically reflect on their desires, are seen as moral agents and members of the moral community and consequently, can lead a genuine life (Atkins, 2005: 141). Atkins outlines an interesting critique from Catriona Mackenzie and Seyla Benhabib which will appear later in the thesis and which addresses the issue of critical reflection. The critique towards Frankfurt consists in the claim that critical evaluation is not something given but rather achieved through interpersonal and social relations. That claim is important in discussing the social conceptions of the “self” because it points out the strong impact of the socio-political context of the socially situated knower as well as the social dimension of his/her cognition (Atkins, 2005: 141). Moreover, as Atkins notes, choices and exertion of the will are also problematic due to the issues concerning self-conception as a possible product of oppressive ideology (Atkins, 2005: 141).

Sydney Shoemaker (1931) is another interesting name in analytic philosophy when it comes to the self and subjectivity, as Atkins states. He is known for his work on self-knowledge and personal identity. “A person is the totality of unity relation holding between all his or her person stages. The unity of a person, then, has two aspects: unity over time and unity at a particular time (diachronic and synchronic unity)” (Atkins, 2005: 154).

Bernard Williams (1929-2003) worked in the domain of moral philosophy, took interest in the value of the “good life”, he viewed morals, values and beliefs as parts of history and culture and understood person’s life as a whole and being righteous to the role of the human body with regard to identity (Atkins, 2005: 163). Derek Parfit (1942), with his “impersonality thesis”, also holds an important position in the domain of the self and subjectivity, as Atkins claims. He sees “person” as a “subset of facts within a wider complex of facts”, that is, we can comprehend personal identity and reality without ever employing the term “person” (Atkins, 2005: 173-177).

Within continental philosophy and more strictly speaking, in the sphere of the “self” and subjectivity, **body** holds a special place. “Self” is corporeal, embodied, tangible. Body is important when we talk about food and “epistemic eaters” are corporeal and gendered. Their body implies different experiences and understandings. Contemporary discourse is oppressive but is especially dehumanizing towards women’s bodies. Within the continental tradition, body is beyond a physical object which expresses particular subjective states (Atkins, 2005: 2-3). Philosophers in the phenomenological tradition, namely Merleau-Ponty, emphasize the power of embodiment in perception and consciousness, thereby destabilizing the idea of a rigid empirical notion of the “self” or the world. To Nietzsche, Freud and Foucault body plays a crucial role in subjectivity. Body is a “locus” of often clashing urges and impulses, a place where power is manifested due to social regulation. All these factors determine different forms of subjectivity (Atkins, 2005: 3). We will focus more on the body, especially female body and its connections to power and food later in the thesis. For now, it seems important to me to understand better the width of the theoretical realm which precedes my own thoughts in approaching the topic of food through questions of power, body, and self-knowledge.

Theory of embodiment is unavoidable with respect to the “self”. According to this theory, body is a crucial component in the constitution of the subjectivity. Body, as I will show later, is inseparable from the food or, more accurately, it is impossible to understand food without exploring its relationship with the body. Body, as an integral and dynamic part which influences our perception and our knowledge, has been a central claim of feminist philosophy. Our body-image, that is, our perception of our body, is socially

determined. This angle gave a social understanding of the female body. Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) was a central figure in the feminist movement. Her book “Second Sex” should be a bedtime story for every young girl. Influenced by Hegel, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, de Beauvoir opened the gate for understanding the social construction of gender (Atkins, 2005: 237-242). She articulated the oppressiveness of political and social institutions in the process of the constitution of subjectivity; she also described the lived experience of female embodiment (Atkins, 2005: 237). Body, or in this case, the female body and its relation to one’s perception and knowledge about the world will posit itself as one of the cornerstones in understanding the topic of food, hence the importance of ecological epistemology as an appropriate tool for understanding the multi-dimensional aspect of food. Collective beliefs, oppressive norms and stereotypes which relate to food and come from the collective imaginary are always imprinted into female bodies which can be read as a physical imprint of social power.

De Beauvoir for the first time introduced sex/gender distinction when she famously wrote that one is not born, but rather, becomes a woman. Beauvoir debunked the naturalized myth of women and showed that social norms surrounding women in our culture are socially constructed. She pointed out the social norms one must meet as a woman, outlining that what is means to be a woman is socially constructed – it is not something natural or ahistorical. She demonstrated how woman is always constructed as relational to men, she is men’s Other. Just to make the context a bit clearer, mind that her book was published in 1949, women won their right to vote in France in 1944, in Yugoslavia in 1945, in Switzerland in 1971. In the USA in 1971 a woman could not get a credit card in her own name without her husband’s signature. In 1978 it was legally guaranteed that women would not get fired if pregnant, women could not get into Harvard University until 1977 and spousal rape in the USA was criminalized only in 1993. And as Miranda Fricker shows with her work, there is much more structural oppression, injustice, and inequality despite formal and legal rights. Posing an issue is the generally accepted and reproduced collective imaginary with many of its damaging beliefs.

What Beauvoir showed was that women are systematically restricted in their capacity to act like agents in their own life, opening the questions of one’s autonomy.

According to Beauvoir, one's situation is defined by relations of reciprocity with the material and social world as well as one's body. Since women and men's situations are different, women have different subjectivities than men. Female body is one of the crucial elements which determine one's position in the world (Atkins, 2005: 241-251). Beauvoir opened the door for feminist philosophy which focuses on understanding the mechanisms of oppression which cannot be grasped without being aware of the social conception of the female body which is still a central theme in the works of many contemporary feminist philosophers. Selection is an onerous task and Atkins includes current philosophers like Judith Butler, Luce Irrigaray and Catriona Mackenzie as de Beauvoir's fellows in the realm of feminist philosophy, with which I fully agree. Judith Butler, on the Foucaudian trail, understands subjectivity, more specifically, gender and sex, as inseparable from discourse. Luce Irrigaray reads Freud's psychoanalytic theory as an integral part of a phallocentric tradition and notes how theories of subjectivities up to this point assumed that subjects are, by definition, male. Catriona Mackenzie writes about the social situatedness of a subject which cannot be ignored in relation to the self and subjectivity, making an important point which I will return to in the following pages.

In this context, Lorraine Code detects an interesting shift in the realm of the "self" and subjectivity. The conception of **unified subjectivity** was dominated for a long time and still, as a picture of human selves, "operates regulatively within the dominant socio-political imaginary of liberal democratic societies" (Code, 2000: 182). But an interesting split occurred with the late twentieth-century "decenterings" of the human subject. As Code states, "twentieth-century psychological, linguistic-philosophical and historical-material evidence radically unsettles the ideal of unified self-determining subjectivity" (Code, 2000: 182). Influenced by Freudian theory, Nietschean genealogy, postcolonial, post-World War II, as well as post-1968 movements, the theory of a subject, self-consciously transparent to himself or herself, is contested (Code, 2000: 182). Feminist philosophy with its focus on embodiment and consequences it brings, be they political or epistemic ones, moves away from universal individualism presupposed by many theories. To understand one's food-related beliefs, among other markers, we must approach it through the symbolism of the female body in contemporary culture. Food surpasses the caloric intake and mere energy necessary for living; it relates to corporeality and bears

epistemic and political consequences. To grasp the multidimensional sphere of food, a one-dimensional approach will not suffice. We need to understand the power of one's cognition in analyzing food-related beliefs that come from the social sphere while bearing in mind that food overlaps with the issues of power, self-knowledge and injustice. And experiencing that, there is no universal individualism. There is no unified position. Every position bears a different amount of power, specific experiences and knowledge. If "self" is represented as "unified", the question is: whose position, experience, knowledge and overall voice is represented and who is left out? All the notions of the "self" which is not unified but is complex and embodied are important because not all "selves" who consume and produce food can be gathered under a common denominator.

In regard to food, epistemic agents are not unified but socially situated. The socio-political identity with an accompanying context is necessary and I find it immensely important in grasping the complex "self" which must be located in a particular context. As I mentioned before, I am writing this thesis from my own position and perspective which is unique to me and as many can identify with it, many cannot. It seems to me that it is important to keep that thought in some corner of the mind at all times. Besides social situatedness, intersubjective relations constitute an important element. As Lorraine Code states, many feminists are obliged to Nancy Chodorow's work in object-relations psychology and her concept of **"relational individualism"** which represents "a conception of selves embedded in and defined from within intersubjective relations" (Code, 2000: 183). Chodorow is focused on the social constitution and argues against a picture of a psyche which suggests that it is created from within through innate structures such as drives and ego-structural development (Chodorow, 2010: 210). Through the 1970s and 1980s, Chodorow, as a clinician and a theoretician, centered on "British object relations theory to describe connections between the intrapsychic world and self-other relations and to claim that subjectivity requires relation to and recognition of other – originally the mother – as a subject" (Chodorow, 2010: 210). She is focused on the human experience of the inner life: she focuses on the vigor of drives, the role of the past which affects the present, the pervasiveness of the intrapsychic conflict, as well as the resistance to self-awareness and the power of emotions such as envy, guilt and shame (Chodorow, 2010: 210). Essentially, subjects are not unified, they are socially situated and embedded

in intersubjective relations, and it bears great significance in understanding the elusive concept of the “self”.

After this short linear overview, it is easier to pinpoint the discussion of the “self” within the broader philosophical landscape. For a long time, the focus in epistemology was on the individual knower and the internal process by which the subject obtains certain knowledge. Unquestionably, that makes an important approach, but there is nevertheless a social moment which affects that process. An individual knower can be analyzed in perfect conditions, stripped of any social context in order to extract and understand the cognitive machinery within the subject in question, but I couldn’t agree more with Cavell’s notion that the “self” is not born but emerges from the social relations. In a way, social imaginary is always inscribed in the “knower” and “knowers” are not unified. After all, we are “social” beings, born into a society where we stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow human beings or epistemic colleagues and inevitably influence each other, while at the same time our culture influences us – our understandings, knowledge, beliefs, norms and behavior, likewise those related to food. As social beings we carry a necessary openness for other people’s beliefs which is an important element when studying the “self” because it opens the opportunity to understand how food-related beliefs are generated on both individual and collective levels with accompanying epistemic injustices. This opens us a space to understand the inevitable sub-ideal side of one’s cognition which, going back to chapter one and Snježana Prijić-Samaržija’s shifts, is a rather new stand in epistemology. “Selves” who have food-related beliefs are not unified and I want to explore them, their position within the social world as well as the forces impacting their cognition in depth.

“Self” is a perplexing concept: it involves one’s mind, cognitive apparatus, beliefs and self-knowledge. Consequently, “self” comes as a non-unified concept where subjects are socially situated with an important constituent of social relations which shape the “self” in question. **Social Constructionist Theory** stands out as a major theoretical framework because it lays out the importance of the “social” and power. This theoretical move made room to understand power as an essential concept within the realm of food because all our knowledge and generally accepted beliefs are mediated through power inscribed in

the dominant discourse and in our epistemic mechanism while constituting the “self” and our self-knowledge.

The significance of the social constructionist theory is that it denaturalized many categories, concepts and generally accepted phenomena and practices which society takes as “natural”. Not until very recently, the second half of the 20th century, was the social context taken into consideration. The abovementioned social constructionist theory stood as a groundbreaking approach at the time – it was a new and radical theory with a new perspective on the social dimension and power; however, a theory with serious limitations. It was pioneering at the time and represents an important corpus of ideas in terms of the interconnectivity of knowledge, power and the social sphere. Therefore, in this quest of mine in which I am eager to detect the impact of the “social” on the subject, I think that the Social Constructionist Theory undeniably deserves some space. I see it as a moment in history which enabled us to understand things differently and its consequences we live till this day. It was an age characterized by the liberalization of society and many movements for social justice. That period in time was an interesting one and the overall social context very fascinating. Its legacy is still alive today.

The second half of the 20th century bestowed on us important shifts in epistemology and the countercultural Left from the 1960s left us with strong heritage in questioning many imposed phenomena that were taken for granted. One of the movements in that era was the environmental movement. Ecological preoccupation can be tracked down to Paleolithic or Neolithic period and that goes in line with the notion that for thousands of years people lived in peaceful coexistence with nature. The second view suggests that the ecological movement has its roots in the nineteenth century, whereas the third view dates the ecological movement back in the 1960s and 1970s which to me is truly the beginning of modern environmentalism because it addressed environmental threats such as resources, waste and pollution on a global level in a systematic analysis of the intertwined social, political and economic aspects which generate environmental problems (Dobson, 2007: 24-25). Environmental movement questioned the dominant attitude towards nature, primarily visible in Rachel Carson’s “Silent Spring”, a pioneering book which paved the way for what is today known as “environmentalism”, with its focus on

reshaping the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This relationship is also a phenomenon whose understanding is culturally shaped and ergo, susceptible to change. Its legacy, in today's era of climate change, is of utmost importance, as I will show later. For now, let us focus on the Social Constructionist Theory which stands as a radical and important framework.

The idea that society is by some means epistemically constructed found its roots in the work of the pillars of continental philosophy, Hegel and Husserl, as well as their followers Dilthey and Alfred Schutz, Husserl's disciple who popularized the term "social construction" where "construction" took the place of Husserlian "constitution", as claimed by Nenad Miščević (Miščević 2011: para. 3). That can be seen as an etymological clarification of the concept of "social construction" which represents a key normative concept within the postmodern approach to knowledge and epistemology in general. In his text "The Social Construction of Self", Kenneth J. Gergen refers to Vico, Nietzche, Dewey and Wittgenstein as pioneers of social constructionism. The list continues with the well-known Berger and Luckmann's book "The Social Construction of Reality" (1966) which made the concept popular (Gergen, 2011: 2). These authors paved the way for a profound analysis of the social aspects which play an enormous role in one's understanding of the complex relations between the "self" and the world.

This general skepticism in the established order took intense momentum in the 1970s and caused the articulation of **three forms of critique** which resulted in the broader movement of **postmodernism** which stands as a ground for social construction, as Gergen notes (2011: 2). First and foremost, there is a critique of the imposed **ideology**. The "taken-for-granted" realities in societies were "unmasked" due to the resuscitation of Marxist theory along with anti-war, anti-psychiatry, feminist, racial, gay and lesbian, as well as the anti-colonialist movement which were quite strong and influential at the time. One must bear in mind that the 1960s and the 1970s were famous by the counterculture movement which questioned the establishment as well as dominant values and norms. And what is "unmasking" of ideology than an epistemic move? The second form of critique leans on **literary deconstruction**, primarily on the work of Jacques Derrida who enforced linguistic conventions which, according to him, govern the knowledge, as Gergen

observes (Gergen, 2011: 3). Derrida is noted for his idea of “deconstruction” which is “constructivism radicalized: the social world is constructed, but in a ‘wrong’, systematically unjust, oppressive and intolerable way. So, it should be deconstructed” (Miščević, 2011: para. 3). The third critique is directed to **science** and is greatly influenced by the 1970s famous book “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” by Thomas Kuhn where the author discussed sciences and different paradigms of thought within it. Social constructivism points out the following:

> “what we take to be knowledge of the world and self finds it origins in human relationships. What we take to be true as opposed to false, objective as opposed to subjective, scientific as opposed to mythological, rational as opposed to irrational, moral as opposed to immoral is brought into being through historically and culturally situated social processes” (Gergen, 2011: 4).

All these critiques incorporated in what will later be called “postmodernism”, displayed groundbreaking doubts in the foundations of science and general socio-economic order. This leads us back to Prijić-Samaržija’s three approaches characterizing social epistemology, revisionism being one of them, which are based precisely on Richard Rorty’s work and the social constructionist theory. Nothing was taken for granted and everything was questioned. As I mentioned earlier, the philosophy of the postmodern era of thought, or a revisionist approach in epistemology, is characterized by skepticism towards Truth, especially visible in the work of Richard Rorty which deeply influenced the postmodern thought by proclaiming the “death of epistemology”. To him, knowledge cannot be seen as a reflection of nature and beliefs are not objective representations of the external world. Also, instead of epistemology, we should have a study of “conversational practices” (Rorty, 1979: 129-139). Rorty calls upon the demise of epistemology: “desire for a theory of knowledge is a desire for constraint” (Rorty, 1979: 315). He proposes hermeneutics based not on central value of truth but on “conversational practices”. This opened the gates for **relativism**.

According to Gergen, to constructionists “no one arrangement of words is necessary more objective or accurate in its depiction of realty than any other” (Gergen, 2011: 4). This is a very dangerous terrain because if we rely on the definition of knowledge

according to which knowledge is justified true belief, without the concept of “truth”, we lose the concept of “knowledge”, as well as “justice” or “rights”, and thus step into the slippery realm of complete relativism. Constructionists discarded the whole epistemic normative framework and there is essentially no tool left for analysis. I do believe that social constructivism has given us as a positive thing – a brand new perspective of comprehending the world while recognizing “power” as an important element impacting our understanding of the “self” and the world. The concepts which were recognized as universal and objective or “natural” and unquestioned are now judged as actually culturally molded and can be grasped from a different angle. Undoubtedly, a strong and positive heritage of constructionism is to question everything. It made a first crack in, up until then, the unquestioned picture of the world. It enabled us to doubt, question and modify concepts, dominant beliefs, norms, understandings, as well as normalized behaviors and “normal” or “natural” phenomena. It provided us with an important epistemic move which enables us to keep doubting. In this case, to doubt the food-related collective imaginary with many oppressive and damaging beliefs and stereotypes and the current relationship towards the non-human world based on domination and epistemic arrogance. This space for questioning the generally accepted phenomena, values, norms and behaviors which are inseparable from social power, poses as valuable heritage from the social constructionist theory.

To take this into consideration in the analysis of understanding the concepts of the “self”, “knowledge” or “justice” is an important leap. But I would stop right here because I do not agree with the idea that we should “deconstruct”, that is, break down and disown the concept of “truth” (because if there is no truth, it is a mere social construction). On what grounds should we fight for “justice” or “human rights” (seen as positive concepts) if there is no truth? By denying the concepts such as “truth” we are denying the possibility for change.

Instead of hard social construction and hard relativism, which I do not deem as useful analytic tool, I advocate firm **standpoint theory** with its supporting epistemology. In other words, raising awareness about specific positions within the social hierarchy while taking the power in question. Comprehension of those positions and privileges or

oppressions that come with it. Awareness about the limitations of a particular position gives rise to the idea that different positions generate different experiences and understandings, as well as different epistemic positions, and is altogether shaped by a particular power dynamic. Understanding the limitations or privileges of a particular position enables change. And in order to approach and change them in favor of the disadvantaged, underprivileged, oppressed or injured, we need a solid normative framework to operate with. Just to "deconstruct", namely, to break down and disown concepts, does not carry any weight. Nor does it provide us with a proper normative framework for concrete change. I see social critique as a rich heritage of the social constructionist theory, especially important in the exploration of the nexus between the "self" and the social while taking into consideration social power.

Bearing that in mind, intellectual openness, as well as curiosity and self-scrutiny, are also welcomed epistemic virtues because they are the crucial element in discussing the epistemic re-evaluation of existing beliefs, phenomena, relations, concepts, positions and behaviors, both on the individual and the collective level. In regard to food production/consumption, we should question and explore those beliefs floating in the collective imaginary which are widely accepted because the current context of climate change signalizes that something is wrong. Generally speaking, I advocate reconciliation between the idea that power indeed affects the constitution of knowledge. We should be aware of power dynamics, as well as inequalities and injustice generated in society, we must be critical, question everything and take nothing for granted. But if we abandon the notion of "knowledge", on what grounds can we discard the pervasive stereotype hovering in the collective imaginary according to which "men are rational/women are intuitive"? It is a notion grounded not in science but a mere stereotype present in the cultural landscape. How can we condemn and punish the act of genocide if "justice" is nothing more than a "social construct"? Hard relativism has harsh consequences and I doubt that anybody would like to live in a world where complete relativism rules, at least until he/she faces some sort of injustice. But then, what is "injustice" than a mere social construct?

One might ask: how is social constructionist theory related to food? In fact, it introduced the concept of power. To understanding the contemporary food system is

impossible without questioning power and its effects on society. Additionally, it opened a pathway to challenge the generally accepted knowledge, dominant values, norms, beliefs and stereotypes which are far from “natural” but rather socially constructed. This heritage of questioning is immensely valuable and should be applied in exploring the current relationship with food and the non-human world. Contrary to postmodern understanding, I would not discard essential epistemic concepts such as “knowledge” and “truth”. On the contrary, I would leave them open to questioning and take them as a normative framework because evermore often will we hear about the concepts of “food sovereignty” or “land justice” in the context of environmental protection in cases of small-farmers and citizens pushing back against official legislation, conventional agro-ecological systems and corporations, while fighting for a sustainable, regenerative and just future. The time for these concepts is yet to come.

Social constructivism as a theory faces serious epistemic implications. However, it gave a new and fresh perspective on widely accepted concepts and norms. It struck like an earthquake in the intellectual and social dimension which led to the liberalization of society. There is another domain where it brought positive change. Social constructivism made a great impact on the way one perceives other cultures and it enabled the idea that one’s understandings are culturally and historically situated (Gergen, 2011: 10). The doors were now opened for comparison with other cultures and times. All of these ideas led to the notion of cultural relativism, according to which one should not impose one’s own cultural values and norms on another culture. This new perspective was a revelation after a long reign of the ethnocentric approach rooted in Western culture and evidenced in the long history of colonization and cultural domination. Furthermore, as Gergen notes, the possibility of comparison delineates richness in human constructions of the “self”, and moreover, it functions as a destabilizing instrument in contemporary culture; the individuated, bounded and autonomous view of the “self”, typical for Western culture can be compared to the “more socially or communally embedded vision of the ‘self’ that can be seen in other cultures around the world” (Gergen, 2011: 11). It is a pioneering idea that other cultures and people have an intrinsic value and that the often ethnocentric Western stand is unjustified and oppressive.

This loosening of the position, democratization and opening to “Others” enabled sensitivity and contemporary concepts such as “climate justice” which revolves around the ethical aspect of climate change referring to the fact that people do not experience the impacts of climate change in the same way. Power dynamics confirms the old rule according to which underprivileged/vulnerable/developing countries are paying the price of climate change for wealthy/powerful/developed countries. For example, in the USA people with limited income more often live in subsidized housing commonly situated in the food plains and are the first to pay the price for climate change. In the distinction between the “West” and “non-West”, many indigenous communities are in the front line of endangerment because their homes and livelihoods are threatened by the rising sea level or drought due to climate change and are forced to relocate (Simmons, 2020). The current problems relating to food, the non-human world, social injustice and sensitivity towards Others, in my opinion represent a legacy of theoretical shifts which took momentum in the 1960s and 1970s.

As was briefly pointed out, there is a slippery terrain in the social constructionist approach where one can result in total relativism which I see as a dead end. On that notion, Gergen talks about two directions of critique directed at the Theory of Social Construction. Namely, “such relational views create a black box or empty organism, bereft of all subjective life” and secondly, this relational stand “represents an eradication of individual agency, and thus undermines long-standing traditions of moral responsibility” (Gergen, 2011: 20). Those critiques seem to be in place because in a world of social constructivism, reduction to constructionism is absolute, pessimistic and utterly deterministic. In that universe, human agency is completely determined by the social sphere, therefore “resistance is futile” and power is unbeatable. Despite the pessimistic views on structures and power, I find Foucault’s notions (from his later phase) optimistic:

> “Q: So resistance comes from within that dynamic?
>
> M.F. Yes. You see, if there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation where you’re not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged

> to change with the resistance. So I think that *resistance* is the main word, *the key word*, in this dynamic" (Foucault, 2000b: 167).

Social Constructionist Theory has its limitations, but put into historical context, it was a groundbreaking theory which gave a new perspective on the social dimension and social power, and it dared to question everything. It was revolutionary in its dissection of the social dimension. It was radical in its critique of the imposed Order, more specifically, on imposed ideology, language and science. It greatly contributed to ideas on the importance of the social sphere and our culturally shaped understandings, knowledge, beliefs, norms and behavior. Maybe the greatest legacy of this theory is that nothing should be taken for granted and everything, however naturalized or normalized, should be scrutinized. I see that as a valuable heritage and a fertile ground for further critiques. However, as I have pointed out earlier, I advocate the standpoint theory which postulates that knowledge arises from a particular social position. That creates space for critique, but for truth, knowledge, resistance and change as well. Perhaps this is old-fashioned. Or this may be "post-postmodernism" in which we should reconcile the important new and revolutionary perspectives on old issues in a never-ending battle for a better and more just world characterized by more knowledge, justice, fairness, epistemic virtues, as well as understandings and enhancement of those core concepts. This era made room for us to question the dominant socio-political order and widely believed norms and values. In a broader sense, with its strong emancipatory force, cultural revolution in the second half of the 20th century left us an important legacy and a strong theoretical tool for investigating the generally accepted beliefs, norms and values. This is precisely what we should do with the multidimensional domain of food which is impossible to grasp without taking into consideration social power as an inevitable force in society. Perhaps it was Foucault who best outlined the importance of those intellectual and philosophical directions by stating the following:

> "I think what happened in the sixties and early seventies is something to be preserved. One of the things that I think should be preserved, however, is the fact that there has been political innovation, political creation, and political experimentation outside the great political parties, and outside the normal or ordinary program. It's a fact that people's everyday lives have changes from the early sixties to now, and certainly within my own

> life, and surely that is not due to political parties but is the result of many movements. These social movements have really changed our whole lives, our mentality, our attitude, and the attitudes and mentality of other people – people who do not belong to these movements. And this is something very important and positive. I repeat it is not the normal and old traditional political organizations that have led to this examination" (Foucault, 2000b: 173).

2.2. The "self" and why Marxism is still important

To understand the multilayered domain of food, it is necessary to better understand the concepts of "self" and "power". I delineated theoretical shifts within epistemology and on a broader intellectual scale. In the following pages, I will focus on the importance of Marxist and post-Marxist theoretical framework which I find applicable to food-related issues which I will tackle more in the second part of the thesis. So far, I have focused on the "self "as an ambiguous, loose and complex concept: it can represent a "person", "I" or a "subject", according to Marcia Cavell stated above. When lowered on an every-day level, every "self" is a non-unified person with different positions and knowledge about the world. Every "self" is an epistemic agent, obliged to function in society. Overwhelmed with an informational chaos in everyday life, a person needs to approach information and beliefs, estimate them as truthful or not, and discard or embed them into his/her own belief system. "Meat is essential for your health." / "Climate change is not so dangerous." / "New research shows that vegan food choices are the best thing you can do for your health." / "Conventional agriculture is not sustainable." / "Organic vegetables are a hoax." How to approach different beliefs, many of them conflicting? How to evaluate them? This is a starting point for in approaching the topic of food where epistemology plays an important role. We need to go to the source and explore the power of cognition and the very moment of food-related beliefs coming into shape.

With an aim to describe the complex relation between the "self" and the social realm or rather their point of juncture, I will rely on Marxist theoretical framework, particularly on the work of Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser, two Marxist anti-humanists who, in my opinion, tremendously well captured the dynamic between the individual and the social. I find their understandings of this relation influential and applicable because they beautifully

capture the connection between the individual and the social, or between the “subject” and the “structure”. Somewhere at that point, one forms beliefs related to the world, as well as those related to food. As a theoretical blueprint, their work provides us with a conceptual map applicable to questions of food because the point between the “self” and the social is marked by power. Furthermore, it is impossible to understand the multidimensional topic of food without taking into consideration the question of that very power. In this subsection, I will try to delineate the significance of power as a crucial social force that shapes the social realm in which every “self” is immersed.

To begin with the terminology: what is the difference between the “individual”, “person” and the “self”, or can they be used interchangeably? When thinking about the difference between the “self” and the “subject”, we operate in the realm of persons, identities and subjectivities, but also within the subject/social nexus where power appears. And power changes context: it “charges” the context, and while “individual” implies autonomy and free will, when “power” enters the game, position of our individual with free will becomes relative. Oxford dictionary defines “person” as a human, an individual; it is commonly used word, a noun (Oxford Learning Dictionary, 2020.) While a “person” stands as a generic, commonly used noun without any deeper meaning and refers purely to a singular individual, a “subject” has some baggage that comes with the term. “Subject” is a bit more complex term with an interesting etymology. Oxford English Dictionary defines “subject” as the following:

> “Subject, *n.* **Origin:** Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from French. Partly a borrowing from Latin. (…)
>
> **I.** Someone or something under a person's rule or control.
>
> **1.a.** A person who is under the control of another or who owes obedience to another. Also in extended use of an animal, etc. Frequently with possessive or *of*-phrase. Also with †*to*.
>
> **1.b.** In extended use: a person who is under the control of or owes obedience to an abstract principle or power.

> **2.a.** A person bound to another by an obligation of allegiance, service, or tribute; *spec.* a feudal tenant or vassal; (hence) †a dependant, a subordinate, a person of inferior status. Now *hist.*
>
> **2.b.** A person who owes allegiance or obedience to a spiritual superior. Now chiefly *hist.*
>
> **2.c.** A person under the spiritual guidance of a priest or pastor; any of a parish priest's parishioners. *Obsolete*.
>
> **3.** A person owing allegiance to and under the protection of a monarch or government; a person (other than the monarch) living under a monarchy“ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019).

“Subject” implies obedience, control, submission and hierarchy; altogether, power. A subject needs to be subjected to someone or something, to perform for someone else’s purpose. It necessitates hierarchy. A person or an individual becomes a “subject” after he/she has passed through the “structure”, after the “structure” has molded him/her. A “subject” is an individual or a person after the “structure” has imprinted itself on him/her. When grasped through these lenses, the questions of hierarchy, power, free will and autonomy, as well as resistance, immediately occur. This kind of articulation of a person or an individual who becomes a subject provides us with a socio-political aspect which shapes the epistemic understanding.

To think about the “subject” in a political way is hardly possible without Marxist and Post-Marxist theory as a disciplinary framework for the abovementioned postmodern critique of the imposed Order. The critique of the imposed ideology focused on revealing different and contrasting perspectives which demonstrate that many phenomena usually taken for granted and perceived as “normal” or “natural” are actually culturally molded and not universal, “natural”, objective or beyond analysis. Theoretical apparatus for this critique was embodied in Marxist theory which underwent a prolix renaissance in the second half of the 20th century. “Subject”, as well as social structure, is in focus of Marxist and post-Marxist theory which still affects the contemporary analysis of the epistemic and political subject. On the cover of the Croatian translation of Althusser’s book, published in 2018, stands a quote by French philosopher Etienne Balibar who says that many of those

who today maintain that Marxism is old-fashioned can claim that only because they are pretending to ignore questions raised by Althusser.

In the 19th century, Marx and Engels gave a profound analysis of the forces which affect human everyday life, not just in economic, but also in cultural terms and their theory was developed in many directions.[4] Some still take this theory as a relevant critique of the current economic system (capitalism), while others see them as the greatest enemies of democracy and evil masterminds responsible for the broken autocratic political systems of the 20th century which fell apart with so many casualties. In the 1960 and the 1970s, Marxism underwent a renaissance and became entangled with civil movements from that era. Many philosophers and intellectuals expanded Marxism by revealing underprivileged positions and oppressed groups within society on the basis of their class, gender, race or ethnicity. These positions are molded by social power. And power is an essential concept in the multilayered domain of food. Post-Marxism surpassed the economic dimension and till this day stands as a base for exploring power relations in society. On a practical level, I see their socialist ideas as applicable to democratic systems through strong labor-oriented politics with green and sustainable programs, insistence on firm social welfare, government funded health care, daycares for children, tuition-free public education (university level included). In other words, a strong social sector for citizens and cooperation between the government, private sector and unions, based on transparency without corruption (which is, at this moment, impossible in Croatia).

For Marxism **class** is the key concept for questioning subjectivity and identity. Subjects of different classes have different identities and subjectivities. To grasp Marxism as a coherent body of thought is difficult because there are many divergences within it, but Barry Hindes summarizes it: Marxism, with focus on the concept of class as a main identity marker, is defined by its attempt to integrate the class conflict into the general theory of history in which economic relations and its advancement play the most important part (Hindess, 2007: 384). Marxism can be defined as a theoretical basis and tool for the

[4] The question of “subject” is comprehensive and without a doubt, because of my short outline, I will do great injustice to Hegel, Marx and Lukacs and many more authors who wrote on this issue. For that, I express my honest regret and hope to amend this flaw some other time.

revolutionary fight of a working class which stands as a historical bearer or the subject of the revolution (Golubović, 1982: 19). If we understand subjectivity as connected to self-understanding or self-knowledge, that is, as some kind of reflection between the world and the subject, then Marxism gives an analysis of subjectivity from a point of view of power, class and labor, and asks how someone's mental structure is built in regard to social relations which are determined by ideology, alienation, class consciousness, fetishism of commodities or revolution, to mention just a few. In other words, how is the "self" constituted win a social reality shaped by power?

In the second part of the thesis these theoretical cornerstones will be directly connected with food-related issues, because the question of food is inevitably a question of power which impacts one's "self" and the accompanying self-knowledge as well as broader social and epistemic injustice. "Class" is a dirty word today. In former socialist countries like Croatia, it is a "forbidden" word because it evokes the "past regime" which is still impossible to address critically. Today there are "employees" instead of "workers". Language mirrors the endeavor of dominant politics to erase the "shameful" past. Nonetheless, our existence is inevitably marked by class and we still live in a class society however different from the 19th century class system because power creates different kinds of inequalities and injustices. In this context, food is a class issue on so many levels, some of which I will try to tackle later in the thesis.

As I previously said, Marx and Engels' ideas were profoundly popular on the intellectual scene of the 20th century and many schools of thought developed from there. 1960s and 1970s were a highly politicized and dynamic era. It was a period of vast crisis and critique of the existing socio-political order articulated through different social movements such as the political protest known as "Prague Spring" in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, anti-war movement in the USA, civil right movement and assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., feminist movements, anti-psychiatry movement, student protests with workers in France in the same year, student protests all over the world, and not to forget, the beginning of the environmental movement. All these movements for social justice were grounded in a political change and the resurrection of Marxism occurred. But it would be unfair to unify those movements, started in 1968. Slavenka Drakulić, a well-

known Croatian author and prominent critic of life under socialism in Yugoslavia claims that the USA was very different from Western Europe: student protest in Italy did not receive mass support and some of the student groups in France, Italy and West Germany were going extremely Left and tying with violent terrorist cells like Red Brigades (ita., "Brigate Rosse") or fractions of the Red Army (germ., "Baader–Meinhof Group") (Drakulić, 2021, 75). What I find important to stress is that, as Drakulić argues, young people in Paris and Prague belonged to two very different worlds. Those in Paris were against consumerism, bourgeois values and way of life, and were eager to put culture at the service of the leftist ideology. In contrast, young protestors in Prague were yearning for all that Parisians wanted to eliminate, they wanted to liberate themselves from the leftist ideology (Drakulić, 2021, 83). These movements and the fight for social justice enabled us a perspective applicable to current issues of social justice and power.

Popularity and disappointment in Marxism grew ever so stronger when people started facing brutality, autocracy and censorship of the socialist political systems, gulags, political camps, harsh prosecution of dissenters of the system and a high number of casualties. Marxist theory became unpopular. It would be a common misconception to equalize one significant theory with broken political systems and a great loss to reduce Marxism and post-Marxism to broken political systems. Atrocious deeds are to be condemned and punished, but to equalize bad political systems with a strong and plausible theory which stressed the importance of power relations within society is a disadvantage because one loses a valuable analytical tool for exploring power relations within a particular social imaginary.

"Power" is an essential concept and understanding the impact of power on social imaginary, knowledge and self-knowledge, and on the constitution of "self" is impossible without understanding the notion of "power". Analysis of subjectivities which are complex, embodied and socially situated is not possible without understanding social power. The period of crisis and critique of the existing socio-economic order beginning in the 1960s was articulated through the politics of the **"New Left"** – a political movement spreading through Western Europe and the USA whose theoretical heritage we still use today when talking about "power". The "New Left" was a political as well as a cultural protest. It was a

reaction against the establishment with focus on social justice and civil and political rights. Herbert Marcuse was viewed as a leading figure and, until 1933, a member of the Frankfurt School of critical thought situated at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His peers included Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, to mention just a few. Escaping Nazism and politics towards the Jewish people, they went into exile in the USA. They relied on the work of Marx, Freud, Hegel, Weber, Kant, Lukacs and others with the aim of addressing current cultural, economic and political issues. The most famous book enjoying iconic status is undoubtedly Horkheimer and Adorno's “Dialectic of Enlightenment” (1944) which gave, as Jochen Hörisch claims, an „appropriate diagnosis of a contemporary age” (2007: 127).

The analysis and profound critique of the Frankfurt School is embodied in **“Critical Theory”** – a central concept developed by Max Horkheimer. It represents a normative approach for analysis and critique of society and culture by disclosing power structures within them and the connection between social structures and ideology. That whole era was characterized by left-oriented intellectuals who matured influenced by ideas of leading European philosophers from that time, as the abovementioned Herbert Marcuse and second-generation Jürgen Habermas. That is the reason why Marxism and Post-Marxism stand as a cornerstone in regard to power relation, domination and generated inequalities and injustices in society. Essentially, if we want to think about subjects or “selves” in a social context, we must take into consideration the power that flows through society and its structures which create inequalities, injustices, privilege, as well as marginalization and invisibility. To focus on one’s cognition where food-related beliefs form, it is necessary to delineate the power-determined social context which shapes that very cognition.

The anchoring point of Marxism is **class,** but the post-Marxist normative framework exceeds the socio-economic analysis of class and it indeed opens the door to understand how different social markers in relation to power influence people, or rather, affect their lives, experience and knowledge. Markers such as race, class, gender, ethnicity or religion influence power relations between people and determine their position. This kind of power

dynamics and its inequalities affect one's knowledge and carries political implications. All of these identity markers are fundamental in the socio-political context of the "self". It is rather abstract to talk about a generalized subject because subjects are socially situated and that situatedness shapes their experience, life, understandings and knowledge. An upper-middle class white woman from the USA has not the same position as a working-class black woman. A well-off urban woman has not same position and understandings as a working-class woman from a rural part of Croatia or an invisible woman from the Roma minority. This is extremely important to understand when we try to explore the social situatedness of the epistemic subject.

Rooted in Marxism and focused on power relations, Critical Theory laid groundwork for the later development of different interdisciplinary areas of study such as Cultural, Gender, Racial or Postcolonial studies. It paved the way for understanding many different standpoints; namely, lived experiences and accompanying knowledge. It opened the door for understanding positions within the hierarchical system, for marginalized, underprivileged and oppressed groups of people who fail to conform to the normative narrative. More precisely, this means that we cannot talk about a "unified self" or unified subjectivity. We should talk about social situatedness of a subject and the space for different experiences, positions and understandings. Given socio-epistemic conditions are inevitably a strong force in the constitution of the "self". That is the reason why Marxist and Post-Marxist theoretical approach are still genuine and popular, representing a useful normative tool in approaching the problems of oppression and domination. It allows us to exit our own position which is "our own" and the only one we know, granting us a different perspective. It enables us to put ourselves in someone else's shoes and give a voice to those who are silent, invisible or underprivileged. All contemporary analyses of different subjectivities and identities in relation to power, irrespective of the key concept of analysis, have Marxism in their core. Apart from class, I stress that there are many other social anchorage points of subjectivity.

"Selves" are inevitably embodied and gendered and it is hard to conceptualize the "self" within a broader social context without the concept of sex/gender since we are determined by it from an early age. In her famous text, "The Feminist Standpoint: Towards

a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism", Nancy C.M. Hartstock delineated how women's lives diverge systematically and structurally, and consequently, epistemically, from the lives of men. She focused on gender as a bearer of subjectivity and identity. The importance lies in her claim that systematic and structural difference results in epistemic difference as well. More concretely, daily activities of women are a basis for a specific feminist historical materialism. This material relation of genders creates distinction between men's and women's point of view; that is, women's position and experience generate different knowledge and understanding of the world from men's. In the 1980s that was a new and radical claim.[5] Feminist standpoint theory pointed out the critical points of a **universal and ahistorical subject**. As Seyla Benhabib claims, "the self is not a thing, a substrate, but the protagonist of a life's tale" (Benhabib, 1987: 89). She claims that sex-gender system, or "the social-historical symbolic constitution, and the interpretation of the anatomical differences of the sexes" constitutes a fundamental way in which social reality is organized, symbolically arranged and lived. That system is

> "a grid through which the self develops an *embodied* identity, a certain mode of being in one's body and of living the body. The self becomes an I in that it appropriates from the human community a mode of psychically, socially and symbolically experiencing its bodily

[5] While writing these lines, I have read in the newspapers something that quite depicts this issue. Namely, that Andreja Kulunčić, a Croatian artist, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, an anthropologist, and Dubravka Stijačić, a psychotherapist, are united in the project with the goal of remembering women prisoners from Goli otok – a labor camp and prison for political dissenters in former Yugoslavia, established in 1948. Women's experience is erased from history, while men began to share their experience back in the 1960s. The known history from Goli otok is articulated by men prisoners. Women started speaking out a great deal later, after the fall of the regime in the 1990s. Common signifier among men and women is torture, but the experiences and epistemic outcomes are different, which should be articulated. While men were coming to Goli otok from all sorts of backgrounds (mostly workers, peasants and clerks), women were educated, ambitious and talented, usually intellectuals and students – candidates for higher functions in the system. Men were punished more drastically, but it seems that women were epistemically damaged in a different way – they did not publicize their experiences, they lacked self-confidence, they lived in silence with fear and distrust in their own capabilities and most of them could not have children. They were subjugated to means of torture based on humiliation which resulted in their complete degradation as persons and internalization of guilt and shame. Undoubtedly, both women and men were tortured and their experiences are monstrous and immeasurable. The focus is not on hierarchization of experiences and sufferings but on the articulation of a specific experience. In order to cope with a particular trauma, it is important to articulate the experience. In this case, women and men had different experiences with probably different epistemic and political outcomes. Unfortunately, women's experience is erased from collective memory and that should be amended. Also, this is an example of a transgenerational trauma so the society as a whole and individuals alike could benefit from this process of dealing with past horrific experiences (Pavić, 2020).

> identity. The sex-gender system is the grid through which societies and cultures reproduce embodied individuals" (Benhabib, 1987: 80).

Historically speaking, the gender system has contributed to the oppression and exploitation of women and Benhabib, writing within the realm of political philosophy, detects the problem not only in the misogynist prejudices of the early modern moral and political theory, but in the constitution of the discourse which has been split in two domains - public and private. While public sphere was a sphere of society, culture, justice and history, private sphere was a sphere of the household, nature and reproduction. Since women were banned from the public sphere, they were banned from history. They were pushed into an ahistorical and atemporal realm of the household (Benhabib, 1987: 86). Benhabib distinguishes **"generalized"** and **"concrete" Other**. "Generalized" Other requires that we observe every individual as a rational being entitled to the same rights and duties we would assign to ourselves. Assuming this, Benhabib claims that we are to recognize individuality and concrete identity of the other by assuming that what constitutes his/her moral dignity is not that which differentiates us but that which we have in common. She proposes the standpoint of "concrete" Other which requires us to perceive each and every rational being as an individual with a particular history, identity and affective-emotional constitution, that is, we "abstract from what constitutes our communality" (Benhabib, 1987: 87). According to her, the standpoint of the "concrete" Other leads to epistemic coherence. Namely,

> "moral reciprocity involves the capacity to take the standpoint of the other, to put oneself imaginatively in the place of other, but under conditions of the 'veil of ignorance', the *other as different from the self*, disappears, unlike the previous contract theories, in this case the other is not constituted through projection, but as a consequence of total abstraction from his or her identity. Differences are not denied; they become irrelevant" (Benhabib, 1987: 89).

If we strip the individual of his/her embodiment, emotions, memory, history and relations to the other, are we talking about human selves at all or are we left with "an empty mask which is everyone and no one"? (Benhabib, 1987: 89). Is one's identity equivalent to a capacity for agency alone? Because

> "identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of my choices, namely, to how I as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stand as my life's story" (Benhabib, 1987: 89).

Without taking into consideration the standpoint of the "concrete" Other, we are missing the epistemic information which is essential for judging the moral situation to be "like" or "unlike" other's situation (Benhabib, 1987: 91). As a matter of fact, "identities as concrete others are what distinguishes us from each other according to gender, race, class, cultural differentials, as well as psychic and natural abilities" (Benhabib, 1987: 92). Consequently, "the concrete other is a critical concept that designates the *ideological* limits of universalistic discourse. It signifies the *unthought, the unseen*, and the *unheard*" (Benhabib, 1987: 92). All of this is compelling and important when dealing with the complex concept of the "self".

In this area of intersection of the "self" and the social arises another interesting point: Benhabib connects the "self" with the community and the importance of the historical dimension of the "self". Namely, her **"relational-interactive" theory of identity** understands inner nature as unique but not fixed. She maintains that bits of early childhood experiences, phantasies, aspirations, desires and goals are inscribed in individual's needs and motives. She asserts that the logic of the word "I" presupposes that every subject, in relation to himself/herself, uses it in a unique way and this "uniqueness" is characteristic for every "I". Therefore,

> "in this respect the self only becomes an I in a community of other selves who are also I's. Every act of self-reference expresses simultaneously the uniqueness and difference of the self as well as the commonality among selves. Discourses about needs and motives unfold in this space created by commonality and uniqueness, generally shared socialization, and the contingency of individual life-histories" (Benhabib, 1987: 94).

Contrarily, the nonrelational theory of the "self", which is a norm in contemporary universalist moral theory, deletes the "private" aspects of life. "Inner nature, no less that the public sphere of justice, has a historical dimension. In it are intertwined the history of

the self and the history of the collective." (Benhabib, 1987: 94). "Selves" and communities share a complex relationship.

To go one step further, not all women are the same when compared to men and the generalization of the term "women" excludes some, while including others. When it comes to "women" there are markers that have to be taken into consideration because "women" is not a unified category; there are many differences that affect understanding of the world and oneself, as well as political consequences that those differences generate. Whose voices can be heard? Class, much like gender, as an identity marker, plays an important role in subjectivity. They represent marks of identity which influence people in a political and an epistemic way, that is, how people experience power, the world and themselves.

With this observation we went back to the 1990s and Kimberlee Crenshaw who coined the term **"intersectionality".** With that term she investigates how different identities, such as race, class and gender, interact with structural inequality, oppression and discrimination. She captured this in her famous text, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" (1991), an important work which articulates that different anchorages of subjectivity (class, race, gender and nationality) are interdependent and that a quality analysis must include the points of intersections and clearly articulate its consequences. Different lived experiences determined by class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability or any other factor, shape particular knowledge and determine life in an epistemic and political way. That is a prime example of problems targeted in gender/race/post-colonial studies.

"Privilege" is a trending word as of lately, particularly in the USA and reasonably so, because of America's unresolved past founded on genocide and slavery. That past is now taking its toll. Despite the black civil movement in the 1960s and rights that black people fought for, structural inequality, discrimination and racism still pervade the collective imaginary as a residuum of the unsolved heritage of genocide and colonialism. We are witnessing it through recent demonstrations and "Black Lives Matter", a movement against police brutality, repression and racially motivated violence against black people.

Therefore, when we talk about the “self” from a social and political aspect, it is clear that there is a number of different “selves” and that our identities are layered and complex in regard to social power dynamics. Social understanding of the “self” is incomplete if we do not take power into consideration. I find all the notions regarding different anchors of one’s identity very important in relation to “self”. They show complicated implications of the universal and ahistorical subject. That kind of subject always excludes someone and does so by its universal nature. Those claims go hand in hand with, as said in the first chapter, changes in epistemology which lowered the epistemic subject from highly idealized circumstances and gave him/her a particular social context which affects his/her epistemic world, as Miranda Fricker demonstrates in her work and, I would say, political as well. Who is excluded from the dominant narrative and who has the power to structure the dominant discourse in the first place?

The talk about the “self” is the talk about subjects, identity and, as I have showed, the question of power. The analysis of power and its connection to structures in all possible contexts is the legacy of Marxism and Post-Marxist leftist intellectuals. The “selves” who are epistemic “subject/eaters” and producers of food are not unified: they come from different backgrounds and have different understandings. Not all “selves” are included in the dominant narrative about food consumption/production. How does power shape their life and knowledge? In real life, “self” is the bearer of different beliefs who must navigate daily through the complex social and epistemic landscape, estimate, select, modify and change his/her beliefs (hopefully), handle self-reflection, make choices, establish habits and act in the world. Epistemology serves as a useful tool for exploring the dynamics between the power of one’s cognition and the power inscribed in a demanding environment, food being one of them. Therefore, epistemology is a practical thing and ecological epistemology, as I see it, a valuable instrument for grasping the complex realm where food intersects with power, different subjectivities, knowledge and injustice.

Power relations change over time but do not disappear. One can talk about power relations in Ancient Greece when slavery was the norm and analyze them from different perspectives of the people living in that period – wealthy and free men were “citizens”,

while slaves or women did not have the same rights, experiences or role in society. Late modern period is a time when modern democratic states were constituted based on social contract with capitalism as an economic system rooted in private ownership. One could say that this was the birth of universal rights. But for whom and who was excluded in that process? “Others”, meaning non-white, non-wealthy people or women did not enjoy that time because they were not recognized as “citizens” at all – only the chosen ones have that right, so the power dynamics flatters some, while others suffer because they are not recognized as citizens with rights. It so happens that they are excluded from the official historical narrative as well. “We” is exclusionary by nature and the question is who gets the chance to articulate “we” and who to be left out. For Others who are not “we” - their history is not written. As Seyla Benhabib claims, universal moral theories in the Western philosophical lineage, from Hobbes to Rawls, are problematic because their universalism leans on identifying the experience of a specific group of subjects which is then perceived as a paradigmatic case for humans as such and these subjects are “invariably white, male adults who are propertied or at least professional” (Benhabib, 1987: 81).[6] Women, laborers, black people – their rights were not “given” to them, their rights were fought for and that fight was soaked in blood.

The imperative of the Western world is commodity, a “thing” – within the abundance and availability “of things” lies the story of modern globalization where people walk the old route based on imperialistic footing. Western economy is founded on sweatshops in the “developing” world, in poorer countries like Mexico, Brazil, Bangladesh, Thailand, China and India, with modern slaves, mostly women and children, who work in inhumane and exploitative conditions. Ironically, this kind of factories stands as a pillar of contemporary western economy and consumerism. Not to analyze those power relations with Marxist tools solely because it was the official politics of wrong political systems is a big waste. Who are Others and slaves today? Who are Others in the contemporary food system? What are the political and social injustices in that domain? Who really feeds the West and what is the price? How can we grasp this aspect of reality without the Marxist “class”?

[6] Benhabib distinguishes substitutionalist from interactive universalism; the latter regards “difference as a starting-point for reflection and action” (1987: 81).

To sum up, individual/person/agent/subject/knower/self is a social being immersed in the social realm where power inevitably operates. That is why in the investigation of social experience of an individual, one must take into consideration power dynamics and the inequalities and injustices it generates. People experience things in different ways, they occupy different positions which opens space for different understandings and grasping of the world. Certain parts of one's identity create an added burden that one must carry throughout life which is invisible to the one who carries no burden at all. There are numerous, different "selves". In the Marxist conceptual framework, we encounter individuals who are transformed into subjects once they have passed through the social "system" or structures shaped by power. It sounds a bit abstract, but if we go one step back, we realize that we are all immersed in a system or structure by the sheer fact that we are born into the society we live in. Under these conditions, epistemic subjects must create, shape, claim, reshape or discard beliefs on a daily basis (many of them in connection to food because eating is an essential act). Social imaginary is saturated with false beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes, all sorts of cultural symbols, images and representations, many of which related to food. From this perspective, it is evident how the power dynamics influences and shapes an individual who transforms into a "subject". The following question poses itself: how are subjects determined by the dominant social Order in which they live?

Within the Marxist framework several important concepts arise. We can speak of the bourgeoisie or the capitalist **class** which owns means of production and controls and exploits the labor power of the proletariat or the working class which sells its labor power. In relation to **class consciousness**, there is the bourgeoisie represents "class in itself"; namely, as a class they share beliefs regarding their position within the society and regarding the means of production. When aware of its position, working class becomes emancipated and thus a "class for itself"; by doing so, it develops into a revolutionary subject who is the bearer of change (Marx and Engels, 1982: 329-331). In its traditional understanding, class will emerge as important because food is intertwined with class when, for example, we talk about the exploited migrant working class which carries the global food system or about the accessibility of healthy food (Labor and Workers in the Food System, n.d.). Which marginalized groups are not emancipated and aware of their

position or still not a “class for itself”? The class system and dynamics are different today but they are not lost because social power is not lost, it is just rearranged.

Alienation as a concept is one of the most important concepts within Marxist theory and one can identify four levels of alienation: alienation of man from the product of his own labor; alienation from his own activity of labor; alienation from himself as a being; and lastly, alienation from another man or alienation from people (Golubović, 1982: 27). Alienation as a concept is immensely important and useful when it comes to food because, as I will show later, alienation from the process of food production opens doors for many ethical problems and doubts, as well as epistemic and political injustice.

The concept of **“ideology”** is also crucial and inseparable from the notion of “subject”. Skepticism towards the socio-economic order in the second half of the 20th century referred to the unmasking of the ideology of the ruling system. “Ideology” became one of the key concepts which represents false consciousness about reality produced by the ruling class in order to maintain the “status quo”. According to Vladimir Biti, earlier “ideology” stood for the study of ideas dealing with the origin and nature of ideas and as a concept was first used by the French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy in his “Éléments d'idéologie” (1801-1815) (Biti, 1997: 133). Marx and Engels gave that concept a completely different meaning, usually with a negative connotation and associated with some sort of manipulation. To Marx and Engels, the thoughts of the dominant class in every epoch are the dominant beliefs in the society which stands as an ideal expression of the ruling material relations (Marx, Engels, 1967: 394). In essence, by the concept of “ideology”, one refers to the ruling class who are in a position to determine beliefs which then become the ruling thoughts of a particular historical period. Ideology denotes distorted consciousness – consciousness of a particular class interest. The idea that different classes have different social perspectives and that some social perspectives are epistemically privileged, opens doors for epistemic repercussion. Generally accepted beliefs, values, norms, ideas, habits and practices are not given birth in a vacuum – they are acquired in the process of socialization through culture and community. What about the values and norms which are the product of an oppressive ideology? As I have said, the topic of food is multidimensional and epistemology is a useful tool because it is

impossible to discuss food without taking into consideration the interconnectivity of power, dominant ideology, food and body.

To go one step further in regard to the subject and its relation to the social world, thoughts on ideology and its subject-production were extensively developed in the second half of the 20th century, especially within one important direction known as **"Marxist anti-humanism"**, framed primarily by **Louis Althusser** and **Michel Foucault** in France during the 1960s. Marxist anti-humanists proposed a concept based on the idea that individuals should be perceived as "embodiments of the economic and other relations in which they are embedded" (Hindess, 2007: 393). Louis Althusser was a structural Marxist who, deeply immersedin the material, gave his structural perspective in the famous 1970 essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)". In it Althusser displaces the individual as the subject of history, revolution and emancipation and underlines the importance of the historical conditions that shape the individual. This is a very interesting perspective on the constitution of the subject, that is, on the process in which a person or an individual becomes a "subject". In the process of "passing through" the system, in what amount is the subject a product of the structure? To what degree is the subject determined by the structure and how does this structure shape his/her knowledge and understanding? What is the proportion of restraint or alteration from it? What are the possibilities for resistance and do they even exist?

In his essay, Althusser describes his views on ideology and its impact on one's subjectivity which may be seen as too deterministic and dark. Perhaps the concept of "hegemony", developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, is more agreeable to some because it is "softer" in a way that it is based more on consent rather than coercion and force (Althusser is a devout anti-humanist). Nevertheless, till this day I remember when my professor Dean Duda introduced us to Althusser in my first year of undergraduate studies. I was mesmerized by Althusser and the way he articulated his ideas. I still am and even now deem his theory applicable. If one exposed the ideological narrative behind food, power and female bodies in contemporary society, it would unfortunately seem to be justifiably grim, determined and depressing like Althusser's anti-humanist stances.

Althusser differentiates between ideological and repressive apparatuses. Namely, the State contains **Ideological State Apparatuses** or ISAs (such as family, education, culture, church or media - elements belonging mostly to the private sphere of society in which ideology functions as a primary force and repression as a secondary) and **Repressive State Apparatuses** or RSAs (government, administration, police, army or prisons - elements belonging to the public sphere in which the primary force is repression and ideology is secondary) (Althusser, 1971: 141-144). The main agenda of these state apparatuses is the reproduction of the relations of production existing in a particular society. Ideology, which is present in both ideological and repressive state apparatuses, here "works" by interpellation which transforms individuals into subjects – by "**interpellation"** ideology constitutes us as subjects. Althusser writes:

> "There is no ideology except for the subject and for subjects. (…) …the category of the subject (which may function under other names: e.g., as the soul in Plato, as God, etc.) is the constitutive category of all ideology, whatever its determination (regional or class) and whatever its historical date – since ideology has no history. I say: the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects* (Althusser, 1971: 170-171).

Furthermore,

> "But to recognize that we are subjects and that we function in the practical rituals of the most elementary everyday life (the hand-shake, the fact of calling you by your name, the fact of knowing, even if I do not know what it is, that you 'have' a name of your own, which means that you are recognized as a unique subject, etc.) – this recognition only gives us the 'consciousness' of our incessant (eternal) practice of ideological *recognition* – its consciousness, i.e. its recognition – but in no sense does it give us the (scientific) *knowledge* of the mechanism of this recognition. (…) …*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject. (…) I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions" in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms it all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' (…) … what thus seems

> to take place outside ideology (to be precise, in the street), in reality takes place in ideology. (…) ideology never says, 'I am ideological'. (Althusser, 1971: 173-175).

Althusser gave a vivid depiction of an individual, person or "self", immersed in a particular structure (in his case, ISAs and RSAs) and through the inevitable process of interpellation, becomes a "subject". His theory of ideology and subjectivity can be criticized for its deterministic and pessimistic interpretation of ideology which does not leave any room for agency or resistance. It is nevertheless important because it explains that ideology is not "somewhere out there" but here: we are in it, we are agents of ideology, subjected to it and it reproduces daily. Ideology constitutes us, individuals as subjects, while at the same time we reproduce ideology. This may be terrifying because in the context of ideology the pronoun is "they" – they reproduce ideology, surely not "me" or "us". "Me" in regard to ideology shocks us.

The intersection of ideology and epistemology is of interest to me. Ideology or different social impacts shape our picture of the world and, consequently, our self-image and self-knowledge. We internalize the system: beliefs, norms and values or ideology in general. The question is to what degree and how does that shape our knowledge and self-knowledge of food? Is there a possibility for resistance or change? How is change connected with the revision of one's food-related belief system? Can we analyze it otherwise than in the postmodern nihilistic approach which is usually applied to this topic? With his anti-humanism implying social determinism, Althusser stands at the one end of the scope. At the other end, there is a number of theories arguing for the independent and autonomous self which usually do not take into consideration the social character of the self, shaped by social power. In the 1970s, Althusser tremendously contributed to the theoretical question of agency and autonomy which are still relevant today with regard to "self". Do we really have "our own" opinion as autonomous subjects with agency? Or is that also "part of the discourse" in Foucault's language or the "dominant ideology" in Althusserian line of reasoning, that is, altogether socially constructed? How much are our beliefs in regard to food or any other matter really "ours" and how much are we a product of environment?

Not all is bleak. Although I am a great admirer of Althusser and his notions on the strength of social power, I really like how Linda Barclay sees **autonomy** - as consisting of a capacity "or the exercise of certain competencies, that enables one to reflect on one's aims, aspirations, and motivations and choose one's end as purposes through such a reflective process" (Barclay, 2000: 53). She begins with the claim that "self" is socially determined and that we are inescapably "a product of our environment" (Barclay, 2000: 54). In her view, autonomous agency does not involve a mystical escape from social forces but the ability to provide a certain response to it.

> "Both the autonomous and nonautonomous subjects are conditioned by the forces in society. The difference is that autonomous person is not a passive receptacle of these forces but reflectively engages with them to participate in shaping the life for herself" (Barclay, 2000: 55).

Right here I see the importance of epistemic virtues such as curiosity, open-mindedness or self-scrutiny which enable critical reflection of oneself and the surrounding cultural imaginary. Those virtues lead to self-reflection of one's inner world consisting of different beliefs, norms and values. This opens the gate for reconsideration and change, which I will return to in the following chapters. Indeed, we are the product of our structure or oppressive ideology but that does not mean we do not have the possibility to respond. This will become important when we come to the section concerning dealing with the food system where the emancipatory aspect of applied/social epistemology becomes evident.

Marxism and Post-Marxism covers an extensive body of literature with many different approaches and discrepancies among them. I outlined Althusser's anti-humanist theory because I find it strong and influential even today and very much applicable in the analysis of one's subjectivity regarding structure and power. His notion on the intersection of the individual and the "structure" gives us a wide and powerful polygon for analysis. I delineated it as an example of how the Marxist normative framework is still important in reading the "production of the subject" which is a crucial aspect in the intersection between the "self" and the social world. "Selves" coexist with different modes of power and inevitably get in contact with that shaping power, call it "interpellation", "normalization" or

"hegemony".[7] Marxism and post-Marxism paved the way for understanding that the "self" in the social context is always covered in many layers, characterized by a particular position, power and the accompanying understanding and knowledge. The legacy of this theoretical approach is that it sheds light on contemporary underprivileged and oppressed positions and groups in society. Without a doubt, the second half of the 20th century gave us an opportunity to understand power in various ways and contexts through the questions of privilege, inequality and marginalization, as well as oppression and injustice, which I believe have political and epistemic consequences. It is always important to grasp the socio-political context of any epistemic subject in question and take into consideration the complexity and variety of "selves" who are not unified or generalized, but concrete "selves" with different positions, experiences and understandings, operating every day in a complex social, political and epistemic field.

2.3. Foucault, power and the "self"

Besides Althusser, a similar reading and extension of Marxist theory offers his fellow philosopher, **Michel Foucault,** at least in his early phase. His work is inescapable in the domain of "subject-production".[8] Both of them are seen as Marxist anti-humanist who put the structure and not the "man" or individual into center of it all. Foucault gave a valuable insight into the moment of collision between the "self" and the social world, grasping the instance of the "social" inscribing into the "self". As I have said many times, exploring the domain of food is impossible without taking into consideration the power which appears in so many facets through dominant ideology, generally accepted beliefs and values, knowledge, self-knowledge and body, both on the individual and the collective level. At the end (or the beginning), comes the power of one's cognition in such a demanding social context. As I will soon demonstrate, Foucault gave a colossal

[7] As I mentioned above, "interpellation" is one of Althusser's key concepts, "normalization" is one of Foucault's key concepts which I will deal with shortly, and finally, "hegemony" is one of Antonio Gramsci's key concepts. Gramsci was a Marxist philosopher at the beginning of the 20th century whose work got much attention within the post-Marxist theory. One of his concepts is "hegemony" which represents necessary compliance to dominant values and norms of the ruling class. In other words, the control of the ruling class is not gained by force but by consent to political, cultural and moral values. Compared to Althusser and his Marxist anti-humanist stances, Gramsci is much "softer" in his consideration of compliance to dominant values (see more in Forgacs, 2000.).

[8] For differences between Foucault and Althusser, see Resch, 1989.

contribution to epistemology with the rethinking of the concept of “knowledge”. He is usually considered one of the strongest postmodern critics of traditional epistemology and a social constructionist or revisionist epistemologist. Additionally, his conception of power is the basis for Fricker’s influential notion of epistemic injustice. It seems impossible to talk about contemporary understanding of power without Foucault. And we cannot talk about food without talking about power.

In his 1966 influential book, “The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences”, Foucault gave a structural analysis of the systems of knowledge from Renaissance to modern days. According to him, **“episteme”** or discursive formations determine knowledge in a particular historical era. These structures determine the individual through rules, decisions and limitations. In his work, he distinguishes the Renaissance, the Classical period and the nineteenth century or the Modern period.

> “…what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemic field, the *episteme* in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility; in this account, what should appear are those configurations within the *space* of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science. Such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of that word, as an ‘archeology’.” (Foucault, 1994: xxii).

Nothing describes “episteme” better than people reminiscing something from the past while explaining or perhaps justifying the past with words “That was the way things were.” In his early work Foucault is not fond of the concept of “truth” as a constituent of particular “knowledge”. He argues that one cannot speak about truth, but rather about the “‘general politics’ of truth – that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true” (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 168). So, when speaking about truth, one really speaks about “the rules of formation of statements which are accepted as scientifically true” (ibid., 144). Therefore, the “political economy of truth” is localized within the scientific discourse as a result of political and economic structures (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 169). In regard to the relationship between truth and knowledge, for Foucault the question is what manages assertions and how they are constituted as a body of notions which is

scientifically approved and can be verified or falsified by science (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 145). Therefore, the problem is the mere constitution of the internal regime of power or the conditions in which scientific verifications or falsifications are dictated by power. As such, power is within scientific statements and it effects the creation of an internal regime of power among scientific statements which are, so to say, "infected" by power.

With this notion of power, Foucault discredits power and presents knowledge in a rather negative way. Let me give a concrete example. In his work, "The History of Sexuality: Volume 1", Foucault explains how the bourgeoisie, capitalist or industrial society which arose in nineteenth century, set in motion a complex apparatus for generating "true" discourses on sexuality which had to formulate the uniform "truth" of sexuality in order to gain control of both the life of the individual and the life of the species in general. Basically, "knowledge", which is represented as "scientific", ergo neutral and truthful, is part of the machinery which perpetuates the existing socio-economic order and should be approached critically. As a true anti-humanist, Foucault claims that a particular time in history is determined by an appropriate epistemic grid and that one is a product of this specific epistemic framework which shapes him/her. In other words, one is subjected to that particular epistemic order. Much like Althusser, with his notion of "episteme" Foucault underlines the importance of historical conditions which determine the individual with rules, conditions and limitations and by shaping him/her, he/she becomes a subject.

In his later works Foucault "converts" to humanism and gives a positive approach towards knowledge with his writings on the "insurrection of subjugated knowledge" by which he refers to historical contents camouflaged or kept hidden by the established structure (Foucault, 2004a: 7). The critique of formal discourses, institutions and practices must reveal this buried knowledge (so, there is "knowledge" after all) which is truthful (there is also "truth"). He argues that this kind of subjugated knowledge or "knowledge from bellow" and singular local knowledge of the people or "what people know" together create **"genealogy"** - "a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or non-legitimized knowledge off against unitary theological instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into hierarchies, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge…" (Foucault, 2003: 9). Therefore, genealogy is an anti-science; it "has to fight

the power-effects characteristics of any discourse that is regarded as scientific" (Foucault, 2003: 7). Nenad Miščević, in "After Foucault – Social Epistemology Facing New and Old Knowledges" writes that Foucault's theory of "the good subjugated knowledge, and the conviction of the possibility of belief and truth both belong to the line that was knowledge-appreciative, truth-appreciative and therefore knowledge-accumulating" (Miščević, 2011: second section, para.12). One can say that in his later phase, Foucault got softer on the questions of knowledge and gave a positive stance to the knowledge of the oppressed. Foucault's "subjugated knowledge" reminds me of an old knowledge of food cultivation. Older women that I have learned from cultivated the soil all their life according to lunar phases or the Catholic calendar. They would tell me that Swiss chard, in order to last throughout the winter, must be sown between "two Marys": "The Assumption of Mary" ("Vela Gospa", always on August 15th) and "The Nativity of Mary" ("Mala Gospa", always on September 8th). That vast and precious knowledge is never written; it is strictly local (people on the coast have a different time for sowing the seeds than people from the continent because of the warmer climate). I cherish this greatly because it is priceless but unfortunately rapidly disappearing with older generations.

On a broader epistemic map, according to Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, due to Foucault's revisionist approach to the idea of objective truth (to him truth and knowledge are socially constructed in line with the economic and political regime), his understanding of knowledge clashes with the basic understandings of traditional epistemology and can be seen as belonging to the abovementioned revisionism or epistemic nihilism (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 20). In his later phase, this "bad knowledge" derived from power is challenged with "the good knowledge of the oppressed" where the "morally superior position of marginalized or oppressed group enables them to understand how power deceives – coupled with the erudition of intellectuals, it provides insights into injustice and makes it susceptible to effective criticism" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 20). Although complex, controversial and radical, Foucault's conception of power opened space for contemporary understandings of knowledge and injustice in the social context. His notion of power paved the way for the concept of epistemic injustice presented in the seminal work of Miranda Fricker's epistemology which I will address shortly. His understandings of power and

constitution of the subject are essential for our comprehension of the multidimensional topic of food.

Foucault's groundbreaking notion rests on the claim that power does not run hierarchically through the social body but is a force that runs through the whole social body – power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1990: 93). In this way Foucault challenged the generally accepted idea of power which runs vertically. According to his view, "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 1990: 93)[9]. Foucauldian power is an omnipresent force which permeates the whole social body and is exercised from innumerable points, its effects being divisions and inequalities (Foucault, 1990: 94). Power shapes every aspect of the human life in a way that, when joined with something presented as "knowledge", thus truthful and neutral, it constitutes different discourses or "tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations" (Foucault, 1990: 101-103). We can say that "power", "knowledge" and "discourse" are fundamental elements in the process of the production of the truth – power needs discourses which are grounded in it and this power systematizes truth among institutions: "We have to produce the truth" (Foucault, 2004b: 25).

While writing about **the constitution of the subject**, Foucault argues that "historical contextualization needed to be something more than the simple relativization of the phenomenological subject" (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 150). As I see it, Foucault maintains that the French intellectual Left combined the phenomenological constitution of the subject (which comes from Husserl and his assumption that a phenomenological subject constitutes the world through his/her perception; therefore, he/she is active in this process) with the socially conditioned subject (this kind of subject is constituted by the ideology within the Marxist discourse). In Foucault's view, the French intellectual Left took the active phenomenological subject and presented it as passive object of history – he

[9] I wrote about Foucault, power and the constitution of the subject in "Hermeneutic Injustice and the Constitution of the Subject" (see Smokrović, 2016.).

rejects this kind of constitution of the subject and in so doing explicitly criticizes Marxism. According to Foucault, the subject has four possibilities in the process of its constitution:

(1) the "classical" phenomenological subject (which is transcendental in relation to the field of events; he/she constitutes the world) – this is unacceptable for Foucault;
(2) the relative phenomenological subject – Foucault states that this kind of constitution does not resolve the problem of the constitution of the subject;
(3) the subject that "runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" – Foucault does not clarify this option but I read him in a way that if the subject thus "runs", it cannot become developed as a subject; and finally,
(4) the subject which is constituted within the historical framework – he calls it genealogy and this is an acceptable way of the constitution of the subject for Foucault (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 150).

Furthermore, constitution of the subject leads to two important concepts: **ideology** (which I have mentioned in the previous section) and **repression**. According to Foucault, one should be careful with the notion on ideology because it assumes truth but it is irrelevant if something falls or not under the category of scientificity or truth. The problem for him is in "seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses that, in themselves, are neither true or false" (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 152). Furthermore, precaution is necessary because, as Foucault maintains, the concept of ideology refers to the abovementioned order of the subject. And finally, ideology stands secondary to infrastructure (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006: 152).[10]

For Foucault, the word **"subject"** has two meanings: firstly, a subject to someone else by control and dependence, and secondly, an entity that is tied to his/her own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge (Foucault, 2002: 331). Confronted with the power of law, a subject is the one who is "subjected", the one who obeys (Foucault, 1990: 85). Foucault's first meaning of "subject", a controlled and dependent being, is related to the constitution in a social sense. He talks about the "normalization of the subject". There are

[10] These presented problems with ideology can be seen as an explicit critique of the Marxist discourse and, more precisely, of Louis Althusser's work.

three modes of objectification that transform humans into subjects, as argued by Foucault. The first mode of transformation of humans into subjects is objectification through **"sciences"**; for example, a "speaking subject" is objectified through philology or linguistics. The sheer fact of being alive objectifies a subject through natural history, biology, medicine, criminal justice system, psychiatry or the social science. Additionally, subjects are objectified through "**dividing practices"** - a subject is created by division inside him/her or is divided by others. If we take medicine as science with its "scientific" knowledge, we can see the creation of particular categories which define the "normal" and the "deviant". The creation of norms by which all can be measured, judged and labeled as "normal" or "deviant" is the very process of normalization.

> "The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize. The normalizing society is therefore not, under these conditions, a sort of generalized disciplinary society whose disciplinary institutions have swarmed and finally taken over everything – that, I think, is no more than a firs and inadequate interpretation of a normalizing society. The normalizing society is a society in which the norm of discipline and the norm of regulation intersect along an orthogonal articulation. (Foucault, 2004c: 253)."

In other words, we have the social power which shapes knowledge which, in turn, shapes the subject. This leads us to the third mode of objectification which refers to the way an **individual turns himself/herself into a subject** (the second meaning of the concept of "subject"). This notion of the subject constitution is tied to his/her own identity and self-understanding refers to him/her as a being, to one's own identity. In Foucault's words, one inevitably internalizes the system of classification. The domain of sexuality is the most prominent in his work. As it appears, through sexuality an individual becomes a subject by learning to recognize himself as a subject of "sexuality" (Foucault, 2002: 327).

> "To sum up, the main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much such-or-such institution of power, or group, or elite, or class, but, rather, a technique, a form of power. This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity and imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and Other have to recognize in him. *It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects*" (Foucault, 2002: 327, my italics).

Subjects therefore internalize a particular system of classification: “heterosexual”; “homosexual”; “normal”; “deviant”; “pervert”. An individual becomes a subject by being subjugated to a power that inescapably turns him into a dependent subject. It is evident that sexuality plays an important factor in this new specification of individuals turned into subjects.

Without a doubt, Foucault gave an excellent explanation of power and how it operates in society. Social power dynamics has a great impact on the process of the constitution of the subject. Power and knowledge constitute discourse which is essentially a result of political and economic structures. Discourse is perpetuated through social imaginary consisting of different beliefs, values, norms and practices which simultaneously represent the productive forces which ensure the perpetuation of discourse. Internalization of this discourse, its generally accepted beliefs and the overall social imaginary ensures its normalization and further reproduction. We internalize and normalize a particular social imaginary which, since generally accepted, becomes unquestioned and further reproduced. Naturally, the question of autonomy occurs. What I find interesting is the power of discourse which resides in the epistemic mechanism through which the “self” constitutes self-knowledge. The aim of my thesis is to explore the dominant discourse and cultural imaginary concerning food production/consumption as well as the power intertwined with this discourse which, presses the cognition of the epistemic subject in question while forming beliefs and constituting the “self”.

Going back shortly to the concept of “normalization”, I will give an example. Some time ago, I was writing a text for a journal which issued a paper about gender and mental illness in Croatia at the turn of the 19th century (Drača, 2019). The archive revealed an old case of Ana Schier, a young woman from Zagreb, who had legitimate and considerable questions about the death and inheritance of her father. By not standing quiet, demanding answers and fair investigation, she transgressed the gender norms of the era and was placed in a mental institution diagnosed with hysteria – a popular women’s disease of that period which applied to all women who dared to disobey the rigid gender norms. In this case, Ana was too loud and demanding, her place was in in the private sphere of the home, certainly not in the public sphere. In that period women knew their place – they

belonged in the private sphere of the home, without any civil rights or rights to education, perceived as emotional, less intelligent than men, with an “unstable” and “fragile” nature. “Rationality” was a trait attributed solely to men; women were deemed irrational and intuitive, placed in the same category with children or people with mental disabilities. In that period, women paid a high price for gender transgression with structural oppression, medical diagnoses, incarceration and inhumane treatments in sanatoriums and prisons. The example of Ana Schier is one in millions of other women who suffer great injustice on all levels. “That was the way things were back then.”

It may seem bizarre today, but this was not such a long time ago. To question all these matters is mainly possible thanks to the abovementioned social critique articulated through critical and feminist theory. To justify the wrongdoings of the past means to accept the responsibility for them. One should take a strong stance and make amends for current injustices and wrongdoings. As Foucault pointed out, particular historical conditions determine the individual with rules, conditions and limitations; through that determinacy and internalization, one becomes a “subject”. The individual is “normalized”, squeezed in a particular box. That process of “normalization” or internalization of imposed norms carries a strong epistemic element in it. If a woman is situated in a society where her possibilities for education and work are limited, where she is seen as less intelligent, capable or valued than men – what will she think about herself and where will her limits lie? In my view, the social impact on the epistemic subject undoubtedly takes its toll on his/her own perception of himself/herself and this will become important later when I address the current connections between knowledge, understandings, power, food and bodies.

With his understanding of the process of the constitution of the subject, Foucault gave a new and interesting approach to the following question – how does the social world shape the “self” and how does it influence his/her self-knowledge? According to Foucault, constitution in a social sense is governed by sciences (for example, biology) and by dividing practices (normal/deviant) - through these processes social power shapes the subject who is at the same time “normalized”. So the subject must be placed in a particular position, must be put in place within a particular epistemic framework, must be

“normalized”, that is, translated and located into the existing discursive order which is epistemic by its nature. Simultaneously, an individual turns himself/herself into a subject while internalizing the very system of classification. In other words, by passing through this process, the subject internalizes the scheme. Foucault would not relate this with the notion of ideology because ideology implies the existence of truth. Nevertheless, for me this Foucauldian notion of the constitution of the subject is very much connected with Althusser’s deterministic notion of interpellation, an unconscious process as well. Social imprints are strong. Sometimes we are aware of them, more often not because discourse actually represents generally accepted and unquestioned beliefs, norms, values and practices. There resides its power which enables its reproduction. The fact is that we, as social beings, are placed in a particular epistemic framework which determines our understanding of the world, ourselves, our bodies, food and the non-human world. By accepting and learning it, we undoubtedly internalize “the system” itself. Social power and its imprints determine our outlook, our cognitive scheme, our understanding of the world. Our self-knowledge is generated through social relations, which is the subject of the upcoming chapter. This is why Foucault is important when one analyzes the sub-ideal aspect of one’s cognition within these complex social surroundings.

I delineated how Miranda Fricker in her influential book, “Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing” (2007), beautifully connected the abovementioned Foucault’s understanding of power with epistemic injustice. According to Fricker, hermeneutic injustice happens “in absentia” due to a particular void in the collective hermeneutical pool. However, my question is what happens with a systematic reproduction of hermeneutic injustice based on identity stereotypes after we have articulated the experience? As I asked in my earlier text, what about so many Carmitas today who can and do articulate hermeneutic injustice but are still exposed to it? How does this affect them as knowers and how does this affect them politically? It seems to me that, besides hermeneutical injustice which occurs “in absentia”, there is another form of hermeneutical injustice based on perpetuation of concrete systematic stereotypes. Let us call it “in praesentia”. The question is why are they perpetuated and how to stop them?

How do these identity prejudices and stereotypes present in the collective imaginary and the structures affect the process of constitution of the subject? Fricker distinguishes between two levels of constitution of the subject which correspond to Foucault's understanding (Fricker, 2007: 55). First, there is **constitutive construction** by which the subject is socially constituted as someone that he/she is not with focus on a social sense (Fricker, 2007: 55). That corresponds to Foucault's meaning of the controlled and dependent subject and the three modes of objectification that transforms human beings into subjects. Fricker's second notion of the constitution of the subject refers to **causal construction** which is in relation to his/her own identity or actually becoming what one is constructed as being (Fricker, 2007: 166). This coincides with Foucault's subject who internalizes the system of classification or, in Fricker's words, identity prejudices. Those two levels seem inseparable because social power creates a discursive order which is exercised upon the epistemic subject who internalizes it and begins to understand himself/herself and the surrounding world according to that very internalized discursive order.

Through Social Constructionist Theory, Marxist anti-humanism and the work of Althusser and Foucault, we have come to contemporary work of Miranda Fricker who continues to tackle the question of structural power, its inequalities and epistemic "bugs" in it. Social imprints shaped by power leave trace on people's knowledge regarding the "selves" and the world. This is an inevitable context which has to be taken as a basis for further exploration of the realm of food.

2.4. Conclusion

The concept of the "self" is hard to grasp and can be approached from many different angles. Biology, medicine, law, psychology, philosophy – every discipline has its own definition. I am interested in a particular one where the epistemic and social meet. Simone de Beauvoir beautifully said that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman. In this one sentence she covered so much about the social construction of different categories in society. She opened doors for the social aspect of the "self". Social Constructionist Theory, radical and avant-garde at the time, played an important role in

articulating the impact of power and the importance of the social world on things usually taken for granted and unquestioned. Critiques were directed at power, ideology, language and science, the very the pillars of our society. Those critiques paved the way for what will later be called “postmodernism”. Why not question and expose everything to doubt, including norms and values?

The problematic is that even epistemology with its central value of truth was perceived as “infected” with power and disowned; we are thus left with nothing more than “conversational practices” and pure relativism. No theoretical framework remains for further analysis. I find this very problematic and a dead end in its own right. Nevertheless, Social Constructionist Theory gave an important legacy – it shed light on understanding the social dynamics of power and power relations, it left a great impact on Western perception of other cultures, and it opened a window for criticism of the ethnocentric approach which was considered a norm at that time. I regard it as important in another scope and that is the acquisition of knowledge. Our understandings, knowledge, beliefs, norms and behavior are socially impacted. My understandings of myself and the world are highly influenced by points of reference from the social sphere. Needless to say, it is important to further discuss the traditional conceptual and normative questions but also develop social epistemology in different directions in which the knower is not universal, abstract or operating in ideal circumstances but has a concrete social and political identity.

1960s and 1970s were meaningful decades with many avant-garde ideas, important till this day. This was a time of radical stances, of the “New Left”, of Critical theory, resurrection of Marxism, articulation of feminism, the civil right movement and many other tendencies which challenged and changed the world in so many ways by broadening the space for the marginalized and the oppressed and reshaped the multilayered and complex “self”. Popular Critical Theory stood as a normative approach focused on power dynamics and was hugely popular with the leading philosophers such as Marcuse and Habermas who were highly influential among the left-oriented intellectuals of that era. This was also the time when epistemology started to open toward the social dimension. Altogether, this was the time of revolutions, enthusiasm and faith in a better world. Unfortunately, history later showed that big political systems based on

socialist grounds, such as USSR, Mao's China, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia notoriously failed. Nevertheless, Marxism gave an important conceptual framework for understanding the power dynamics in a society. Class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity… There are so many important anchors of subjectivity that shape people epistemically and politically which must be taken into consideration because they shape people's lives. Marxist key normative concepts such as class, class consciousness, ideology or alienation are a constructive tool for understanding those issues today. The famous 1968 stands as a symbol of personal and cultural revolution as well as of social breakthrough whose consequences we feel today in society where the fight for justice and equality is not over.

I am very much fond of Althusser's and Foucault's work because they gave important ideas on individuals and structural relations surrounding them. Althusser's focus on material conditions and Foucault's notion of epistemic issues and the process of the constitution of the subject seem very useful and applicable to today's understandings of the society we are immersed in. Namely, they gave an interesting overview of mechanisms through which society and its vital segment of power work. There are specific historical conditions which determine subjects with rules, conditions and limitations; there is a particular cultural imaginary; there is a particular imposed Order which individuals internalize by simply being born into the social world and by that they become "subjects". Every subject is a situated knower -one's beliefs, judgments, prejudices, norms, values, stereotypes - the overall knowledge is inseparable from a particular position and social context. Naturally, one can and should analyze the process of knowledge acquisition in idealized circumstances, but why not take into consideration the socio-political context of the epistemic subject which shaped him/her. We must bear in mind that immersion into the social world comes with susceptibility to different social beliefs which sheds light on the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition which I will focus on in the following chapter.

Epistemology in the second part of the 20th century also experienced shifts and opened toward the social dimension of cognition. I find this openness essential as well as the fact that epistemology can be practically applied to a real-life situation, with a strong normative framework, yet maintain truth-oriented beliefs as a central epistemic value. It

can give us great many answers and guidance in today's complex circumstances so that we could better understand the world with its complex dynamics, misconceptions, problems, and socio-political and epistemic injustices. I see social epistemology being applied to real-life problems as a project of emancipation – a tool for better understanding of ourselves and the world around us. It is a tool for a comprehension of cognitive processes of a particular epistemic subject and of external forces leaving marks on the epistemic subject in question. Understanding – it is a prerequisite for change. To reach the epistemic "subject/eater", in this chapter we have begun with the "self" which I tried to grasp through the intertwined political and epistemic lenses. At least, that is how I would put it. This brought us to the important concept of self-knowledge which, along with the "self", power and injustice, stands as one of the key elements of this thesis. To grasp the complex and multidimensional realm of food, we must go to the source and explore the power of one's cognition and understanding of food.

3. SELF-KNOWLEDGE

As I have tried to show so far, “self” is a complex, elusive and ambiguous concept despite the fact that every human being is the bearer of one’s “self”. There is no unified or “general” “self” – every individual is shaped by its history and identity, as well as bodily experience. Moreover, every “self” is relational - it reflects on others and returns that image. Every “self” exists in specific socio-political circumstances. Furthermore, “self” is inseparable from self-knowledge - I am aware of myself, that is, I have a particular knowledge of my feelings, thoughts, beliefs and desires, which, according to Brie Gertler, constitutes self-knowledge (Gertler, 2019: para.1). In a way, “self” is a carrier of self-knowledge. I see it as a tank of one’s beliefs, values, attitudes, character traits, desires, emotions, capacities and norms – all that which can be seen as one’s inner, personal narrative that constitutes the “self” in question. It is also a tank for food-related beliefs. With the intention to understand food as a multidimensional topic where power, epistemic and broader social injustice as well as self-knowledge coincide, I find it important to explore the concept of “self-knowledge” because that is the very place where our food-related beliefs reside. How does this cognitive machinery actually work?

Until now, epistemology analyzed the process of cognition in perfect conditions: the subject was stripped from any identity and context and perceived as completely rational and flawlessly logical. I am interested to see how self-knowledge – an invisible site where our inner lives occur, as well as beliefs, values and feelings which govern our actions, choices and habits – is being formed by the surrounding social environment. How does this “inside knowledge” differs from other sorts of knowledge? Brie Gertler indicates four points of distinctiveness of self-knowledge:

(1) Self-knowledge has a secure epistemic status;
(2) Self-knowledge is (sometimes) obtained by an exclusively first-person method;
(3) Self-knowledge is special because it implies subject’s cognitive agency - there is a distinctive agential relation to one’s mental states;
(4) Statements about one’s own mental states bear special authority or presumption of truth (Gertler, 2019: para. 2).

Furthermore, in understanding self-knowledge, Ursula Renz distinguishes between four types of self-knowledge:

(1) Self-knowledge of one's **mental states** includes knowledge or awareness of mental states like sensations, impressions, perceptions, afterimages or random thoughts. This kind of knowledge also includes knowledge of pain, sleepiness, thirst or similar conditions.
(2) Self-knowledge of one's **standing attitudes** refers to knowledge of one's beliefs and other propositional attitudes, as well as values, preferences, desires and intentions.
(3) Self-knowledge of one's **dispositional properties** refers to subject's knowledge of his/her dispositions such as character traits, behavior patterns, capacities and limitations.
(4) Self-knowledge of one's **being subject to the human condition** refers to features specific to humankind (Renz, 2017: 10-12).

Taking into consideration that self-knowledge is a popular and very much debated domain of philosophy since ancient Greece, it does not come as surprise that the body of literature concerning it is immense. Apologizing in advance, I will do great injustice to contemporary philosophical and psychological accounts of self-knowledge by just briefly touching upon them in reference to Annalisa Colliva's overview of approaches (Colliva, 2013). Colliva defines self-knowledge as a "characteristically human ability of knowing one's own mental states, like sensations, perceptions, emotions and propositional attitudes" (Colliva, 2013: 676). Within that field, she differentiates four models. The first is the **introspective model** which relies on the Cartesian notion by which all mental states are like objects in one's mental field and the subject is introspectively aware of them. Objects are **transparent** to subjects who are at the same time **authoritative** in respect to those objects. This model is widely criticized since Freud's introduction of the unconscious. Another critique relies on the fact that children and animals also have mental states but they can't attribute them to themselves. Furthermore, the presence of self-deception makes the authority of the subject problematic. Lastly, as Colliva states by referring to Wittgenstein, this model would imply the view that psychological language is

private to every subject. Namely, when applying the given term *t* to a current mental state *M*, my use of *t* will be correct, and *t* could mean anything at all (Colliva, 2013: 676).

The second model that Colliva cites is the **inferential model** suggested by the psychologist Alison Gopnik. According to this model, self-knowledge suggests that we know our minds by inference or reasoning. For example, subjects at the age of 3-4 would know their mental states just the same as they know other people's – by making **inferences** from their apparent behavior to their likely mental causes. As it shows, transparency and authority are not essential features of self-knowledge in this model. As Colliva states, this account of self-knowledge has been criticized since it turns authority and transparency into a contingent instead of an integral element of self-knowledge. Likewise, this model denies the intuitive asymmetry between our own and other's knowledge (Colliva, 2013: 677).

As the third approach to self-knowledge, Colliva indicates **constitutive accounts**. Authors who belong to this model, such as Sydney Shoemaker, Crispin Wright and Akeel Bilgrami, dismiss the view that self-knowledge is based on introspection or inference. To them, **transparency and authority** are fundamental elements of self-knowledge. Their thesis is as follows:

> Given conditions *C*, a subject believes/judges that he is in a mental state *M* iff he is.

According to Colliva, this restricted thesis applies only to subjects who are conceptually "gifted" (not children or animals) and for mental states like conscious intentions, desires or beliefs (Colliva, 2013: 677). In regard to the problem of self-deception, Colliva maintains that authors who belong to this model claim that self-deceived subjects do not make wrong self-ascription; they see self-deceiving subjects as having two contrasted mental states, one of which is conscious and correctly attributed. Therefore, the rule of self-ascription of a subject is consistent with their being self-deceived. The critique of this model is based on the rupture between first- and second-order mental states – between beliefs, desires and intentions, and our own beliefs about them. In addition, this model views self-knowledge as a cognitive accomplishment (Colliva, 2013: 678).

Lastly, **recent epistemic accounts** of self-knowledge refer to authors such as Richard Moran and Christopher Peackocke who, according to Colliva, assert that one's self-knowledge comes from forming judgments about one's beliefs, intentions and desires, based on the fact that the subject has them and on the **reason** why he/she has them. "Self-knowledge is thus a modest, yet a genuinely cognitive accomplishment consisting in immediate, non-observational judgment about one's own mental states, rationally grounded in their obtaining" (Colliva, 2013: 678). To Colliva, the problem lies in the fact that "phenomenal" awareness (awareness of what it is like to have a particular desire, intention, or belief) fails to accommodate subjects with reason for self-ascription. Furthermore, "propositional/higher-order" awareness assumes that self-knowledge is founded on judging of being in the relevant state of (Colliva, 2013: 678.)

3.1. Trivial and substantial self-knowledge

After this short overview of self-knowledge approached from a traditional epistemic perspective, let us turn toward a slightly different understanding of self-knowledge. What I am interested in is the every-day self-knowledge of the epistemic subject who is far from being a perfect cognizer. In other words, self-knowledge which is "private" in a way that it is anchored in every individual but at the same time molded by the socio-epistemic conditions dominant in the epistemic community. Self-knowledge of an epistemic subject is characterized by imperfect cognition, emotions, as well as values and norms obtained by socialization. An epistemic subject must navigate through countless beliefs (those regarding food as well) on a daily basis, estimate them, take some of them as truthful, and hopefully reevaluate his/her own current belief system from time to time. Naturally, according to their beliefs, epistemic subjects act, make choices and establish habits leaving concrete material imprints.

Therefore, what is the general architecture of one's self-knowledge in a real-life context where our food-related beliefs reside? Inevitable immersion in the social realm and openness or susceptibility to different social beliefs while constituting the "self" sheds light on the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition (let us call it "cognitive vulnerability") which is usually not taken into consideration. It is precisely this kind of self-knowledge that I am

interested in. To explore self-knowledge is to explore the source where all beliefs occur, including the ones related to food. This is the reason why self-knowledge is inevitable in understanding the complex domain of food.

Self-knowledge often appears with psychologists, fiction writers, as well as with philosophers, but with a slight difference because the philosophical approach is usually dry and difficult, as Quassim Cassam, a British philosopher, suggests (Cassam, n.d.-a). He notes that the philosophical focus is very much narrow, mostly concentrated on the relatively "**trivial" self-knowledge** which diverges from **substantial self-knowledge** in everyday sense. He defines self-knowledge as knowledge about the "real you" – your desires, true character, values, emotions and beliefs. Truthful knowledge about the "real you" implies that there is a picture presented to others, as opposed to the "real" intimate and hidden one, and substantial self-knowledge is interested in this "raw" material, unpolished before being placed in front of others. Cassam sees it as "the core of knowledge of the 'true self'" (Cassam, n.d.-a: 1). To him, self-knowledge is the knowledge in the everyday sense, knowledge of the "true" self (although debated if there is a **"true self"** at all, and if there is, what it represents). To him, "each 'self' is no more and more less than the sum of his or her thoughts, actions, attitudes, emotions, abilities, values and physical characteristics" (Cassam n.d.-a: 11). To realize these things about yourself means to know your true self – the "real you". "Realness" refers to self-illusions, false beliefs and facades which one puts on in front of others. "Realness" refers to "true" or actual character traits, attitudes, emotions and abilities which are sometimes hidden from selves and from others (Cassam n.d.-a: 11). This "realness" must be tackled more with the aim to understand how cognition operates in everyday life. In this "realness of cognitions", our food-related beliefs are shaped and in turn affect our actions.

Cassam differentiates "trivial" from "substantial" self-knowledge. "Trivial" self-knowledge refers to the vast body of thought concerning the question of self-knowledge in Western philosophy. It seems important to differentiate this kind of knowledge from what Cassam calls "substantial" self-knowledge. Cassam's trivial/substantial knowledge distinction coincides with Ursula Renz's distinction which she outlines in writing about recent understandings of self-knowledge connected to human mentality on the one hand

and **"epistemic self-intimacy**" on the other hand. This meets Cassam's contemporary understanding of "substantial" self-knowledge of everyday life. Such an approach to self-knowledge differs from "Socratic self-knowledge" which, as Renz outlines, is an accomplishment and necessity for wisdom (Renz, 2017: 6). Cassam refers to an example of "self-knowledge" from the point of view of traditional philosophy:

> "Suppose you believe you are wearing socks and know that that's what you believe. Your belief that you are wearing socks is one of your current 'states of mind', and many philosophers would want to say that knowing that you believe you are wearing socks is a form of 'self-knowledge'. The same goes for knowing that you have a headache or that you want to go to see a movie this evening. These are all examples of 'self-knowledge' in the philosophical sense. Notice that in the socks example what is at issue isn't whether you know that you are wearing socks but whether and how you know that you *believe* you are wearing socks" (Cassam, n.d.-a: 2).

Although "self-knowledge" is usually defined as knowledge of one's "particular mental states, including one's beliefs, desires and sensations", as the abovementioned Brie Gertler states, Cassam argues that the philosophical scope of self-knowledge is even more limited (Cassam, 2014: 38). Philosophical focus on the question of self-knowledge gravitates more towards metaphysics and there is truly limited interest in character traits which really represents Cassam's domain of "substantial" self-knowledge. Philosophical interest lies dominantly in knowledge of "particular mental states" which Cassam calls particular self-knowledge. This specific self-knowledge, represented in the analytic tradition, focuses on knowledge of our beliefs and desires and on the question of how one knows one's own beliefs, as Cassam puts it. Secondly, inspection is targeted at relatively trivial stances. For example, at explaining the knowledge that he/she believes it is raining rather than focusing on vital questions such as the belief that minorities are as important as the domicile population. Lastly, philosophers have tried to explain self-knowledge clarifying the knowledge of "what" one believes or wants, rather than "why" one believes or wants (Cassam, 2014: 39). In Cassam's view, the philosophy of self-knowledge seems limited in this extent.

Cassam asks: why is the focal point of philosophy of knowledge placed on trivial rather than substantial self-knowledge which to him seems far more important? Usually,

when something is in the spotlight for a long time, it means that it is exceptionally important or valuable or unique and interesting. “Why would anybody suppose that if you believe it is raining it is important for you to know that you believe it is raining? (Cassam, 2014: 39). He sees the answer in epistemic **foundationalism** which assumes that beliefs have a pyramidal structure with basic beliefs constituting the foundation and all additional justified beliefs supported by reasoning leading back to basic beliefs. Those basic beliefs can be seen by some as infallible, by others as non-inferentially justified. Nevertheless,

> “old-fashioned foundationalism holds that basic believes are believes about our particular mental states, and that our beliefs about our particular mental states are justified in a way that makes it a case that *we know* our particular mental states. On this account, knowledge of our particular mental states turns out to be foundational with respect to the rest of our knowledge, and that is why particular self-knowledge, including knowledge of relatively trivial attitudes, is important” (Cassam, 2014: 40).

To Cassam, philosophers from Descartes were fascinated with the **peculiarity** of “trivial” knowledge (Cassam, n.d.-a: 2). Peculiarity is the element which differentiates trivial from substantial self-knowledge and other kinds of knowledge. This fascination led to **over-exaggeration of specialness** (but not importance) of “trivial” self-knowledge at the expense of philosophical interest to substantial self-knowledge (Cassam, n.d-a.: 2). The philosophical quest was to explain how this “special” self-knowledge is possible.

The distinctiveness of self-knowledge lies in the fact that even if it is **not rigorously infallible**, it is **authoritative** (Cassam, n.d.-a: 3). Furthermore, specialness relates to the fact that “trivial” self-knowledge is not based on evidence. To illustrate how this authoritative and immediate self-knowledge is constituted, Cassam and the abovementioned Colliva distinguish the **perceptual model of self-knowledge** where **inner perception or introspection** stands as a way of knowing one’s mind. The second is **inference or reasoning** – a constitutive element of the **inferential model** of self-knowledge (Cassam, n.d.-a: 4). Each of these forms has several variations and can mutually intersect (as Cassam states, if perception implies inference, then the claim that self-knowledge is perceptual is consistent with the claim that it is inferential). In contrast to “trivial” self-knowledge, which is in focus of Western analytical philosophical thought,

substantial self-knowledge includes knowledge of one's **character, values, abilities and emotions** and, as Cassam argues, it represents **a real cognitive achievement**. When analyzing substantial self-knowledge, neither perceptual nor inferential model can function. In Cassam's words, you cannot know if you are a gentle person by introspection and you cannot know if you have resentment towards your mother through your ratio. In regard to inferentialism, he argues that "to infer a character trait from your thoughts, feelings and what you care about, you need to see the evidence in your possession *as* evidence that you have that trait, and this means that you need a 'theory' or understanding of the trait in question" (Cassam, n.d.-a: 7). He claims that substantial self-knowledge is gained by **theory-mediated inferences** from psychological and other evidence which means that it requires a certain amount of intellectual finesse (Cassam, n.d.-a: 7).

Cassam's substantial self-knowledge is a compelling approach to self-knowledge which takes into consideration the totality of an individual from an interesting and vivid angle. Substantial self-knowledge is the place where out intimate knowledge resides. This is where beliefs are accepted, shaped, declined or revisited. This is where the "self" constitutes food-related beliefs. In other words, it is the formation point of choices, habits, actions and practices concerning food and other matters. To explore self-knowledge and the imperfect process of everyday cognition means to explore the place where food-related beliefs occur. Hence the importance of epistemology which must go to the source and examine the power of one's cognition when dealing with food in a complex social landscape.

Another alluring viewpoint on self-knowledge gives Nenad Miščević who writes about **two kinds of self-knowledge**: the knowledge of **inner phenomenal states** (for example, "I feel headache.") and the knowledge of one's **causal and dispositional properties ("CD-properties")** (for example, "I am a hedonist") (Miščević, 2017: 103). In line with Cassam, Miščević states that the former, the knowledge of inner phenomenal states (which Cassam classifies as "trivial" self-knowledge), is one of the most revisited and debated in the mainstream analytic literature regarding self-knowledge, while the latter was at the core of traditional and tradition-inspired reflections on self-knowledge

from Old Greece to the abovementioned Foucault and Cassam. While phenomenal self-knowledge is immediate, knowledge of one's causal and dispositional properties

> "has to do with one's causal powers, active and passive. One causes things, acting in the world, and also, acting on oneself. Thus, causal-dispositional-level concerns, causally oriented active and passive dispositions of one's self, and thereby the ways of being (possibly) affected by various courses of things, and of reacting to them: *reliably true factual beliefs about causal structure in human matters*" (Miščević, 2017: 103).

Such knowledge, of a causal-dispositional sort, can be acquired from different sources, such as experience, introspection, simulation (including thought experiments), psychology and psychoanalysis, and so on (Miščević, 2017: 103). Similar to Cassam who focuses on substantial self-knowledge ("real" knowledge in the everyday sense), Miščević focuses on CD-knowledge which is relevant in Cassam's "everyday" world because, "in order to be(come) wise I have to know my motives and my habits, my ways of reacting to external events, opportunities and pressure, and about the methods that could change these ways (Miščević, 2017: 104). Essentially, I have to know myself, my inner world consisting of my beliefs, values and norms regarding food and the broader non-human world.

Miščević's example of CD self-knowledge is based on a familiar example – back pain. His subject sits in front of a computer and feels pain in the lower back which motivates him to change the position. Firstly, the feeling of pain relates to the posture, and secondly, the subject knows that the pain will go away due to the change of position. As he explains, pain-posture-modifications are part of a causal structure implicitly known to the subject and this implicit causal knowledge is a precondition for action (Miščević, 2017: 104). Going from back pain to more complex causal structures of one's "self" – "one causes things, acting in the world, and also, crucially important for wisdom and care for the Self acting on oneself" (Miščević, 2017: 110). This is very much applicable to food-related knowledge – to get familiar with this kind of self-knowledge means to explore one's beliefs and motives regarding food which generate further behavior and actions. In a way, self-knowledge is the container of our beliefs and the process of forming those beliefs is much messier and problematic, not only because our collective imaginary often consists

of damaging beliefs, but because our cognitive mechanism is complex and infected by many “bugs”. This makes it harder to estimate beliefs from the social world as truth-oriented, be they related to food or any other matter.

In order to illustrate the difference between a philosophical approach to self-knowledge and self-knowledge which concerns ordinary people in everyday life, Cassam distinguishes between **“Homo philosophicus”** and **“Homo sapiens”**. In the philosophy of self-knowledge the norm is the “Homo philosophicus” - “a model epistemic citizen” who can discover what his beliefs and other ‘propositional attitudes’, meaning desires, fears, hopes, intention, ‘as they ought rationally to be’” (Cassam, 2014: 2). As Snježana Prijić-Samaržija showed in her book and I discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the norm in epistemology is an individual epistemic agent with a pure cognition and unlimited logical ability. He/she is analyzed without his/her identity or social context taken into consideration. This ideal subject or “Homo philosophicus” is infallible in his/her reasoning and his/her belief-formation is based on rational processes. His/her self-knowledge is exhaustive and infallible because “Homo philosophicus” is resistant to self-ignorance (Cassam, 2014: 2).

For “Homo philosophicus”, the modus operandi for acquiring knowledge is the **Transparency method**, generally accepted among philosophers as a method for gaining knowledge of beliefs and attitudes, and an essential form of self-knowledge (Cassam, 2014: 3). The TM is nicely summed up by David Finkelstein in the following words:

> “The question of whether I believe that P is, for me, transparent to the question of what I ought rationally to believe – i.e. to the question of whatever the reasons require me to believe that P. I can answer the former question by answering the latter (Finkelstein in Casam, 2014: 4).

According to Cassam, many philosophers see knowledge of one’s beliefs and attitudes as direct or immediate; you know what you believe without any reasoning, that is, self-knowledge is psychologically and epistemically immediate (Cassam, 2014: 5-7). If we employ the TM, by which a belief is managed by my reasoning, that leads us to conclusion that self-knowledge is psychologically and epistemically inferential, rather than

immediate (Cassam, 2014: 6). What if I believe that P even if I recognize to own the reasons which do not require me to believe that P? For Cassam, humans are not model epistemic citizens: beliefs and attitudes are often not guided by reason and there are practical difficulties which stand in the way of average humans in relation to self-knowledge (Cassam, 2014: 7). A common spider can endanger the TM, as Cassam demonstrates with his example. Knowing that you have no reason to fear spiders does not affect the fact that you are scared of spiders, which shows that the TM cannot be sustainable for this part of self-knowledge (Cassam, 2014: 8). So, when talking about sources of self-knowledge for humans, Cassam claims that the TM, a reliable and not an infallible method, is a generally accepted method of self-knowledge (Cassam, 2014: 8-10).

Average humans are far from the "Homo philosophicus" who is perfectly guided by his/her reason in the process of belief-formation. If you are a "Homo philosophicus", your "reasoning is critical, your attitudes are as they rationally ought to be, whatever that turns out to mean, and your self-knowledge is infallible and exhaustive; you are immune to self-ignorance" (Cassam, 2014: 14). An average "Homo sapiens" is far from this norm. Cassam states that reasoning in a "Homo sapiens", as opposed to a "Homo philosophicus", is not always critical. "Critical reasoning" embodies a reasoning "that is guided by an appreciation, use, and assessment of reasons and reasoning as such" (Cassam, 2014: 15). Cassam distinguishes between the "fast thinking system 1" and the "slow thinking system 2", where system 1:

- "operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort, and no sense of voluntary control;
- generates impressions, feelings, and inclinations which, when endorsed by System 2 become beliefs, attitudes, and intentions;
- is biased to believe and confirm;
- focuses on existing evidence and ignores absent evidence;
- generates a limited set of basic assessments.

In contrast, System 2:

- has beliefs, makes choices, and decides what to think about and what to do;
- allocates attention to effortful mental activities;
- is associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration;
- constructs thoughts in an orderly series of steps (Cassam, 2014: 15).

System 1 is fast but lazy, System 2 is slow but deliberate, orderly and effortful." (Cassam, 2014: 16). As opposed to "Homo philosophicus" who operates only within System 2, "Homo sapiens" operates within both systems, and "most of us are too busy, lazy, or contended to do much critical reasoning" (Cassam, 2014: 17). "Homo sapiens", or "ordinary people", is imperfect in his/her reasoning and has a lot of "bugs" in his limited and imperfect cognition. Laziness, prejudices, stereotypes, recklessness… "Homo sapiens" does not rely so much on evidence. These all are cognitive limitations which take place in the head of every "Homo sapiens" (Cassam, 2014: 16-17).

In everyday life, an average epistemic subject's cognition is thus far from perfect. Moreover, we are rooted in a social fabric saturated with disinformation, prejudices, stereotypes, as well as different cultural symbols and images in all domains, including food. In this context, we must estimate social beliefs as truth-oriented and must form our beliefs that will become the basis for our attitudes and actions. In this process our cognition is sub-optimal. This is why ecological epistemology is a necessary tool for grasping the complex and multidimensional issue of food – we must go back to the source where food-related beliefs are generated, taking into consideration the complex social imaginary and our imperfect cognition. "Self-knowledge" is the point where "social" meets "individual" in relation to food, the place where beliefs are given rise to on individual and collective levels and where the power of one's cognition must be examined.

Cassam outlines another differentiation between "Homo philosophicus" and "Homo sapiens" – it is a **"bias to believe"**; that is, a person's belief-formation is often influenced by non-rational factors, including bias to believe which results in people believing peculiar stuff (Cassam, 2014: 18-20). For example, 42% of Americans believe in ghosts while only 45% believe in Darwin's theory of evolution (Cassam, 2014: 19). People believe in

supernatural creatures, in conspiracy theories, have wishful thinking and are influenced by any non-rational factors which part ways with “Homo philosophicus’” reasoning.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of **“belief-perseverance”** is a common practice present in situations where beliefs and attitudes are discredited by a particular evidence but nevertheless survive (Cassam, 2014: 20). This failure in monitoring justification relations and the basis for one’s beliefs is a form of epistemic malpractice. Mary is good at swimming and she has taken a medical examination whose bad results showed that she is not fit for competitive sports. Mary takes these results seriously although her results in competitions do not correlate with the results of the test. After some time, Mary receives a letter stating that there was an error in data analysis and that those were not her results, but she nevertheless keeps believing that she is not apt for competitive swimming. “Homo philosophicus” would change his/her mind on the basis of wrong results, but “Homo sapiens” sometimes fails to revisit attitudes. In other words, humans are sometimes flawed in their interpretation of evidence (Cassam, 2014: 20).

Fourth important distinction between “Homo philosophicus” and “Homo sapiens” refers to **self-ignorance**. Mary continues to believe that she is not fit for swimming even though that belief was discredited. She does not know why she continues to believe that and this is a form of **self-ignorance**. “Homo sapiens” is to some extent self-ignorant (Cassam, 2014: 21). Besides self-ignorance, what often stands in the way of reasoning is **belief-recalcitrance.** It constitutes phenomena in which a person knows that he/she has no good reason to maintain a particular attitude but nevertheless cultivates that attitude. Cassam claims that people in general simply find it difficult to change beliefs: changing a belief is hard as changing a bad habit (Cassam, 2014: 21). In essence, our cognitive system is often not guided purely by reason; there is always a possibility of error and ignorance.

These phenomena, outlined by Cassam, pose serious challenges for the TM. “Homo sapiens” is far from perfect in his cognition in contrast to “Homo philosophicus” whose cognition is based on strong reason. All these features of “Homo philosophicus”, that is, features of average people guided by their imperfect cognitive apparatus in

everyday life, also apply to food-related beliefs. Our beliefs regarding food impact our actions, habits and behavior concerning food choices – what we eat, what we buy, who we support with our purchase, how we handle our waste…. Millions of our food-related beliefs guide our actions which leave material imprint in the world. And this process is, as Cassam outlines, messy and imperfect.

Cassam is interested in substantial self-knowledge focused on one's character, values, abilities, aptitudes and emotions – things different from those usually in philosophical focus. Perhaps those are not such complex and sophisticated questions, but real-life, everyday issues that most "Homo sapiens" confront. What makes a person happy, does that person know if he/she is kind and not a racist? Those are examples of questions about substantial self-knowledge which is focused on mundane questions concerning our everyday thoughts and existence. To emphasize what he understands as substantial self-knowledge, Cassam states a number of examples.

- Knowledge of one's character/knowing that you are a kind person;
- Knowledge of one's values/knowing that you are not a nationalist;
- Knowledge of one's abilities/knowing that you can speak Italian;
- Knowledge of one's aptitudes/knowing that you are a good stonemason;
- Knowledge of one's attitudes toward "knowing why" rather than toward "knowing what"/knowing why you believe that wearing a mask on your face that does not cover your nose is inefficient;
- Knowledge of one's emotions/knowing that you are angry;
- Knowledge of what makes one happy/knowing your hobby and knowing that you can make a business out of it (Cassam, 2014: 29).

Can we relate one's knowledge about one's character, values, abilities and emotions with food – what are one's values and emotions about the non-human world, animals and the overall environment? How do we stand in relation to sustainability, pollution, waste and use of plastic bags or treatment of animals in the conventional meat production process? Those are all questions about one's self-knowledge in which one's

“self”, conditioned by the imperfect cognitive apparatus, constitutes beliefs and values related to food in complex social surroundings.

The difference between “substantial” and “trivial” knowledge is not clear cut but is a matter of degree and some cases of self-knowledge are more “substantial” than others. Cassam beautifully delineates the scope and most important characteristics of substantial self-knowledge which contains knowledge of one’s own character values, abilities and emotions.

1. **The Fallibility Condition:** in the domain of substantial knowledge, there is always a possibility, not just for a theoretical but for a true error due to the fact that humans are in general likely to think good of themselves although evidence might reveal a different situation (for example, despite your thinking that you are a patient person, your best friend can testify differently).

2. **The Obstacle Condition:** Repression, self-deception, bias and embarrassment are some of the obstacles in obtaining substantial self-knowledge; it can be hard and shameful to admit to myself to have particular faults (for example, that I am stingy when I have to buy my friend a beer after he has bought me a drink several times already).

3. **The Self-Conception Condition:** substantial self-knowledge intersects with person’s self-conception. To know that I am stingy as a character, I must believe that I am stingy, and that can be hard to believe because it is inconsistent with my self-conception that I am generous person. To know that I have a particular characteristic, I must believe that I have it, which is a problem if that belief is in clash with my self-conception.

4. **The Challenge Condition:** substantial self-knowledge can be challenged. For example, if I decide to color my hair in blonde, I must be prepared for a question “why”, and my reasons can be criticized or even corrected.

5. **The Corrigibility Condition:** substantial self-knowledge is corrigible because we are not inevitably authoritative about a certain issue (for example, my husband may have a deeper understanding of my character than I have).

6. **The Non-Transparency Condition:** substantial self-knowledge cannot be obtained by the TM (for example, I cannot determine if I am happy with my new job by determining rationally if I ought to be happy with it. Maybe I should, but I am not).

7. **The Evidence Condition:** substantial self-knowledge is based on evidence (for example, if the question is "Am I a nationalist?", my thoughts about and treatment of different minorities and immigrants crossing the border will answer that question).

8. **The Cognitive Effort Condition:** substantial self-knowledge demands a certain amount of cognitive effort (for example, if I do not know my character traits and aptitudes, I should reflect on them by taking other people's opinion as a reference point).

9. **The Indirectness Condition:** substantial self-knowledge is not psychologically direct because it demands reasoning or inference, nor is it epistemically immediate because it relies on having justification for believing other, supporting propositions. I cannot know that I am kind if I am not justified in believing the supporting propositions about my actions. To know that I am a kind person, it is not enough for me to act as a nice person, I also must believe and be justified in believing that I act as a nice person.

10. **The Value Condition:** substantial self-knowledge matters in a practical and even moral sense. If I plan to finish my studies in Finland, it is important to know that I can speak Finnish. Being stingy is a bad character trait but it is morally worse if it is conjoined with the belief that one is generous which makes it an example of self-ignorance and moral defect (Cassam, 2014: 30-32).

Intellectual laziness, prejudices, recklessness, reluctance to change obviously false beliefs, strong influence of non-rational factors in the process of forming beliefs - average human cognition, filled with all sorts of cognitive "bugs", is quite fascinating to me. In regard to food consumption, maybe the most fascinating and common characteristic of "Homo sapiens" is "akrasia", a concept originating from ancient Greek philosophy which refers to the weakness of will or lack of control manifesting when one knows what he/she should do (for example, lose some weight, eat more vegetables and

exercise because of high cholesterol, but one simply cannot force himself/herself to do so). This is a typically “Homo sapiens” pattern. Of course, it is necessary to examine the mechanism of cognition of an ideally rational subject in order to postulate the principles of human cognition, but it seems equally interesting to understand our epistemic vices that trouble us in everyday life. Not only are we rooted in socially demanding surroundings filled with impaired beliefs, but our cognitive “apparatus” is far from perfect. Moreover, I see emotions as a strong element affecting our cognition which I will touch upon in later parts of the thesis.

It is very appealing how Cassam outlines our human cognition which is far from perfect and the functioning of the epistemic subject when he/she enters the arena of everyday life saturated with misinformation, false beliefs, damaging and oppressive norms and values, prejudices and stereotypes. That kind of imperfect cognition is the cognition of the epistemic subject who can be more or less intelligent (but probably thinks to be smarter than others), certainly not immune to self-ignorance and sometimes epistemically lazy; he/she has prejudices and stereotypes while believing to be open-minded and progressive in attitudes (this is a real obstacle in self-reflection), but will listen to his/her closest friends’ feedback; he/she is sometimes impatient and although usually calm, sometimes gets completely misguided by emotions and loses temper. We are dealing with this kind of epistemic subject – an average human being with virtues, vices and everyday “bugs” and imperfections operating daily in a complex social world where he/she must generate many different beliefs and decisions which frame actions and behaviors regarding all spheres of life, including food.

3.2. The social aspect of self-knowledge

As I have shown in former chapters, the second half of the 20th century pushed epistemology towards the social sphere and social environment was taken into consideration in the analysis of epistemic subjects. What are the sources of this specific kind of knowledge and the implications arising with it? According to Cassam, there is no singular source of substantial self-knowledge. One can know his/her character in a different way than knowing his/her abilities, but **testimony, inference and reflection** still

constitute **sources** of acquiring different kinds of substantial self-knowledge (Cassam, 2014: 36).

Testimony is an inherently social way of learning. As Lorraine Code beautifully articulated, it refers to the "elaborated sense of learning from other people; from the cultural wisdom embedded in everyday language; and from books, media, conversation, journals, and standard academic and secular sources of information" (Code, 2000: 186). Not only do I learn from others, but I will have a finer understanding of myself if I take people who know me well and their outlook on me as a relevant reference point. This is a crucial point – one needs an external perspective in shaping his/her understanding of himself/herself and the world around. I shall focus more on Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's views on testimony in the second part of the thesis because testimony and the accompanying problem of trust are essential questions regarding the epistemic subject and his/her food-related beliefs.

This bond between **the self and the collective** seems to be especially important here. As Seyla Benhabib showed with her concept of "Concrete Other", every self, every rational being as an individual, is shaped by personal history, identity and emotional mosaic (Benhabib, 1987: 87). In her **relational-interactive theory**, self bears the **"history of the self"**, as well as the **"history of the collective"** (Benhabib, 1987: 94). We all affect each other. Going one step further, Catriona Mackenzie indicates that people are not just constituted among others, but people transform themselves in "intimate and nonintimate relations with other people" (Mackenzie, 2000: 139). This creates space for growth and change. Namely, "self" exists in several social spheres and there are intimate interpersonal relations including family, love and friendship. There are also nonintimate social relations such as work, various hobbies, art, sport, different clubs or groups based on ethnic or communal identity, as well as political identity and activity (Mackenzie, 2000: 139-142). As Mackenzie argues, people become persons and live in concrete "social, cultural, and historical communities", that is, "our sense of our lives as temporal, our points of view, our self-conceptions, and our values, are therefore shaped by these relationships and these communities" (Mackenzie, 2000: 139). As an introvert and a worshiper of

silence, I have learned through these theoretical insights that we are much more social creatures than I ever thought.

As DeNicola reminds us:

> "we are not solo knowers; we are members of an *epistemic community*. An epistemic community is a network of interactive, cognizing communicators; that is, of individuals who may seek, posses, forget, communicate, share, and conceal or protect information, knowledge, and ignorance. (…) more formal communities have shared procedures for inquiry, standards for warranting beliefs, and domains of confidentiality. Such a community contains many epistemic roles, including: learner, instructor, researcher, discoverer, witness, testifier, expert, judge, critic, confidante, liar, whistle-blower, and so on. Epistemic communities overlap and nest within each other, and all of us are active in many, from the largest and most general to small and narrowly specialized ones. Science constitutes such a community, as do families, neighborhoods, belief-based religious groups, professions, corporations, legislative bodies, individual professionals and their clients/customers, academic disciplines, and so many others" (DeNicola, 2018: 58).

So much is happening in the social sphere. With that in mind, , the "self" and self-knowledge can be grasped as an isolated process and analyzed from within to establish its mechanisms and principles. However, it seems that in order to fully understand one's self-knowledge, social bonds and influences should not be ignored because they influence and shape it. Linda Barclay claims that "the self is essentially social", it cannot be grasped without considering interdependence or "immersion in networks of relationships forms [their] desires, aspirations, indeed [their] very identities" (Barclay, 2000: 52).

Social dimension opens the question of **autonomy** which Barclay approaches by highlighting the connection between self-knowledge and one's culture and family, as well as other social influences on one's aims, aspirations and values (Barclay, 2000: 55). **Values** are constitutive of one's identity because they represent a reference point which enables one to critically evaluate desires and preferences (Barclay, 2000: 65). Barclay claims that values are socially influenced and usually "socially shared by parents, peers and culture" (Barclay, 2000: 63). She offers the following example. Imagine a man or a woman who realizes that he or she desires a person of the same sex. He or she reflects on those desires and finds them wrong and disgusting. Critical reflection of these desires

is based on values which are derived from and shared with the community which perceives a heterosexual family as a norm and all other possibilities as deviation from the norm, so he or she who is attracted to a same sex person represses his or her desires and undoubtedly becomes a terribly hurt person (Barclay, 2000: 65). This is a clear example of how the social domain with its norms and values influences and shapes one's self-knowledge leaving epistemic scars.

Critical reflection comes to light here. As Kim Atkins claims, "**critical reflection** is not given, it is mediated through interpersonal and social relations" (Atkins, 2005: 87). In other words, our "inside perspective" is not inherently "given" or "neutral", but is socially molded. Therefore, it can be argued that self-knowledge is severely shaped by the cultural landscape. DeNicola notes that beliefs and personal values are usually not chosen: "they are 'inherited' from parents, and 'caught' from peers, acquired inadvertently, inculcated by institutions and authorities, or assumed from hearsay" (DeNicola, 2018: 99). He sees the bigger problem in "the reflective maintaining of such beliefs along with the refusal to disbelieve or discard them" (DeNicola, 2018: 99). This opens doors for self-reflection and epistemic change.

Additionally, as DeNicola claims, there are irresponsible beliefs, or beliefs gained and maintained in an epistemically irresponsible way. One may ignore evidence, accept gossip, rumors and testimony from vague sources, disregard incoherence with more embedded beliefs or show cognitive bias – those are cases of "doxastic dereliction" (DeNicola, 2018: 99). This goes in line with Mackenzie who sees self-knowledge as essential to **self-definition** and accomplished through social relations (Mackenzie, 2000: 139). On the one hand, Mackenzie refers to self-definition as "the process of formation of a person's *self-conception* as a process whereby, through reflection guided by her values, ideas, commitments, and cares, a person constitutes certain elements of herself, or certain features of her point of view, as external to herself while appropriating other" (Mackenzie, 2000: 133). On the other hand, she defines **self-knowledge** as "involving which aspects of one's point of view – which desires, characteristics, traits, and so on – one defines with; knowing what one values and cares about; and knowing how one feels and what one wants" (Mackenzie, 2000: 140). If self-definition denotes how I identify

myself and self-knowledge represents my understanding of myself, one can claim that self-knowledge is the basis for self-definition.

Mackenzie views the process of self-definition as a **process of negotiation** between three related parts of the person: her point of view; her self-conception; and her values, ideals, commitments and cares, things which are important to that person (Mackenzie, 2000: 133). Self-definition is not fixed and concluded but is open and ongoing or, as Diana Meyers maintains, "an open-ended process of reflection, reconsideration, revision, and refinement, and self-portraits as best viewed as works in progress" (Meyers, 2000: 168). Hence the importance of **self-reflection** and of questioning the dominant norms and values. How we position ourselves in regard to food, environment or any given issue, depends on our own beliefs and norms – that is, on our self-knowledge. Therefore, the significance of self-knowledge and self-reflection is immense.

In order to tackle the process of reflection and change, one must be receptive, willing to rewrite oneself and one's own beliefs. Precisely here lies the importance of epistemic virtues such as curiosity, open-mindedness or receptiveness which refers to willingness to consider new beliefs. Furthermore, the endeavor of critical reflection has a social dimension, as Catriona Mackenzie claims, arguing that self-definition is not an essentially introspective activity, but also connected with **social recognition** (Mackenzie, 2000: 125). She contends that it is important to understand the social dimension of self-understanding in order to comprehend the connection between "imaginative projects of individuals and the cultural imaginary", especially in **oppressive social contexts** (Mackenzie, 2000: 125). Socialization as a process shapes the process of formation of "our beliefs, desires, patterns of emotional interaction, and self-conception" (Mackenzie, 2000: 144). Socially forced and uncritically accepted values influence one's autonomy (Mackenzie, 2000: 65). How do these shared values influence the "self" when they are impaired and product of **oppressive ideology**? How is self-conception connected with oppressive ideology, values and the norms it imposes? This is an interesting question in which the social and the individual as well as the political and epistemic meet. It is likewise applicable in the context of food – what is the connection between an oppressive social ideology and one's food-related beliefs?

3.3. Conclusion

Self-knowledge deals with a particular kind of knowledge, knowledge of one's sensations, beliefs, feeling and mental states. Self-knowledge can be regarded as "inside" knowledge or knowledge about the "real" you. Cassam distinguishes between "trivial" and "substantial" self-knowledge. On the one hand, trivial self-knowledge is focused on one's beliefs, desires or particular mental states – knowledge of inner phenomenal states. This kind of knowledge is usually immediate and transparent. On the other hand, substantial self-knowledge is focused on the "raw" material inside – the "true" self" which deals with, as Ursula Renz calls it, "epistemic intimacy". In other words, knowledge concerning one's character, values, emotions, desires, etc. There is no clear cut between these two kinds of knowledge, it is a matter of degree according to Cassam. In my view, the characteristics of trivial self-knowledge are transparency and immediacy – attributes which are hardly related to substantial self-knowledge and, in that regard, Cassam's classification of "trivial" and "substantial" self-knowledge appears fair. Undoubtedly, every "self" consists of a particular self-knowledge which is not so clear, transparent or rational as "trivial" self-knowledge.

Parallel to these two sorts of self-knowledge, there are two types of cognitive mechanisms. Cassam differentiates between "Homo philosophicus" with his/her impeccable cognition and logical ability and "Homo sapiens" who resembles an average human being. Cassam's "Homo philosophicus" corresponds to Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's vision of the main figure of traditional epistemology who was deprived of any social context and his/her acquisition of knowledge would occur in idealized circumstances. Contemporarily, social/applied epistemology opened the gate for the "situated" knower who comes with his/her socially situated beliefs and this kind of epistemic subject is identified as the bearer of particular socio-political identity. The "situated" knower corresponds to Cassam's "Homo sapiens", an average person with imperfect cognition. "Homo sapiens", contrary to "Homo philosophicus", is not immune to self-ignorance, but limited and imperfect in his/her reasoning. Subsequently, his/her reasoning is characterized by a number of "bugs" such as laziness, prejudices, biases, belief-recalcitrance, self-ignorance, etc. While it is undoubtedly necessary to delineate

the mechanism of human cognition and the only possible way to do it is on the ideally rational subject, “Homo philosophicus” and his role is undisputable. He/she exists since the dawn of philosophy and thanks to him/her, the discipline has developed into what it is today. However, after establishing those mechanisms, I find it useful to open space for understanding average people, Cassam’s “Homo sapiens”, who are far from being epistemically perfect knowers but burdened with “epistemic bugs”.

Social epistemology can help us understand ourselves and our cognitive system and train it in order to achieve a higher quality of cognition in everyday life, while keeping in mind the sub-idealness of our cognition and susceptibility to different social beliefs. With our imperfect cognitive apparatus, we must daily estimate a number of different beliefs, select which ones to accept as truth-oriented and embed into our own belief-system, shape, re-evaluate or change our own beliefs and continue to act on them – matters regarding food included.

One can conclude that there are two approaches to self-knowledge – analytic and constructivist. On the one hand, the analytic approach is a traditional approach addressing the process of acquisition of self-knowledge. The focal point is immediate self-knowledge or, in Cassam words, “trivial” self-knowledge. How do I know that I am wearing red socks? How do I know that it is raining outside? On the other hand, the constructivist approach to self-knowledge is not focused on immediate and transparent knowledge. Cassam’s “substantial” self-knowledge is interweaved with social aspects because that kind of knowledge involves a different kind of self-knowledge. While the analytic approach with trivial self-knowledge focuses on immediate knowledge, the constructivist approach with substantial self-knowledge has different elements that are not a matter of direct self-knowledge which is characterized by transparency and immediacy. Issues like one’s values, emotions, histories, desires, character, aims, aspirations or capacities do not share common ground with direct, transparent self-knowledge. Moreover, in order to analyze those aspects of one’s self-knowledge, one should take social aspects and influences into consideration, merely because my values or norms, as an integral part of my self-knowledge, are socially determined. Conversely, in order to know that I know that

I am wearing red socks, the impact of the social is not crucial. I believe we are speaking about different segments of self-knowledge which require different perspectives.

Furthermore, those two approaches do not coincide but could rather be taken as complementary. The analytic approach is centered on direct self-knowledge and more on the process of cognition “per se” which takes part in ideal circumstances. As I see it, this approach is more atomistic. The constructivist approach is focused more on the broader, holistic picture and assumes a messy reality, imperfect subjects and the complex social context. While both approaches bear their own characteristics and usefulness, my interest lies in substantial self-knowledge which is interwoven with social impacts. What comes into my focus from this perspective is the socially situated subject with a particular identity and an imperfect cognitive apparatus (which is the legacy of shifts in epistemology discussed in the first chapter).

The traditional epistemic subject can be analyzed as an asocial being without any identity. That seems reasonable if one wishes to understand the mere process of cognition. However, to fully comprehend the acquisition of knowledge, it seems inevitable to contextualize that process and to lower it to real-life situations and contexts. One acquires self-knowledge via testimony, inference and reflection, as Cassam claims. Testimony does not refer just to direct but to all sources of communication, including books, media, journals, social media and popular culture. One is always astonished how American popular culture shapes minds, beliefs, norms and knowledge, taste and aesthetics of children around the world. With its movies, music, magazines, comics, books and MTV, it sculpts mindsets and constitutes a strong unifying force leaving a profound impact on one’s self-knowledge. As Seyla Benhabib argues through her “relational-interactive theory”, “history of the self” is at the same time “history of the community”. One’s point of view, self-conceptions, values and understandings cannot be distinguished from the social landscape. Culture, family, community, different social influences, personal and non-personal connections influence one’s self-knowledge with its dominant ideas. Self-knowledge and critical reflection are thus not given but negotiated through different social relations. In Foucauldian sense, there is no introspection because introspection and subjectivity are discursively produced. Therefore, one can ask: What are the conditions

for formation of one's beliefs and values? What is the role of dominant ideology in this process? This leads us back to questions of critical reflection and autonomy. Referring to W.K. Clifford's quote, "No one man's belief is in any case a private matter which concerns him alone", DeNicola argues that "beliefs guide motives, choices, and actions" (DeNicola, 2018: 100). Everything should be questioned at all times.

Food-related beliefs are formed in a harsh social environment. Alongside other beliefs, they constitute one's self-knowledge. As I have tried to demonstrate, the social world immensely influences shaping of the "self" and one's self-knowledge. Questions about Cassam's substantial self-knowledge are more ambiguous than questions about trivial self-knowledge characterized by transparency and immediacy. Brie Gertler legitimately asks: "How reliable are our judgments about our character traits? What are the special obstacles to substantial self-knowledge?". She calls for rethinking of boundaries, both intra-disciplinary (which separate epistemology from ethics) and inter-disciplinary (which separate philosophy from psychology and other disciplines) (Gertler, n.d.: 11). This reasoning opens social epistemology to new directions where we could expand our understandings and improve cognition of an average "Homo sapiens" who, among other things, must eat and make innumerable food choices daily, consciously or not, leaving his/her material imprint in the world.

4. VALUE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EPISTEMIC VIRTUES

While reading Kim Atkins' commentary on Seyla Benhabib's work in "Self and Subjectivity", at one point she writes the following:

> "… a subject, entirely abstracted from any ties to person, place, object, beliefs, desires, or abilities, cannot be a human subject" (Atkins, 2005: 279).

This sentence resonated in my head for a long time. I could not escape thinking – what makes us humans? What makes us exactly who we are? And what is the value of knowing "who" one is? In my view, self-knowledge is knowledge about oneself. To be aware of one's values, character traits or attitudes. To be conscious of virtues one has or does not have but would like to possess. To be aware of epistemic vices such as recklessness. Or wanting to become familiar with the complex emotional landscape within oneself. Histories, emotions, desires, attitudes, aspirations and capacities – all that is hidden in one's own self-knowledge unconnected with our immediate knowledge about ourselves. It also represents potentially not such a pleasant scope of feelings, memories or attitudes. To me, self-knowledge constitutes a lifelong quest for self-definition, self-reflection, owning and dealing with what is "inside". It refers to an infinite insight into who one is and who one wants to be with the goal to live a fulfilling and satisfying life. It accounts for the intricate "inner" world transpiring within every individual.

I consider apprehension and cultivation of virtues to be a prerequisite for self-knowledge as a remedy for epistemic and broader social injustice. Curiosity, as a condition for self-knowledge and self-reflection, leads towards the improvement of the cognitive mechanism and generation of more truth-oriented and just beliefs. Each change of widely accepted beliefs, norms and values begins on individual level. I would insist that curiosity as an epistemic virtue is a vessel for a more just society. Translated into the realm of food, cultivation of virtues brings one toward an enhanced selection of food-related beliefs which make a base for one's actions and choices and improved overall understanding of the non-human world affected by food production/consumption.

4.1 The value of self-knowledge

Is there any value in what Cassam calls “substantial” self-knowledge? He sees no deeper value in this kind of self-knowledge, the value is to a great extent practical - he calls this the **“low road” account** (Cassam, 2014: 12). It is a **practical** thing to know your desires or attitudes. Value of this kind of self-knowledge is derived from practical consequences that follow after. Self-knowledge is then valuable because it contributes to one’s well-being or as Cassam puts it: “having self-knowledge makes one’s life go better then not having it” (Cassam, 2015: 1). He is suspicious of abstract ideals such as unity or authenticity which are often associated with “self” or “life” and maintains that there is no reason why life low on substantial knowledge cannot be genuine. Self-knowledge is a cognitive achievement (Cassam, 2015: 6).

Cassam gives an example of a person who hates giving public talks. Refraining from giving talks will eliminate one’s source of unhappiness in life. He asks: “Why must you *know* what makes you happy in order for you to avoid what makes you unhappy?” (Cassam, 2015: 7). He argues that knowing that public talks make you unhappy is an intellectual achievement that calls upon a specific reflection on the sources of one’s unhappiness (Cassam, 2015: 7). Essentially, Cassam does not go to into high and abstract notions of human existence, but rather claims that “self-knowledge is valuable because it promotes well-being” (Cassam, 2015: 8). Self-knowledge should be given attention to not for its own sake but because it helps us live a certain kind of life and enables us to take care of ourselves (Cassam, 2015: 9). To avoid what makes one miserable and to strive towards what makes one content is a great accomplishment which surely enables one to live a more satisfactory life. Applied in the domain of food, one’s practical value of self-knowledge would consist in knowing that one is, for example, allergic to seafood or not fond of green vegetables. It is nothing abstract or grand, just awareness about practical food-related issues.

In terms of value, Cassam outlines two components: knowledge of what you believe and desire and knowledge of how you act. For example, knowing that you honestly believe that all people are equal, irrespective of nationality or similar features, has

characteristics of substantial self-knowledge because this belief does not depend solely on what one says but on behavior, implied assumptions and emotional reactions. This belief can be challenged by concrete evidence. For instance, Mary can believe that she is a kind and empathic person, then suddenly reveals her true attitude towards immigrants when they approach the national border which demonstrate quite the contrary, that she is very much a racist and a bigot (Cassam, 2014: 33). Knowledge of how one really acts gives value to one's self-knowledge. Besides a practical, Cassam identifies a moral value, and there being a possible combination of the two. The moral dimension of value is detectable since some forms of self-ignorance can be seen as moral defects (for example, being aggressive and rude is a bad trait, but it is morally worse if it is entangled with the belief that one is actually kind and patient) (Cassam, 2014: 32).

While Cassam very much straightforwardly claims that the value of self-knowledge is to a great degree practical, Miščević observes "substantial" self-knowledge through **extrinsic and intrinsic lenses**. To him, **practical extrinsic (instrumental) value** consists in the "causal circle of being affected and reacting properly" which is essential for survival and it "might be the biological point of simple CD self-attached knowledge" (Miščević, 2017: 110). Take, for example, the following claims: "I get vertigo when I climb stairs" or "I get hiccups when I drink carbonated beverages". According to Miščević, these statements can be seen as biological "loci" of elementary CD self-knowledge bound up to "simple bodily self-awareness" (Miščević, 2017: 110). This extrinsic importance relates to one's habits, characters, histories, needs and wishes and goes in line with Cassam's practical views about self-knowledge.

Furthermore, as Miščević argues, advanced CD self-knowledge is presumed to offer "modally rich and flexible view of myself" and due to the fact that the causal structure of one's self is fundamental on the CD level, (one causes and acts upon things), CD knowledge contains dispositions of one's self, as well as means of being affected by different lines of things and/or events and reactions to them (Miščević, 2017: 110). Therefore, CD knowledge bears a far-reaching spectrum of practical applications, "from survival to small needs and pleasures"; its value lies in what Miščević calls **"self-critical perspective"** which is essential for ethics, human happiness and prosperity (Miščević,

2017: 111). This brings us back to Diana Meyers and her powerful claim according to which **self-definition** is an endless process of "reflection, reconsideration, revision, and refinement" (Meyers, 2000: 168). On that line, Miščević writes: "The point of it all might be the care of the self, finding and realizing the most meaningful kind of life for myself" (Miščević, 2017: 111). Is not this the point: to know myself better in order to live a purposeful and accomplished life? This seems to be congruous with Cassam's idea that substantial self-knowledge is valuable because it promotes one's well-being in general.

This leads us to Miščević's notions on **intrinsic value** of CD self-knowledge which he sees in the example of **self-inquisitiveness** or, more specifically, the lack thereof (Miščević, 2017: 111). Self-inquisitiveness explains our inner world. "Jane, why did you volunteer?' 'God knows, I just feel like doing it!' And that is it" (Miščević, 2017: 111). Would one not want to know oneself? One's emotions, motives, desires or aims? Miščević maintains that the negative value of self-blindness and self-disinterest make one's inner world poor. This gives CD self-knowledge intrinsic value. Self-blindness and categorical apathy regarding one's own character is, at the very least, an unusual feature (Miščević, 2017: 111). It is not so often the case that one meets a person who does not know anything about himself/herself.

Applied to a food system, it refers to deeper motives, values, norms and emotions accompanied by specific behaviors, habits and lifestyles. When it comes to food-related values, norms and beliefs, one can surpass the practical level of pure survival contained in knowing what food causes allergies or physical discomfort. "I do not eat animal produces because I do not find it ethical." "I eat less meat because cultivation of animals produces high amounts of CO2." "I do not use plastic bags because I want less plastic in the sea." "I buy locally produced food because I support local producers." All these sorts of beliefs attest to deep self-reflection and development of various values and norms of self-knowledge regarding food production/consumption with practical and material consequences.

In Miščević's opinion, extrinsic (instrumental) value of CD self-knowledge has far-reaching consequences, from practical application and survival to more abstract notions

of human wisdom and fulfillment. To Cassam, the value of substantial self-knowledge is purely practical or, as he calls it, “low-road” value. Both authors associate it with the quality of life. From my point of view, on a personal level self-knowledge carries immeasurable value because one knows and constitutes oneself through self-knowledge, while at the same time, acts upon it in the world. Echoing Diana Meyer’s words, reflection, reconsideration, revision and refinement of oneself. Self-knowledge relies on epistemic virtues. I consider sensitivity towards epistemic virtues such as curiosity a precondition for self-knowledge which is key for alleviating epistemic and broader social injustice. It can sound utopian, but every collective change begins with individual self-reflection and change of beliefs which prompts further action. Every person is part of an epistemic community, and he/she can either contribute to perpetuation of flawed beliefs which cause epistemic and other kinds of injustice or can generate better, different, more just beliefs and values. Every “self” is a member of an epistemic community and can hence make a difference. Naturally, there are places of immense power such as corporations, national and supranational governments or organizations, or mass media companies, but it is nevertheless important not to underestimate the power and responsibility which every individual bears in his/her epistemic community. Self-knowledge is related to individual and collective life and I regard it a panacea for rooting out epistemic and broader social injustice.

4.2. Epistemic virtues and vices

> “To be curious is to care about what lies beyond the boundary of our knowing” (DeNicola, 2018: 119).

In relation to the value of CD self-knowledge, Miščević argues the following:

> “In order to live wisely, one has to fulfill a first-level and a second-level condition: on the first level to have **correct action-guiding preferences**, and on the second level a **coherent reflective mechanism** that balances moral, prudential and meaningful life-related consideration, can take control if needed, and gives the agent a coherent reflective perspective of one-self and one’s situation. We simply do normally enjoy some amount of **self-curiosity**: self-insight is cherished by people, no matter how difficult it is to achieve.” (Miščević, 2017: 117).

In essence, **self-inquisitiveness** can be seen as playing the main role in intrinsic epistemic value. Namely, self-knowledge cannot be understood without curiosity and interest about the "self" and one's inner psychological world. Miščević continues:

> "Epistemologists talk about epistemic virtues in two senses; some describe crucial cognitive abilities as virtues, others concentrate on epistemically (and often morally) positive character traits. Self-knowledge needs both kinds. On the one hand, we need ability-virtues to reach it; on the other we need positive curiosity. Let me call it 'self-inquisitiveness'. Epistemic apathy or sloth about oneself would be the opposite of it. Self-inquisitiveness is an epistemic virtue of the character-related type, tied to the value of self-knowledge" (Miščević, 2017: 117).

It seems that virtues are in direct relation with self-knowledge (as the Socratic tradition has been claiming for millennia). **Self-inquisitiveness** as a virtue refers to one's curiosity towards one's inner world of beliefs, thoughts, character traits, habits, values, desires or attitudes. Food-related beliefs abide in this "inner world". Curiosity is a ticket to Cassam's substantial self-knowledge. To know myself, I first have to be self-aware and curious to know my inner world consisting of my thoughts and traits which result in my aims and aspirations and everyday habits and behavior. I view curiosity as a fundamental human virtue which represents a path to self-knowledge and further self-reflection, while opening space for a critical address of individual and collective beliefs on the individual and collective level. The importance of self-inquisitiveness in the area of self-knowledge points us back to Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's value turn.

As I outlined in the first chapter, there was a shift from the truth-value of propositions towards the epistemic virtue of the epistemic subject and this opened doors for analysis of epistemic properties of an individual, Cassam's ordinary "Homo sapiens" as opposed to the ideally rational "Homo philosophicus". This turn towards the epistemic traits of an individual subject who is far from perfect reasoning gives us a chance to explore one's world of cognition replete with imperfection, bias, curiosity, impaired beliefs and prejudices. As Prijić-Samaržija claims, the key feature of virtue epistemology is its attention to the epistemic agent and his/her cognitive and intellectual character with the objective to promote intellectual prosperity and well-being (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 53).

This attention to cognitive and intellectual traits of the subject refers directly to one's intellectual virtues and vices. Turning towards epistemic virtues and their cultivation is a conscious and deliberate act – a choice. One has the possibility to curiously inspect the inner world consisting of all kinds of beliefs in order to grasp his/her attitudes towards food, the broader non-human world or any other matter.

According to Prijić-Samaržija, virtue epistemology can be understood as an effective framework in questioning the "self" and self-knowledge due to the fact that epistemic evaluation does not have to be restricted to truth or justification of a particular proposition, but can be broaden to the evaluation of the epistemic subject and his/her cognitive and intellectual character, as well as individual or group responsibility in the decision making process (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 65). This is a great legacy of shifts occurring in contemporary epistemology. Moreover, what is being analyzed is whether epistemic subjects understand what is happening - whether they are epistemically responsible in forming beliefs (making attentive observations, inferring valid conclusions, evaluating hypotheses and evidence) (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 66). And in the context of values and norms imposed by the community and broader social sphere – whether subjects are responsible in critical reflection of their beliefs. Undoubtedly, social/applied epistemology can be employed as a scaffolding for questions about self-knowledge because the surrounding social landscape has a great impact in defining the "self" and self-knowledge.

In reflection on **epistemic virtues**, my first thoughts lead me to some forgotten times – towards Aristotle's ideals of wisdom or the ideal of courage of medieval knights. To think about virtues somehow seems utterly romantic to me. From Alasdair MacIntyre's "After Virtue" (1981), through Linda Zagzebski's "Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge" (1996), to Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's (2018) recent notions on shifts in epistemology which focus on the virtues of the epistemic agent rather than the evaluation of truth or justification of a particular proposition. I deem virtues to be a strong weapon for epistemic and more general injustices because self-reflection, resulting in wiser and more truth-oriented beliefs, dictates wiser and more just actions and habits. I believe that the improvement of

one's personal epistemic outlook leads towards a better collective imaginary with more truth-oriented and just beliefs.

"Virtue" is an old concept adopted from ancient Greeks. As Linda Zagzebski claims in her famous book, "Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge", from "arête" in ancient Greek, through "virtue" in medieval Latin, to "virtue" in modern English – the first thing that crosses one's mind regarding virtue is excellence (1996: 84). Besides excellence, virtue is "a property that we attribute to the person in a deep and important sense"; it is closely tied to one's identity (Zagzebski 1996: 85-101). Zagzebski understands virtues as acquired excellence of the subject (1996: 85-89). It is inseparable from the **"self"**– once virtue develops, it becomes rooted in a person's character – it becomes part of that person. Virtues, as well as vices, "form part of what makes a person the person that she is" – they define the person as an integral part of the "self" (Zagzebski, 1996: 116). Therefore, virtues (and vices) constitute an essential part of one's identity or "self" and are also connected with one's self-knowledge. In other words, social epistemology with focus on the epistemic conduct of a subject is an employable framework for questions regarding the "self" and self-knowledge. I consider virtues of curiosity, open-mindedness, humility and receptiveness as preconditions for introspection and critical reflection which represent first steps towards knowing oneself and the possibility for broader social change. Virtues are gradually acquired, they are the result of a subject's continuous moral work and can be understood as a habit demanding time and effort on the part of the subject (Zagzebski, 1996: 116-125). Zagzebski regards virtues as intrinsically valuable (1996: 113). She defines virtue as:

> "a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end. What I mean by a motivation is a disposition to have a motive; a motive is an acting-guiding emotion with a certain end, either internal or external." (Zagzebski, 1996: 137).

I have mentioned intellectual virtues of curiosity and open-mindedness and I will add to the list with Zagzebski's account of intellectual virtues:

- the ability to recognize the salient facts; sensitivity to detail;
- open-mindedness in collecting and apprising evidence;
- fairness in evaluating the arguments of others;
- intellectual humility;
- intellectual perseverance, diligence, care, and thoroughness;
- adaptability of intellect;
- the detective's virtues: thinking of coherent explanations of the facts;
- being able to recognize reliable authority;
- insight into persons, problems, theories;
- the teaching virtues: the social virtues of being communicative, including intellectual candor and knowing your audience and how to respond (Zagzebski, 1996: 114).

But let us take a step back. **Ethical virtues** like honesty, fairness and courage motivate the subject to act accordingly. Epistemic or, more specifically, **intellectual virtues**, can be classified into two categories – some virtues are perceived as **motivating character traits**, such as ethical virtues, intellectual integrity or intellectual fairness, while others, such as intuitive reason or good memory, are seen as **capacities** (Miščević, 2007).

Virtue epistemologists can also be separated into two camps as mentioned in the first chapter. The first camp includes epistemologists who incorporate virtues in the theory of knowledge and understand intellectual virtues as cognitive abilities (perception, memory or deduction) which lead the epistemic subject towards truth or knowledge (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 67). As Miščević states, Ernst Sosa is the pioneer of this approach in which truth has central value and virtues, which represent positive qualities of the epistemic subject, are understood as the means of arriving at the truth. In this framework, virtues are important, but they do not play a fundamental role. According to Miščević, this approach can be categorized as a "virtue-*focused*" theory by which virtues carry out "the good work" of acquiring the truth. Virtues are seen as non-motivating, but pure capacities or cognitive features. Epistemologists belonging to this camp can be considered "the conservatives" (Miščević, 2007: 242). To sum up, what matters is ends or true beliefs, so this camp can be placed into **"virtue-reliabilism"**, as Heather Battaly states. She

specifies four important features of this approach: epistemic virtues are reliable, they are dispositions to produce more true beliefs than false ones; they can be hard-wired capacities of our brain or they can be acquired; epistemic virtues do not require good intellectual motives; and lastly, they are instrumentally valuable because they are reliable means to obtaining true beliefs (Battaly, 2014: 1). “The epistemic virtues are just stable qualities that reliably produce true beliefs” (Battaly, 2014: 2).

In the other camp, there are epistemologists who claim that intellectual virtues are character traits that can be acquired: every epistemic subject bears responsibility to develop virtues such as intellectual integrity that will enhance their intellectual life (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 67). This approach can be categorized as *“*virtue-*based”* (Miščević, 2007: 242). The abovementioned Linda Zagzebski represents this camp with “strong” virtue theory and the notion that virtues are motivating character traits which organize the subject’s epistemic activity. The idea that virtues are foundations of epistemology poses a new, contemporary epistemic theory and Zagzebski and her colleagues, contrary to Sosa and his fellow “conservatives”, stand as “the radicals” (Miščević, 2007: 243). What matters in this camp are good intellectual motives matter, so its followers can be called **“virtue-responsibilists**”, as Battaly maintains. She specifies four features of this approach as well: firstly, among them there is no consensus whether the epistemic virtues require reliable acquisition of true beliefs; secondly, epistemic virtues are admirable and actively acquired; thirdly, virtues demand intellectual motives and an acquired disposition of intellectual action; and lastly, epistemic virtues are intrinsically valuable because the motivation for truth is intrinsically valuable (Battaly, 2014: 5).[11] In this camp, epistemic virtues are understood as “acquired characteristics traits over which we have some control, and for which we are (partly) responsible” (Battaly, 2014: 4).

With different approaches to virtues, both camps share the common idea of intellectual or epistemic fulfillment (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 67). As opposed to Sosa and the “virtue-reliabilist/conservative” camp for whom virtues are given and hard-wired, the

[11] Regarding the disagreement on the first feature, Batally refers to Montmarquet who argues that they are not, as opposed to Zagzebski who disagrees and states that both good motives and good effects are necessary for virtue possession (Batally, 2014: 5).

“virtue-responsibilist/radical” camp focuses on the character of the epistemic subject who is active and bears certain responsibility. I am fond of the connection between virtue and person’s character because, according to the intuition of the “radicals”, “virtues express character: they reveal what we care about, and what we value” (Battaly, 2014: 4). I find this very important because it gives a certain epistemic responsibility to person. Battaly argues (and I could not agree more) that as epistemic subjects we must learn whom to trust and whom not to trust on a certain topic, when to seek evidence and when to stop, and when to acknowledge alternative ideas and when not to (Battaly, 2014: 5). As I will shortly demonstrate with the epistemic “subject/eater”, this epistemic training is very much important in everyday life when we are immersed into a vast collective imaginary consisting of all sorts of impaired beliefs, “fake news”, prejudices and stereotypes. One can obtain the epistemic virtues of open-mindedness, curiosity or intellectual vigilance depending on curiosity for self-knowledge and self-reflection.

While the one camp connects virtues with truth and the other with motives and characters, Miščević combines those two approaches (Miščević 2007). He claims that while motivating virtues are not necessary for essential knowledge, they are essential for understanding the role of truth as well as the point of desire to have knowledge and the concept of “knowledge” (Miščević, 2007: 244). He argues that **inquisitiveness or curiosity** is a core motivating epistemic virtue – it is a truth-focused motivating virtue. We are curious in a practical way, or in a pure desire to know something, or as a third possibility there is a combination of the pure desire to know and the practical way. For example, I “google” everything on my phone all the time, sometimes because I need information such as “On duty pharmacy on Sunday” which implies the practical side or sometimes simply out of pure curiosity. I really do not have any practical interest in knowing all the information, such as “Hugo Boss and WWII uniforms” while watching a WWII documentary, or “Who was Cambieri” when passing through Cambieri Street. Nevertheless, I am a passionate “googleator” simply because of my pure curiosity, despite being sure that I will forget the information as soon as I turn off my phone. Curiosity is, as Miščević claims, a typical virtue for relatively ignorant beings such as humans, who are in constant need for update in information. Therefore, truth is a central epistemic value and inquisitiveness is a fundamental epistemic virtue capable of providing that value. This

invokes Cassam's "Homo sapiens" who is imperfect in his cognition and often irrational. Insofar as truth is a central epistemic value, so is curiosity a fundamental virtue responsible for the value of truth: truth is valuable to cognizers because they are curious - "truth has value because we care for it epistemically, and we do so because we are inquisitive" (Miščević, 2007: 264). Curiosity is an immensely important virtue in relation to food. On the one hand, there are people who eat because they have to and could not care less for food and the overall food system. On the other hand, there are people motivated by curiosity who are very much interested in the food they eat, energy and resources they consume, and their CO2 imprint. Of course, it is all a matter of degree, but nevertheless curiosity motivates different food-related beliefs carrying different outcomes, lifestyles, choices and behaviors. Individuals' curiosity sharpens their inner world consisting of beliefs, norms and values which consequently impact their actions and behavior in the material world.

I find epistemic virtues to be of great importance in everyday life. For example, when an average Cassam's "Homo sapiens" scrolls down the internet news portals in the era of "fake news" and "alternative facts", one must have sharp a cognitive mechanism and developed epistemic virtues to know how to process the vast collection of information coming from the social world. Every epistemic agent has a responsibility to train his/her cognitive mechanism and to cultivate epistemic virtues, to be self-reflective and to question personal and collective beliefs and the ways in which he/she obtained those beliefs along with their sources. In today's world in which social media are possibly the main source of information for the average "Homo sapiens", epistemic virtues seem to represent a major issue.

Relating to the value of self-knowledge in a broader social context and referring to Diana Mayers, Linda Barclay stresses the importance of self-knowledge and gaining understanding of how one's culture, family and general social forces shape one's aims, aspirations and values (Barclay, 2000: 55). In my view, self-knowledge can be understood as the critical analysis of socially imposed values and norms which shape one's identity and is connected to one's autonomy.

> "… the difference between an autonomous person and a person who fails to be autonomous is not the difference between a person who mysteriously escapees the forces of socialization and one who does not. Both the autonomous and the non-autonomous are conditioned by the forces of society. The difference is that the autonomous person is not a passive receptacle of these forces but reflectively engages with them to participate in shaping a life for herself." (Barclay, 2000: 55).

This is where lies the value of self-knowledge which is in connection with direct action – becoming **receptive** and **reflective** on our beliefs, values and norms. The importance and role of self-knowledge is in its being inevitable for self-definition and critical refection. Self-knowledge refers to critical reflection on desires, norms, values and attitudes which we endorse unconsciously, which are embedded into our cognitive scheme and which stand as constitutive of our identity. We have the power to change or enhance them and furthermore, make a change in our epistemic community. How else to change generally accepted beliefs? Fricker writes about prejudices and stereotypes existing in the social imaginary which we embrace unknowingly and acquire passively from the social environment, family and broader community while growing up. Let us say "communal" prejudices and stereotypes which we undoubtedly receive. Are self-reflection and the accompanying self-knowledge not a means to raising awareness and a possible change of values, norms and attitudes?

I consider attentiveness and the cultivation of epistemic virtues a precondition for self-knowledge which is key to approaching the problem of individual epistemic vices and broader social and epistemic injustice. When implemented on the individual and consequently, collective level, will virtues not gain effect in the broader ethical and political dimension? This brings us towards Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's hybrid perspective where the epistemic and ethical/political virtues intertwine. In this model, social practice of a subject is justified only if ethical/political requirements are aligned with beliefs/judgments/decisions which are epistemically fulfilled. For this reason, epistemology should have a loud say on the collective, decision-making level. Therefore, I believe that the cultivation of epistemic virtues which lead to self-knowledge can have an impact on epistemic injustice on the individual and collective level, as well as on ethical/political dimension.

I probably still believe, echoing Emma Goldman, that ignorance is the most violent element in society which can be defeated not just with knowledge but precisely with the cultivation of the epistemic virtues of curiosity, open-mindedness or fairness. This leads to the phenomenon of "understanding" which resonated with me after I encountered it in Zagzebski's writings. She argues that the social aspect of cognitive activity is neglected. What is important in our everyday life is "the ability to see the way bits of reality fit together" (Zagzebski, 1996: 50). It is necessary not just to understand another person - to understand one's motivation or character we must choose from the abundance of information in our memory which piece becomes important in a particular context in order to understand that, for example, Mary is a jealous person, and that same ability is essential to **our knowledge of ourselves**. As Zagzebski claims, "understanding involves the comprehension of structures of reality other than its propositional structure" (Zagzebski, 1996: 50). Understanding surpasses a single proposition, it allows the subject to recognize connections among his/her beliefs and call upon introspective attentiveness and insight in various forms (Zagzebski, 1996: 184). I am fascinated with "understanding" which implies "connecting the dots" – reminiscing, concluding and grasping the broader image. DeNicola writes that "to understand something implies the possession of an insight epistemically deeper than merely 'having knowledge of' that thing" and he connects "understanding" with "a broader, coherent, cognitive context" (DeNicola, 2018: 25). To him, "understanding" is a primitive concept, logically preceding "knowledge" and "belief"; it is a "broader and more basic concept than knowledge", not narrower and connected with the concept of wisdom (DeNicola, 2018: 198). Expanding horizons, learning, cultivating epistemic virtues and broader understandings is a way to develop a more just and democratic society.

Epistemic fairness generates ethical and political justice on the individual and collective level. For example, if a man gets a job applying for a kindergarten teacher based on his credentials and contrary to a still widely common stereotype that it is a "women's job" because women are by "nature" caregivers, it is an epistemically and politically just decision. If a Roma man is employed at a grocery store contrary to the accepted stereotype that Roma people are thieves, it is a just decision on all levels. If a female medical student receives specialization in surgery contrary to the stereotype that women

are fragile “by nature”, nonresistant to stress and family oriented, that is a victory for the female medical student who is not epistemically or politically discriminated because of her gender, but a triumph for the community in question and for all future female surgeons as well.

Let us turn from someone who owns epistemic vices towards someone at the receiving point who experiences the consequences of another person’s stereotypes. Imagine Mary who belongs to the ethnic minority of Roma people – a minority group vulnerable to social stereotypes which Mary experiences in her job interview. She did not get the job because of her identity. In Miranda Fricker’s language, Mary is harmed by prejudice on two levels. In the primary sense, “the subject is wronged in her capacity as a knower”, while the secondary harm lies in subject’s losing confidence in his/her general intellectual abilities (Fricker, 2007: 44-49). Owning epistemic vices results in bad epistemic practices and fallible beliefs, but experiencing the consequences of other people’s epistemic vices can be devastating to a person in the epistemic sense and have political consequences as well because it demonstrates how prejudices and stereotypes are interwoven in the social fabric. In terms of law things have changed: we have a legal system which ensures freedom and equality, but there is a lot of work to be done about social prejudices and stereotypes that people perpetuate in everyday life. In Althusserian language – “we” are the ones who are subjects to “interpellation”. Therefore, cultivation of epistemic virtues on a personal level, as a prerequisite for self-knowledge and further self-reflection, is a necessary tool for addressing broader epistemic and social injustices.

In that sense, I find obvious that the epistemic is inseparable from the ethical and political sphere. Therefore, the hybrid perspective, proposed by Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, is an essential perspective for minimizing the epistemic and broader social/political injustice. Giving space to the unheard, wrongly categorized, unseen, marginalized, misunderstood and underprivileged is an epistemic and a political victory essential for a democratic society. Fighting hard-coded stereotypes and prejudices in society, no matter how widely believed they may be, is a fight for a more just society.

Self-knowledge refers to having a concept of the "self". It appears to me that **self-cultivation of virtues** has a motivational aspect. "I will listen to arguments of the opposing side and will not discard them without taking them into consideration". In other words, I will try to listen people without epistemic superiority or arrogance for different ideas and beliefs, instead of focusing on the display of my own claims. Contrarily, Cassam states that Mary may be unaware of her gullibility and naivety, but then again, the first step to take is curiosity which leads to self-reflection and review of her own beliefs, while making room for the possibility that she is doing "something wrong". Of course, when it comes to virtues, there must be present the other side of the coin – **vices**. As Heather Battaly claims, while the field of epistemic virtues is expanding, the questions of epistemic vices have been widely neglected (Battaly, 2014). Now we will take a quick glance on epistemic vices.

A great portion of an endless talk with ourselves is epistemic. Zagzebski detects it in the following:

> "Some of the most important questions we ask about our lives include 'What should I think about?' and "What should I believe?' as well as 'What should I want?' and "What should I do?' Furthermore, we often wholeheartedly criticize other for their actions but mostly for their beliefs (Zagzebski, 1996: 5).

Furthermore, people daily and directly evaluate other people epistemically by calling them "narrow-minded", "careless", "intellectually cowardly", "rash", "imperceptive", "prejudiced", "rigid", "obtuse", blaming them for "jumping to conclusions", "ignoring relevant facts", "relying on untrustworthy authority", "lacking insight", being "unable to see the forest for the trees" (Zagzebski, 1996: 20). This sheds light on how our everyday life is by all means unconsciously epistemic.

Cassam defines **vice epistemology** as "the philosophical study of the nature, identity, and epistemic significance of intellectual vices" such as gullibility, dogmatism, prejudice, carelessness, closed-mindedness and negligence (Cassam, 2016: 159). It seems that epistemic vices are just as important as virtues. Linda Zagzebski, in "Virtues of the mind", lists examples of intellectual vices: "intellectual pride, negligence, idleness,

cowardice, conformity, carelessness, rigidity, prejudice, wishful thinking, closed-mindedness, insensitivity to detail, obtuseness, and the lack of thoroughness" (Zagzebski, 1996: 152). I would add prejudices, stereotypes, intellectual laziness and intellectual arrogance. As a matter of fact, our social imaginary (as well as our personal) is saturated with epistemic vices.

Analogously to her discussion about epistemic virtues in regard to virtue-reliabilists' and virtue-responsibilists' key concepts, Battaly does the same with epistemic vices. Accordingly, to virtue-reliabilists who focus on ends or effects, as virtues are instrumentally valuable because they lead us to true beliefs, vices such as color-blindness or myopia have negative value because they lead us to false beliefs. Battaly states that there are two plausible approaches to vices opened for debate – vice can be understood as a quality that produces *bad* ends or effects (i), or *fails* to produce good ends or effects (ii) (Battaly, 2014: 6-9). In accordance with this analysis, vices correlating with responsibilist virtues are qualities such as dogmatism, epistemic self-indulgence, epistemic malevolence and epistemic conformity. In this model, vices are understood as qualities that demand blameworthy psychology or bad motives (Battaly, 2014: 12-14).

Cassam offers a third path. Instead of focusing on ends or motives, he shifts attention to the process of **epistemic inquiry**. He understands intellectual vices as intellectual character vices which are also intellectual character traits that obstruct adequate and responsible inquiry (Cassam, 2016: 159). We, an average "Homo sapiens", are not ideal epistemic citizens and our everyday lives are influenced by intellectual vices. While epistemic virtues are perceived as "cognitive excellences", intellectual vices can be defined as "cognitive defects" (Cassam, 2016: 160). I find extremely fascinating and important to improve one's own epistemic inquiry, cultivate epistemic virtues and self-reflection, and response to epistemic vices one possesses. This cognitive achievement on the personal level relates to the broader, collective level because, as I have shown, we are all parts of a particular epistemic community and individual achievements leave an imprint in the social world like concentric circles.

It is absorbing to bring the issue of epistemic vice onto the level of everyday life. Although rationality is a property which makes us distinctively human, “people believe weird things”, in Cassam’s quote of Michael Shermer (Cassam, 2016: 162). Conspiracy theorists believe that the 1969 Moon landing was staged; the AIDS epidemic was a government conspiracy; “chemtrails” are a secret government program to disperse toxic chemicals into the atmosphere from aircrafts; the COVID vaccine contains a 5G chip; to more sinister claims embodied in “Holocaust revisionism”, Flat-Earthers, creationist activists who want it taught in schools, believers in the paranormal… Beliefs in conspiracy and the supernatural are not reserved for people with states such as schizophrenia, but those kinds of beliefs are rather widespread among the “normal, mentally sane adults” (Van Prooijen, Douglas & De Inocencio, 2017: 332).

Let us take Cassam’s example of Oliver who believes in conspiracy theories and thinks that COVID vaccines are nothing more than a conspiracy of “Big Pharma” and Bill Gates. Oliver takes conspiracy websites as valid points of reference, he fails to comprehend the absurdity of those beliefs and rejects the testimony of genuine experts - all this tells us something about the person (Cassam 2016: 163). Oliver believes what he believes because he is gullible, cynical towards legitimate sources of information and prejudiced (Cassam, 2016: 163). Character traits relate to intellectual vices because intellectual character vices evidence how a person thinks and reasons; they are “habits or styles of thought and inquiry” - they say something about one’s “mind-set” or, in Cassam words, “intellectual character traits are distinctive ways of seeking out and evaluating evidence and assessing the plausibility of explanatory hypotheses” (Cassam, 2016: 164). Therefore, intellectual vices seem to correlate with intellectual character traits. Furthermore, intellectual character vices which are intellectual character traits obstruct an effective and responsible inquiry.

> “Because he is gullible, dogmatic, closed-minded, cynical, prejudiced, and so on, he ignores important evidence which bears on his questions, relies on unreliable sources, jumps to conclusions and generally can’t see the wood for the trees. The fact that this is how he goes about his business is a reflection of his intellectual character. He ignores critical evidence *because* he is grossly negligent, he relies on untrustworthy sources *because* he is gullible, he jumps to conclusions *because* he is lazy and careless. He is

> neither a responsible nor an effective inquirer, and it is the influence of his intellectual character traits which is responsible for this" (Cassam, 2016: 164).

Essentially, Oliver's intellectual traits or, in this case, vices, affect his idea of a **responsible and effective inquiry**. Cassam views inquiry as an "activity rather than a state" and knowledge as a "state rather than an activity" (Cassam, 2016: 165). A responsible inquiry should be guided by evidence and the inquirer should recognize obligations coming with that activity (Cassam, 2016: 166). Cassam moves away a bit from standard epistemic consequentialism according to which character traits which are truth-conductive produce true beliefs, while character vices are truth-obstructive and produce false beliefs. For Cassam, intellectual virtues and vices are still defined in reference to their consequences, but the consequences for an effective and responsible inquiry rather than those for the ration of true or false beliefs (Cassam, 2016: 166). The goal of the inquiry is to "find things out, and an effective inquiry is one that produces knowledge rather than mere true belief" (Cassam, 2016: 167). One obstacle in the inquiry is that of prejudice which obstructs inquiry because it does not allow possession of knowledge and "weakens the connection between what we do believe and what we have reason to believe" (Cassam, 2016: 168).

Regarding the motivation for vices, Cassam disagrees with virtue-responsibilist Zagzebski who claims that intellectual vices represent acquired defects which demand bad motives or which are in connection to one's responsibility (Mary is not showing the lack of motivation, her problem lies rather elsewhere – the way she gains knowledge is not good). As opposed to Battaly who claims that vices involve the idea of "wanting to believe what is easiest", Cassam maintains that Mary wants to believe what is true and is not motivated by a "shortcut". She is not working actively on her gullibility or cynicism; she is not aware of her defects and there is a possibility that she cannot help herself. Cassam advocates refraining from "being excessively moralistic" and gives an empathetic approach to the imperfect epistemic process (Cassam, 2016: 169). We are all humans and our lives can never be vice-free, but what we can do is understand intellectual vices and realize "how and why we go wrong", so in this approach, vice epistemology is perceived as **"an exercise in self-knowledge"** (Cassam, 2016: 161).

Epistemic virtues are a strong asset and it would be beneficial if the general society encouraged them. Zagzebski writes that “good thinking is socially based as well”. In other words, we learn from others how to believe rationally because we acquire intellectual and moral virtues by imitating people around us since children learn by imitation. As she points out, “this means that the intellectual healthiness of the whole **community** is vitally important for the justifiability of our own beliefs” (Zagzebski, 1996: 28). Thus, self-knowledge is intrinsically linked with the social sphere and individual beliefs are not just “mine” but they relate to the broader social imaginary which constitutes a strong force in defining the “self” and self-knowledge. By employing the epistemic “subject/eater”, I will demonstrate that the detection of epistemic vices and cultivation of epistemic virtues represent strong and important tools in today’s society.

4.3. Conclusion

In Cassam’s view, self-knowledge is a cognitive achievement which has value because it promotes well-being. To Miščević, CD knowledge has extrinsic as well as intrinsic value and it is broadly applicable - from survival to one’s needs and pleasures. It also offers a “self-critical perspective” essential for one’s happiness and well-being. I regard self-knowledge as valuable because it enables us to reflect on ourselves and the world around us with the objective to live a more purposeful, meaningful and sustainable life. Nonetheless, I could not agree more with Miščević and his stances on curiosity which I see as a conductor to self-knowledge. The epistemic virtues of curiosity, open-mindedness, self-scrutiny, receptiveness to new ideas and beliefs will lead us to self-reflection which involves paying conscious attention to one’s own thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, behavior and values – that is, reflection on how one feels, acts and views different things. Essentially, our epistemic virtues, responsiveness to them and their cultivation are prerequisites for self-knowledge. One’s inner world is built from values, character traits, emotion, perception, desires, aspirations and other aspects of one’s identity, as well as curiosity, intellectual integrity and prejudices. It is a complex world and I consider curiosity a ticket to entering that inner world.

It is essential to critically reflect on one's values, beliefs, norms or ideas that we unconsciously acquired throughout life because they may not function anymore. Being a receptive and reflective subject represents willingness to change, to revise a particular belief and consider accepting new ones. Here lies the importance of "understanding" - grasping retrospectively; connecting memories, attitudes, actions and context into one picture; a process of "getting" the broader picture; reminiscing; linking beliefs with the memory from the past; reflecting on our beliefs, actions and thoughts. This is an integral part of an individual's mental and emotional "hygiene". This is where epistemic virtues and vices come into focus. I see them as intellectual character traits and constitutive elements of a person. Their importance abides in the fact that they determine the level of self-knowledge. Curiosity as an epistemic virtue will lead towards critical reflection, as well as receptiveness and open-mindedness which I see as epistemic virtues that assist one in thinking, doubting, understanding and eventually changing himself/herself. Curiosity, as a continuous interest for finding new knowledge and truths in general, applies to self-inquisitiveness in in the continuous interest for detecting new truths about the self. Contrarily, stereotypes and prejudices are inherent in our social landscape, and consequently, epistemic vices also make an integral part of an average epistemic subject. The social environment, upbringing and community play an important role in adopting values and critical reflection is always mediated through the social imaginary. It is not something neutral, but at one point a person must take responsibility and become self-reflective about the inherited traits that require modification. This alone calls for the epistemic virtue of curiosity. Cassam demonstrated how important human cognitive limitations and imperfections. Those imperfections are exactly what makes us human. Fricker showed that epistemic vices are all around us, both on the individual and collective level. Virtues give us a tool for change.

Cultivation of virtues leads towards self-knowledge which I consider a key for resolving broader social and epistemic injustice because every individual is a member of a community, which is simultaneously epistemic and political. Although the social world is saturated with prejudices and stereotypes generating injustice which can demoralized a person, one can resort to Lynda Barclay's definition of autonomous agency as an ability to provide a certain response to surrounding social forces. It involves reflective

engagement about the persisting false beliefs and epistemic injustice in the epistemic community. Likewise, the hybrid perspective poses as important because I find epistemic vices inseparable from the ethical/political domain. On the individual and collective level, epistemic virtues have the power to change the society and fight the “bugs” burdening our social landscape. In other words, individual and collective exercise of epistemic virtues can bring us closer to a more just society.

I do not know if I am an epistemic optimist or a pessimist. I am usually an eager optimist, while on some days I am a dark and cynical pessimist who has faith only in the tomatoes in her garden and lacking any hope for humankind and our relationship with the non-human world. In any case, I think that epistemic virtues form a great tool which enables us a possibility for change. And I do hope for a change. For things to improve and a more just and sustainable society to develop, we, as humans, will have to assume responsibility for our own actions towards the world. Generating new and enhanced epistemic and political understandings and norms will determine the dynamics of change. We have the tools - it depends if and how we will use those tools and question the power of our own cognition about the relationship between humans and the environment. In that sense, the individual is inseparable from the collective and the epistemic is inseparable from the ethical and political. This brings us back to Marcia Cavell’s notion of “growth” where “becoming a self” means growing up - taking responsibility for one’s spiritual and moral life and for broader understandings of life in regard to our surrounding and the non-human world we impact.

Virtues are intrinsically valuable and important in everyday life. Vices influence the epistemic inquiry, as Cassam claims. Vices such as prejudice, gullibility, over-confidence or intellectual arrogance represent an obstacle in changing impaired beliefs. Self-reflection is an active process: it is self-knowledge “in action”. I could not agree more with Cassam who sees epistemology as “an exercise in self-knowledge”, that is, one must self-reflect on his/her intellectual traits. This is where I detect the great importance of epistemology in everyday life. Self-reflection and cultivation of virtues demand responsibility from the epistemic subject who is focused on a responsible and effective epistemic inquiry. Conformity, apathy and laziness as characteristic traits are also

epistemic traits. Mary really does not want to bother to know that plastic bags are harmful because it would involve her fighting her own laziness, becoming responsible and taking a cloth bag before going grocery shopping. It may be even easier to claim that waste management does not work because that allows Mary not to trouble herself with waste separation and recycling. In my experience, many people do not have a concrete explanation why they actually hate Serbs, gays, Roma or black people – for to be "the enemy" and to be hated, it is enough to "belong" to a particular category on which a particular stereotype is glued. To question those stereotypes would require intellectual courage to admit that those beliefs are just that – stereotypes or false beliefs. Intellectual courage is obviously an epistemic virtue of people who generate that kind of wrongful beliefs. By acknowledging virtues and vices, on the individual and collective level, we take responsibility. The importance of self-knowledge lies in the fact that it enables us to reflect on ourselves and the world around us and to live a more purposeful and meaningful epistemic and political life.

SECOND PART: EPISTEMOLOGY AND FOOD

5. PROBLEMS WITH EPISTEMOLOGY AND FOOD

In the second part of the thesis, I will focus on food as a multidimensional social issue where social power, self-knowledge and power of one's cognition overlap within the complex social imaginary. Self-knowledge involves food because it encompasses our personal food-related values, habits and choices which dictate our further actions. In this sense, ecological epistemology is a great tool for understanding issues about our relationship with food and the power(lessness) of our own cognition. As I have tried to show, every individual possesses or owns self-knowledge, but it is also distinctive in its nature because it is shaped by the socio-epistemic conditions dominant in the social sphere where epistemic injustices generate broader social and political injustices. Understanding correlations between the social sphere and the "self" is the legacy of recent shifts in epistemology which broadened the epistemic landscape. In the following pages, my aim is to show that food can be understood as a social factor which strongly influences constitution of the "self" and self-knowledge.

Food is more than a sum of calories – it influences the way we perceive ourselves, our bodies, how we position ourselves and act in the world. In that sense, it is directly connected with self-knowledge, that is, one's knowledge about values, habits, practices and character traits. All these aspects of self-knowledge are mediated through the social realm. Because of the political and economic structures, knowledge is inevitably fused with power which, in Foucauldian terms, creates discourse. The power of discourse also manifests itself in epistemic mechanisms through which the "self" or self-knowledge is formed. Discourse is perpetuated through the exact same social imaginary replete with damaging beliefs and values, norms, traditions, prejudices, habits, cultural symbols and images which can be understood as power relations. Those power relations are normalized or internalized as generally accepted knowledge which enables further reproduction of that discourse.

Although food is perceived as something inherently primordial, how we understand food is very much shaped by the surrounding epistemic community and dominant food discourse. To understand the multidimensional sphere of food, we must explore one's power(lessness) of cognition and the socio-epistemic conditions concerning food. "Ecological epistemology" poses a great tool for understanding this realm. Although eating to satisfy hunger is our instinct, our perception of and relation to food is culturally shaped. Since we all have to eat, food bears a particular kind of responsibility in the current context of climate crisis. We need new knowledge and understandings of our relationship with food and the non-human world. In this quest, ecological epistemology and its focus on epistemic virtues provides us with a great tool for analysis.

5.1. The social aspects of knowledge and food

> "One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit. Everyone knows this." (Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit", 1988: 117).

Our current socio-epistemic landscape is rather complex. In today's era of ignorance, "post-truth", "fake news" and "alternative facts", we are overwhelmed daily with all kinds of beliefs which create an epistemic mess. Food succumbs to that mess. How to select truth-sensitive beliefs in an endless amount of information? How to estimate beliefs and decide whom to trust? How to change and modify our beliefs in today's informational chaos? I will touch upon testimony which was mentioned in the first part. For a long time, it was a neglected way of acquiring knowledge, while today it is understood as a fundamental way of obtaining knowledge. In my view, food is very much connected with epistemology and I see it as a social factor. Its production, representation, meaning and consumption are socially outlined and shaped by social power and that very power is inscribed in the epistemic mechanisms which constitute the "self". There is the problem of selection of food-related beliefs, as well as the problem of trust and experts. It is important to explore how particular knowledge is articulated and how a particular narrative is formed because how we understand food is also shaped by the current socio-epistemic conditions saturated with power. What comes to light here is the importance of the epistemic virtues of curiosity, prudence in estimating someone as an authority or open-mindedness, and recognition of epistemic vices such as arrogance, rigidity or close-mindedness. I strongly

associate detection of epistemic vices and cultivation of virtues on the individual and collective level with deflation of epistemic injustices.

It is hard to navigate through the contemporary socio-epistemic map. I outlined the important cultural and epistemic shift which took place in the 1960s and in the following decades which were characterized by social liberalization, decentering of the objective science, as well as general doubt in science, epistemology and its central values such as truth. Considering current hyper-production of information and the fact that we have never been this scientifically advanced, we nonetheless testify to an enormous amount of conspiracy theories, science-denialism, anti-intellectualism, "alternative facts" and similar phenomena. One can argue that we are living a postmodern legacy of relativism in which objective epistemic value lost its status and importance. How to stay sane in this vast sea of information and how to process this unbelievable amount of information on an everyday level? How to estimate beliefs as truth-oriented? This is where I see the importance of social/applied epistemology – it can help us understand the power(lessness) of our own cognition in the complex social landscape.

Harry Frankfurt's famous essay, "On Bullshit", published in 1986, revealed that truth as a value has depreciated in contemporary society. I do not outline this from a higher, moral perspective but simply as a fact. Plainly speaking, the public space was opened for "bullshitting" which is epistemically interesting because it is grounded not on its falsity but on its phoniness. "The bullshitter is faking things. But this does not mean that he necessarily gets them wrong" (Frankfurt, 1988: 129). In line with this analysis, Matthew D'Ancona writes that "1968 marked the revolution in personal freedom and the yearning for social progress; 1989 will be remembered for the collapse of totalitarianism; and 2016 was the year that that definitively launched the era of 'Post-Truth'" (D'Ancona, 2017: 7). This new concept of "post-truth" was declared the international word of 2016 by the Oxford Dictionaries and it is defined as "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (D'Ancona, 2017: 9). The concept was coined in 1992 by Steve Tesich and is an epistemic concept in its core. Cassam states that "to live in a 'post-truth world' is to live in a world in which citizens connive in their own ignorance" and he grasps this concept on three different levels. In

the first account, the concept is an epistemic notion which contains an epistemic stance towards objective truths. Secondly, there is a value stance according to which truth is irrelevant. The third account is concerned with the truth itself by which "what is true is equated with what is taken to be true; perception is reality" (Cassam, n.d.-b., p.11) In this epistemic muddle, it seems that Richard Rorty has resurrected. An average person, citizen, epistemic subject is bombarded daily with vast amounts of information and most of them are frankly "bullshit". That pile of misinformation includes the domain of food as well. As D'Ancona demonstrates, phenomena such as Trump or Brexit proved that facts can be substituted for interpretation, "alternative facts" or different narratives based on emotions such as rage, blame or impatience rather than facts (D'Ancona, 2017: 17-24).[12] It is hard to make truth-oriented beliefs when we are socially rooted in this kind of harsh epistemic environment.

D'Ancona argues that the contemporary era is marked by collapse of truth and what we have today is "multi-billion-dollar industry of misinformation, false propaganda and phony science" (D'Ancona, 2017: 41). He considers the internet problematic because it is "indifferent to falsehood" and whose algorithms, based on psychometric portraits of subjects, their preferences, tastes and assumptions, determine what they will see as relevant information for them (D'Ancona, 2017: 35-51, 121). Basically, one is being fed his/her own narrative without being challenged by different ideas, beliefs or thoughts. In addition, there is a general mistrust towards science and experts embodied in "scientific denialism", as well as an expansion of conspiracy theories about chemtrails, 5G or micro-chipping through vaccination which are extremely popular today. All things considered, thanks to the web, people have access to a vast amount of information but in D'Ancona words, "being smarter or having access to more information doesn't necessarily make us less susceptible to faulty beliefs" (D'Ancona, 2017: 70). What to select as relevant beliefs, whom to believe, who is the expert and on what grounds? These questions, as I will shortly show, do not bypass the realm of food. Although postmodernism dethroned everything and everybody and enabled us to doubt and reexamine everything, D'Ancona blames

[12] Kellyanne Conway, Trump's political advisor is famous for her statement: „Don't be so overly dramatic about it, Chuck. You're saying it's a falsehood […] Sean Spicer, our press secretary, gave alternative facts to that". (D'Ancona, 2017: 13).

postmodernism for the current situation. He claims that despite postmodernism giving us a pluralist society based on inclusivity, diversity, personal liberty, and civil rights, post-truth is a direct successor of postmodern relativism (D'Ancona, 2017: 91).

This complex situation, saturated with a vast amount of information in which "everything goes", should be observed through epistemic lenses. Cassam relates Frankfurt's "bullshit" with epistemic insouciance which "consists in a casual lack of concern about whether one's belief have any basis in reality or are adequately supported by the best available evidence" (Cassam, 2018: 1). He argues that epistemic insouciance can be understood both as epistemic stances or rather attitudes towards the epistemic objects of knowledge or truth, as well as epistemic vices or rather character traits (Cassam, 2018). This shows the complexity of the contemporary epistemic landscape. It seems that epistemic virtues, known and debated since Aristotle, play an indisputable role, but that epistemic vices, as a subfield of virtue epistemology, are equally interesting and critical. Epistemic attitudes and vices are inseparable from the media which represent the greatest generator of information today and have a massive impact on people. The question of epistemic standards seems crucial in such a context.

One can conclude that in today's collective imaginary, epistemic virtues and (perhaps even more so) epistemic vices play an important role. Through a reliabilist perspective, epistemic vices refer to cognitive qualities that an agent does not possess and, consequently, should not be blamed for the lack thereof, while according to responsibilist view, there are motives and cognitive character traits for which an agent bears at least some responsibility (Baird and Cavlard, 2018: 267). Cassam outlines epistemic insouciance as an epistemic vice, and Baird and Cavlard detect three additional types of epistemic vices: epistemic malevolence (active individual or collective work with the intention to corrupt epistemic cultures and prevent epistemic goods), hubris (exaggerated sense of epistemic privilege related to power, arrogance and over-confidence) and injustice (Fricker's idea of injustice towards someone's credibility and capacity as a knower) (Baird and Cavlard, 2018: 268-271). They consider the nature of those epistemic vices, their prevalence in organizations and societies in general, especially in the domains of politics, media, or PR, to be epistemically overlooked instead

of being granted more space for analysis. When talking about epistemic vices and their predominance in the socio-epistemic sphere, we find ourselves in the social domain once again. As Baird and Cavlard claim, our moral and epistemic characteristics are “formed through process of acculturation, repetitive practice and habituation” - an epistemic subject establishes attitudes, dispositions and sensibilities through the process of socialization which gives an important role to the epistemic environment or rather broader community and related circumstances (Baird and Cavlard, 2018: 266). In this sense, it can be understood as old-fashioned, but nevertheless, cultivation of virtues and sharpening of the tools for critical reading and understanding, seem useful tools in selecting information from the social world.

In the context of the current outlooks on knowledge, ignorance represents an inevitable notion. Daniel R. DeNicola offers a unique and interesting position on **ignorance**. He distinguishes between two kinds of ignorance: the negative account of ignorance present in today’s culture and the second account, presented in a rather positive tone, in which ignorance is part of the ignorance/knowledge dichotomy, with ignorance preceding knowledge. I will come back to the latter account later on. For now, let us focus on the negative account concerning culture and collective understanding of knowledge. DeNicola diagnoses contemporary culture as a “culture of ignorance” characterized by the distrust in dominant sources of information and rejection of rationally important factors in constituting beliefs. He distinguishes “ignorance” as a lack of knowledge or understanding from stupidity as a mental dullness which disables learning, or irrationality, or error (DeNicola, 2017: 8, 22). As triggers for the current situation, DeNicola states the following: the impact of fundamentalist religion and partisan political ideology; postmodern deconstructions of ideals and concepts such as truth and reason; fusion of news and entertainment; the role of virtual reality; infection of pure science by “sponsored” research and profit; “the silence of the rational center”; and lastly, “user-preference technology” which enabled us to enjoy a cozy and isolated position with preferred news, information, music and voices (DeNicola, 2017: 9). All this leaves us in a “self-reinforcing” cave of ignorance which “we comfortably share with like-minded peers” (DeNicola, 2017: 95). DeNicola sums it up nicely in his claim that since the Enlightenment, different social reforms, universal education and scientific progress aimed to free people

from individual and collective ignorance, but today it shows that people voluntarily go back to the state of ignorance (DeNicola, 2017: 32). Ignorance bears refusal to know, as DeNicola notes, and the ideal of a well-informed citizen seems to fade. This seems like a valid, and unfortunately, rather realistic portrait of today's culture of ignorance.

I illustrated this ongoing epistemic mess because it affects the questions of food, its production as well as its consumption. Food is a burning topic today and people face many of its problems in practical and epistemic terms. The whole world is dealing with unsustainable practices concerning food production, global warming, climate change, environmental pollution, hunger, animal abuse, disappearance of entire eco-systems and population growth among others. It is visible in droughts, heat waves, and floods which marked this summer of 2021, the time of finishing this thesis. Beside its practical level, food has an epistemic aspect as well. We all have to eat, food has to be produced, and we are all exposed daily to a vast amount of food-related information which shape our choices of the food we buy and eat. This plethora of food-related information is coming from the messy epistemic pool of misinformation, questionable standards and ignorance, as portrayed above.

With all this in mind, **how do we shape our opinions about food?** How do we choose who to believe and embrace them as a reliable source of information? How to select truth-sensitive beliefs in this endless amount of information on an everyday level? "Quinoa is good for your health, you should eat it!" "Grains are good." "Why you should quit eating grains right now!" "Current agriculture is not sustainable." "Fires are the consequence of climate change." "There is not enough evidence to claim that we live in times of climate change." "GMO is the only future we have." "Organic agriculture is the only way to sustainability." An average epistemic subject is bombarded daily with a number of different beliefs coming from the social domain. Newspapers, portals, social media, media in general, universities, institutes, associations, experts, documentaries, books… New trends, new diets, and new kinds of food unknown to traditional cuisine are introduced daily. Every bombastic piece of news usually opens with the terrific yet infamous phrase, "New study has shown that…", as if the noun "study" gives a stamp of

validity for the information in question.[13] There is a great amount of information about food which we encounter every day which is often contradictory or unverified, and leads to general confusion and insecurity.

All information coming from different realms, including the realm of food, is based on other people's **testimony** which represents a domain in social epistemology focused on the transfer of beliefs between people. "Testimonies of other people are a fundamental social source of knowledge. The statements and testimonies of other are the key source of information on the basis of which we form, retain, or revise our beliefs" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 73). But testimony, as a source of information, was very much neglected. DeNicola writes that "most of our knowledge comes from the others"; testimony is somewhat devalued in traditional theory because it is second-hand, yet if we look more widely from the perspective of a traditional autonomous knower, epistemic community relies on the testimony of others (DeNicola, 2018: 123). As humans, we "work on trust" and our culture is based on trust – even scientists rely on knowledge developed by former colleagues (DeNicola, 2018: 124). We can trust or doubt a particular belief: "to trust is to extend credibility and forgo continual verification or justification; to doubt is to deny credibility absent compelling independent evidence or proof" (DeNicola, 2018: 123). Since I cannot verify the reliability of a particular belief, I must turn to someone and, as DeNicola beautifully sums it up, "to trust is to be willingly vulnerable" (DeNicola, 2018: 123). For a long time, epistemology ignored testimony as a fundamental source of information, but now it is clear that testimony is a vital way of acquiring knowledge. If we consider the immense significance of trust in forming beliefs and apply it in the contemporary social world where we simply must form beliefs while keeping in mind the sub-ideal aspect of our cognition, we can notice space being opened for epistemic injustice which leaves ethical and political consequences.

If I read a bombastic headline on a news portal saying, "New study shows that grains cause cancer!" – should I believe it? On what grounds should I embrace it as valid, or perhaps doubt it and discard it? Testimony is one of the sources of beliefs which we

[13] In Croatian, it is the famous line: „Istraživanja su pokazala…"

use to build the very architecture of beliefs regarding the world around us. The distinctiveness of testimony is that in its nature it exceeds the individual knower and includes the epistemic community (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 165). As Prijić-Samaržija states, testimony is the fundamental condition not only of science but of the entire intellectual functioning in the community. Testimony as a source of knowledge is essential for civilization and culture – we learn all our knowledge about the world in schools, by reading or researching; every scientist relies on previous findings. In a nutshell, testimony is one of the fundamental ways of acquiring knowledge (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 168). We have to believe someone.

How does our cognitive mechanism work? When we hear or read a particular food-related belief, for example, "New study shows that celery is a new source of longevity!", we cannot get independent evidence based on experience regarding that belief, but "check" it by determining whether it is sustained or not by our current framework of beliefs about the world. Every individual shapes a particular set of beliefs over time and creates a coherent set of beliefs which can constitute a tool for verification of new testimony-based beliefs (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 190). If I read in the newspapers that red meat correlates with colon cancer, I could easily accept that testimony as justified because my epistemic landscape consists of a belief that humans are built for a predominantly plant-based diet – this belief would somehow easily "fit" into my cognitive scheme. But if I read that article as a passionate meat lover and a fan of traditional meat-based cuisine with the accompanying belief system, I would probably be suspicious towards that claim and maybe dismiss it as "vegan ideology". Or if I, as a passionate "meat-loving protein junky", read that meat is a fundamental source of protein and a prerequisite for a "six-pack summer body", I would probably take that testimony as justified and fit it easily into my cognitive scheme which would verify my belief system. This kind of approach regarding the justification of testimony is known as **coherentism or coherence theory of justification.**[14] According to this theory, "a belief or set of beliefs is justified, or justifiably held, just in case the belief coheres with a set of beliefs, the set forms a coherent system

[14] I apologize for the brief time I dedicated to theories of justification. Besides coherentism, there are foundationalism and reliabilism. Unfortunately, space in my thesis is narrowing and I cannot go into any more detail.

or some variation on these themes" (Olson, 2017). As Prijić-Samaržija claims, our beliefs create a unique, intertwined, and coherent whole (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 226). That set creates our cognitive scheme which we use to understand and interpret the world around us. This explains why it is so improbable to dramatically change one's opinions. That dialogue could occur only with people who are not dogmatic in their beliefs, who do not own the epistemic vice of dogmatism or rigidity and who are open-minded to critically revisit their belief system. In that sense, self-reflection poses an important asset.

Moreover, there is **"background knowledge"** or a set of accepted beliefs about the world and **"folk psychology"** or commonsense psychology which is based on natural laws and language, and this commonsense knowledge also influences our verification of a particular informer (person or institution) (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 206). As Fricker understands, if the informer is a person, social prejudices and social identity of the informer can open the gate for unjust credibility judgments. Testimony is a fundamental source of knowledge and although we cannot be sure that it is true, we evaluate the belief in line with our personal belief architecture. We can also review our "background knowledge" in accord with the newly acquired beliefs and this is where open-mindedness matters as an epistemic virtue. Besides open-mindedness, curiosity and the aptitude for questioning and revising our beliefs and views constitute two epistemic axes. This leads us back to Cassam's "substantial self-knowledge" because this entire process occurs within one's inner world where one must select and estimate shared beliefs and eventually manage self-reflection and modification of one's belief-system. This is what our cognitive mechanism looks like. It opens questions about the balance between epistemic firmness and open-mindedness accompanied by constant self-reflection.

This flexibility or rigidity of beliefs leads us to public ignorance as a widespread cultural trait. DeNicola notes that one of the problems lies in the loss of persuadability which represents the epistemic virtue of "openness to rethinking beliefs in light of evidence and argument – is a central norm of epistemic communities" (…) and a key epistemic virtue of individuals" (DeNicola, 2018: 96). "True believers" without openness for reflection and eventual change of the current belief system are usually lost cases because there is no line of argumentation which would demonstrate the invalidity of the claim that, for

example, Earth is flat because you do not see Earth's curvature when traveling by boat (this is not a joke, but a real "argument" of flat-Earthers, "Behind the Curve", Clark, D.J., 2018). Usually, people like this are aggressive in their calcified beliefs and not quite pleasant interlocutors (everyone knows at least one "know-it-all").

We have a cognitive scheme with a web of personal beliefs but we should always walk the line of self-reflection and reevaluation of our beliefs, fine-tuning between epistemic firmness and open-mindedness. The central thought in this thesis is that ecological epistemology, as a branch of social/applied epistemology, should be employed as a framework for exploring the multidimensional domain of food in which the questions of "self", self-knowledge, power and epistemic injustice overlap. The reason for this is because ecological epistemology explores beliefs at their source, on the individual and collective level, while keeping in mind the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition and the collective imaginary saturated with power, norms, prejudices and stereotypes which are oppressive and undoubtedly play a great factor in constituting the "self". Apprehension and cultivation of one's self-knowledge and epistemic virtues as a task thus must be seriously conducted.

The individual knower is inseparable from the social sphere: communal knowledge, beliefs, customs and shared collective imaginary affect the attitude towards oneself and the world. As individual knowers, we seek to gain true beliefs, but also, on the social level, "if we want to be able to attain true beliefs, we ought to develop collective or social strategies of gathering information" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 74). As Prijić-Samaržija notes, theories of justification in individual epistemology, such as coherentism, foundationalism and reliabilism, correlate with theories of justification in social epistemology, such as consensualism, expertism and veritism (2018: 201). In our social quest for truth, Prijić-Samaržija refers to Goldman who stresses the position of **veritism** by pointing out that "social practices and entities need to be evaluated in terms of their contribution to generating knowledge or true, justified belief" (2018: 203). According to Goldman, "social entities such as science, law, media, educational practices, and institutions are as epistemically desirable as they develop reliable procedures or methods of generating true beliefs" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 203). In that sense, **science** "is still, in comparison with

any alternative system of generating beliefs and solving problems, the one with the most reliable methods and procedures (experiments, publications, reviews, conceptual and critical analysis and arguments) of generating truth-conductive beliefs and theories" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 203). Science is not infallible: it is based on trial and error, but the process of constant validation makes it epistemically superior in finding the answers. It is not perfect, finite, without errors or prejudices, stereotypes, or wrongful doings (as in the case of Rosalind Franklin who made a crucial contribution to the discovery of DNA but was severely neglected and only today can we speak about her real recognition). Perhaps far more important than science is the epistemic conduct of scientists, as well as epistemic vices of arrogance and closed-mindedness of people who bring forth science.

All this leads us to epistemic paragons or **experts**, indispensable in every domain, including food. There are some people who have more knowledge about a certain topic and can be qualified as experts. An expert is characterized by a higher degree of education, superior amount of knowledge and professional "training". These features enable them to be reliable "problem solvers", that is, reliable "truth seekers" or reliable indicators of conditions in the real world (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 135). Nota bene, experts do not imply that they belong to a privileged political elite or that they stand as bastions of social power. They are trained, reliable truth seekers but there are no universal experts and, moreover, being an expert in one area does not implicate that the person is an expert in every domain (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 12). Let us take the example of food. As I stated above, we are constantly overwhelmed with a great deal of food-related information, beliefs and issues. For example, we can read that a particular food item is withdrawn from supermarkets due to a high degree of pesticides. One day we can read that conventional agriculture relates to climate change and two days later that there is not enough evidence to claim that we live in an era of climate change. On the same day we can read that potatoes are the worst kind of food one can eat, while two news portals away, we can read the complete opposite belief praising the super-power of potatoes. Every year there are new trends which generate new enemies such as "gluten" (I am talking about healthy people, not those suffering from celiac disease) or new kinds of "superfood" which guarantee youth, rejuvenation and skin of a twelve-year-old girl. I remember one of my fitness instructors, an average, sane man who started eating raw kale maniacally because

it was that year's trend. He saw some "YouTube star/Instagram influencer" who "swore" by that method by several thousand likes. Why did my fitness instructor choose this "star" to be the expert, giving her his trust and the opportunity to shape his eating habits? Why is she seen as an "expert"? Who is an expert and whom should we believe? What comes as important here is the epistemic virtue of prudence because we are evaluating someone as an authority or estimating a particular theory as truth-oriented or not. The epistemic vices of recklessness or gullibility can appear as obstacles in the evaluation of a person as an expert.

Let us go further into the topic of experts. Prijić-Samaržija distinguishes between **"reputational" and "objective" experts**. The former does not guarantee that this expert is the most reliable guide towards truth, so she argues that an expert in a community is a person who, due to his/her acquired knowledge and exercise of reliable methods, has a greater ability to provide valid answers to questions and recognize false answers. Therefore, we have experts and "experts" – not all experts are equally good. Beliefs of experts are not always truthful and the progress of science shows that those held to be truthful in the past are replaced with new truths today; nevertheless, beliefs of experts are understood as the most reliable guides towards truth (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 136-138). Additionally, Prijić-Samaržija distinguishes between **experts-theoreticians** and **experts-practitioners**, and adds that there are **different degrees of expertise** (Prijić-Samaržija, 2000: 140). In the sea of (often contradictory) information, how should a layperson recognize an expert? On what grounds did my fitness instructor take the "kale woman" to be an "epistemic authority"? An **epistemic authority** can be regarded as an expert "whom other people, following a conscientious appraisal, select as a guide to truth" under the assumption that it is prudent to accept the opinion of that expert than to maintain their own opinion (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 220). The difference between an expert and an epistemic authority is that the status of the epistemic authority arises from the relationship with another person who places his/her superior expertise in the position of authority (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 220). Evidently, a layman cannot go to a laboratory and conduct research, but we must verify an expert and his/her beliefs to some extent - we must trust his/her authority, competence and sincerity. If I watch some agricultural expert on television, I will justifiably accept his/her belief when I estimate that his/her beliefs are

acceptable in given circumstances and that he/she is honest and competent. I will do that based on my own set of beliefs, which leads us back to the coherentist theory of justification. There is a possibility of disagreement between experts: one expert on nutrition argues that soy is one of the most dangerous groceries, while another swears that soy is the secret of Japanese longevity and female hormonal balance. Whom to trust and on what grounds? Once again, a person will trust the expert who he/she finds to be more honest, competent and in line with his/her set of beliefs.

As I have mentioned, there are objective experts and "experts"; there are different degrees of expertise among experts; an expert does not guarantee truth; and experts are not immune to epistemic vices, such as epistemic capriciousness, arrogance, close-mindedness, cowardice, or personal interest. But experts play an important role in our society since they are the most reliable guides towards truth. I agree with Prijić-Samaržija who claims that experts should be seriously involved in the decision-making process in deliberative democracy, but this does not mean defending the position of epistocracy, by any means. On the contrary, there should be no elitism or privilege among experts nor should they use their knowledge in order to pressure others into obeying their viewpoints (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 217).

Everything said so far inaugurates one integral part of our culture - **trust**. As DeNicola writes, epistemic communities exist based on trust which is the fundamental element of human communication and presupposes "that what is said is truthful, or at least sincerely believed" (DeNicola, 2018: 91). In Zagzebski's words, "to believe is to believe-true" (Zagzebski, 1996: 57). When you stop someone on the street and ask him/her for the time or directions (in the pre-mobile-phone era), you presuppose that the person will tell you the truth. Since we are social beings, the essential part of our epistemic communities and culture is trust. In today's world characterized by the epistemic chaos, the erosion of trust poses a great epistemic challenge. We live in a complex situation concerning knowledge, ignorance, power, and the surplus of information. Much of that is, following Harry Franfurt, bullshit. As individual knowers, we are nevertheless inseparable from the social realm, communal knowledge and shared collective imaginary. In this informational overload, testimony, as a fundamental way of acquiring knowledge,

occupies a prominent place. The role of experts and the issue of trust constitute important elements. Trust is an essential component of testimony and the acquisition of knowledge. In today's world, the loss of trust creates space for all sorts of injustices rooted in the epistemic injustice.

Thus far, I tried to outline the challenges that epistemic subjects confront on a daily basis in real-life situations. I consider social epistemology and its branch of ecological epistemology to be a practical tool for improving epistemic capacities of an average epistemic subject. It is part of what I call mental and emotional "hygiene" – enhancing our cognitive mechanism by constantly questioning and reevaluating our beliefs, values or norms and facing our own epistemic "bugs" embodied in stereotypes or prejudices. All this can be motivated by pure curiosity to understand oneself. In the following lines, I will shift the focus from the problems which epistemic subjects face in everyday life in approaching and shaping beliefs towards the intriguing question of **narrative** formation. In the process of building an opinion and giving trust to someone, the articulation of knowledge or narrative formation poses as immensely important in belief formation.

As Harriss and Stewart write, "framings" of a particular narrative "have influenced the collection of evidence and the ways in which facts are viewed. The power of different framings is more cultural and political than it is dependent upon scientific understandings" (Harriss and Stewart, 2015: 52). Facts and their interpretation cannot escape beliefs and values of those who present them as evidence. This is the point where power and knowledge overlap. One can detect the immense importance of power, as well as political and cultural articulation which influence scientific understandings. Furthermore, when epistemic "subject/eaters" (epistemic subjects who form beliefs about food) form an opinion on a particular subject and select whom to trust, the framing of that **narrative** very much affects the process of opinion formation. Let me present a concrete example concerning food. "The Oxford's Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society" is a comprehensive and essential book which explores the complex correlations between food and agriculture, politics and society, in which the abovementioned Harriss and Stewart write about the importance of narrative. In this rich and extensive book, I could not notice the highly polarized debate about the future of food and agriculture. The importance of

narrative formation here becomes evident: the facts and the way they are presented cannot be separated from the authors' beliefs and values because the strong effect of power cannot be ignored.

On the one hand, there is the **"science"** camp with their "Green Revolution" model, a production system of modern agriculture in which the market provides the intakes such as fertilizers, pesticides, fuel for machinery, and receives the outputs, and in which the main performance measures are yield and income (Nelson and Coe, 2015: 108). The "Green Revolution" took a major upswing between the 1960 and the 2000s, especially in Asia and Latin America, attaining increase in cereal yields as a result of the use of varieties, fertilizers, and irrigation (Nelson and Coe, 2015: 108). The era of "Green Revolution" had two major moments: it began in the 1940s but really grew strong in the 1960s and is characterized by "modern" varieties of cereals, while the second moment occurred in the 1980s but really gained momentum in the 1990s and is characterized by the application of genetic engineering in agriculture ("GMOs") (Harris and Stewart, 2015: 43). Those two moments in the development of technology opened a Pandora's box and stand as two important turns in food production. This kind of centralized, uniformed and industrial way of food production threatens genetic biodiversity and sustainability and leaves behind devastation and poverty, as we witness globally.

On the other hand, in the first-world context, **"organic"** agriculture is often recognized as an alternative to industrial agriculture (Nelson and Coe, 2015: 108). The birth of the organic food movement goes back to November 5th, 1972 when the national organizations from France, the UK, Sweden and South Africa met in Versailles to found the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (Larsson, 2015: 740). Much earlier, in 1940, Lord Northbourne coined the term "organic farming" and presented his manifesto on organic agriculture, "Look at the Land", which gave rise to an alternative international agricultural movement of organic farming (Paull and Hennig, 2020: 114). Lord Northbourne practiced biodynamic farming which is considered the dawn of organic agriculture, beginning in 1924 with Rudolf Steiner's famous "Agriculture Course" which anticipated the ominous direction of food production (Paull and Hennig, 2020: 114).

Organic production is focused on the production process. At first, the "organic" movement was focused on the methods for cultivating the soil without agrochemicals such as synthetic pesticides and artificial fertilizers, but with time has expanded onto the domains of meat and dairy production and questions of social justice, such as "fair trade", women's rights, "food sovereignty", or the empowerment of indigenous people (Larson, 2015: 741).[15] Furthermore, the movement is regarded not simply as a solution to local environmental problems, but as a potential solution to global issues (Larson, 2015: 741). As Michel Korthals writes, the discrepancy between various food and agricultural systems resides in their values about the nature of food and the value of nature (Korthals, 2015: 242). In my opinion, the biggest clash lies in sustainability. Conventional, industrial agriculture, which is based on monocultures, fertilizers, agrochemicals and manipulation of genes, constitutes one of the biggest factors in causing the environmental issues of greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion, air and water pollution. While conventional agriculture is shortsighted because it centers on the instrumental value of nature, alternative food movements, under the umbrella term "organic", focus on a different relationship with nature and the non-human world based on sustainable practices and cooperation rather than domination and exploitation.

"Natural", "organic" or "regenerative" agriculture includes approaches and practices which increase biodiversity, enrich the soil and cherish nature's intrinsic rather than instrumental value. Although conventional agriculture was successful in raising productivity, today it is unambiguous that its side effects, evident in environmental damage, prove this approach to be ultimately excessive and unsustainable. Due to climate change, pollution, global warming, hunger, animal abuse, extinction of species and entire

[15] As Michiel Korthals writes, "food sovereignty" is a concept that originated from small and medium farmers in Latin America and represents "the right of people to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to prove local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources" (Desmarais, Weibe & Witman in Korthals, 2015: 242). Hence the importance of the concepts of "justice", "knowledge" or "truth" and a corresponding normative framework discussed in earlier chapters.

eco-systems, as a human race we are forced to create new and more sustainable practices in line with environmental justice.

Epistemic vices being implemented into a narrative and power being inscribed into a particular narrative is problematic. What is evident is the **hierarchization of knowledge** based on “real science” which is often infected with epistemic arrogance although it is obvious that conventional agriculture, rooted in science and the “Green Revolution” model, proved unsustainable and calls for new methods of food production. Through this narrative, the proponents of the current, conventional agriculture, are often represented as “reliable”, “objective”, “rooted in science”, and “serious”, holding a hierarchical position of intellectual supremacy and epistemic arrogance, while the advocates of alternative approaches are often portrayed as “bogus”, “crazy”, “amateur tree-huggers” divorced from reality. Several question arise from this. How are the two axes of Science/Nature represented in our culture? On what grounds can epistemic “subject/eaters” form opinions about the subject in question and be truly “informed” citizens? How do they make everyday decisions which bear consequences and demand political changes? In other words, does the framing of a particular narrative impact its reception on the part of the knower?

The scientific technology based on gene varieties, artificial fertilizers, synthetic pesticides and human supremacy or power over nature communicates the solemn position wrapped in epistemic arrogance and power originating from the scientific position which generates per se objective and unquestionable knowledge. In my opinion, the pro-GMO side requires credibility simply on the grounds that they speak from the “scientific” position which leads us towards Fricker’s notion of epistemic injustice based on credibility excess. Every position within a hierarchy comes with power(lessness). Although conventional agriculture has contributed to the reduction of famine in some parts of the world in the short run, at the same time it is ultimately unsustainable because chemical fertilizers, agrochemicals, monocultures and its general approach lead to vast environmental damage, as witnessed globally. This approach has also showed that epistemic injustice is at the core of broader social injustice. It appears that modern agricultural technology is positively portrayed simply because it is “scientific”, while alternative approaches are discredited as “nonscientific”, ergo less valuable or

nonsensical. As Harriss and Stewart argue, “different framings reflect different values and worldviews that are not subject to empirical refutation” (Harriss and Stewart, 2015: 52). This is a clear example of epistemic injustice in which power and knowledge overlap and a particular knowledge enjoys excessive credibility preventing it from being questioned. Conversely, other “corpora” of knowledge are immediately discredited because of their credibility deficit. Regardless of technological development, we are and will be dependent on the land and its resources. Conventional farming, based on synthetic chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, genetically modified organisms, intensive tillage which leaves the soil barren, heavy irrigations, monoculture production (nota bene, this kind of production is not old, it developed after the WWII), and motivated by the capitalist imperative of high input and output, is not sustainable. If we want to continue to live on Earth, we must turn to regenerative agriculture with methods of soil enrichment and a holistic approach to nature which will increase biodiversity. It is not about “picking sides” – at this moment, it is about survival.

Let us take the example of Alan McHughen’s text, “Fighting Mother Nature with Biotechnology”, whose moral is “science or bust”. I find this epistemically unjust. McHughen writes: “If we don’t like human domination of the planet’s resources, the option is to reject human technology and return to Mother Nature.” (McHughen, 2015: 435). On the contrary, we can evaluate options and create new ones, more sustainable and ethical towards Earth. In his view, it is “some naïve Europeans” who talk about “natural agricultural environment”, while “all kind of ‘natural’ farming destroys biodiversity” (McHughen, 2015: 437). Unfortunately, that only demonstrates that this scientist has never really worked with soil and that he does not understand the foundational principles of functioning alternative approaches to soil. What constitutes an expert in the domain of food production? In terms of food production, a person who writes about the soil and growth of food, yet lacks practical knowledge and understanding of the soil, makes a questionable expert in my view.

According to his understanding, we can practice “pre-industrial farming” and die of hunger or turn to gene mutation, as if there is nothing in between. Such articulation of knowledge does not look just, but rather manipulative and patronizing. This is a beautiful

example of epistemic arrogance and a biased or even a manipulative way of framing a particular narrative. Science is a great guide towards objective epistemic value, but it is not perfect. Nor are scientists immune to the epistemic vices of intellectual pride, arrogance, conformity or rigidity. McHughen states “misconceptions” such as “species barrier”, that is, the transfer of genetic material not being unusual in nature. But let us not be fooled - the real question is the gene transfer which would not occur in nature but it does happen with GMO technology and the risks it brings. As Harris and Stewart write, “no amount of science can finally prove that there can *never* be harmful effects, for the environment or for the health of humans and animals” (Harris and Stewart, 2015: 46). The risk and the possible irreversible consequences pose a problem. Is not this the embodiment of epistemic arrogance? What should we do about unsustainable agriculture which leaves behind barren soil and complete devastation on a global level? How ethical is it to bestow this burning planet as a legacy to future generations? The life of future generations will be much harsher due to older generations’ irresponsibility.

McHughen frames the narrative in such a manner that if we do not embrace science without questioning it, we will perish in a slow and painful death. Ironically, science and its methods have brought us to where we are – our planet is literally engulfed in flames. Now that we know better, let us learn from our mistakes and make a better science. He colors the narrative with panic and desperation, as if there are just two options: we can either live the impossible pre-industrial agrarian lifestyle or a “hardcore” conventional approach based on GMO. As if there is nothing in between. Yet so many examples from around the world prove the opposite. When it comes to food, the polarization of sides is quite strong. Norman Uphof, in his text “Alternative Paths to Food Security”, opens a passage for different understandings which exceed this polarized debate.

> “Alternative management practices, as discussed below, mobilize biological process that elicit beneficial interspecies interactions and enhance plant’s expression of their existing genetic potentials. This approach, broadly characterized as ‘agroecological’ can be undertaken either as an alternative or as a compliment to what is called ‘modern agriculture’. From an ecosystem perspective, crops are not regarded as isolated species, with other organisms seen mostly as competitors or adversaries (weeds, pest, or pathogens). Nor is the soil treated as an essentially inert medium, in which the plants

> begin grown are primarily dependent upon farmer's inputs. Rather, agroecological approaches aim to capitalize on symbiotic relationship among the huge number of complementary species, both flora and fauna, that cohabit ecosystems. This strategy is not some kind of backward or atavistic version of agriculture. In fact, it derives support from contemporary knowledge in disciplines such as microbiology, soil ecology, plan genomics and proteomics, and epigenetics (Uphof, 2015: 203).

Uphof beautifully outlined one problem of narrative-framing: oftentimes, the "scientific" approach of conventional agriculture is presented as rational, objective and the only that can save the world, while the "non-scientific" or alternative approaches are portrayed as irrational and "non-scientific", ergo, ridiculous, despite them often being rooted in several millennia old knowledge. This is truly epistemic arrogance at its best. There is so much happening today in regard to sustainable food production practices, but they simply do not have a voice or space in the mainstream narrative which is a great defect. Science is the best guide towards the truth, but let us not be so pompous in thinking that we know better than nature and the thousands of years of knowledge that it has shaped. Scientists such as McHughen condescendingly ridicule alternative approaches calling them crazy or bogus and their proponents irrational amateurs or uneducated tree-huggers.

As Lisa Heldke writes in her text "Farming Made Her Stupid", in the hierarchy of knowledge, the label "stupid" gets enforced on marginalized groups of knowers – in this case, rural people are defined as stupid, and I would add, everybody who disagrees with experts' narrative (Heldke, 2006: 151). Although food production is practical or physical work, thousands of years old knowledge of food production and tradition are inscribed in it. Yet, in this polarized debate, "science" is related to "real" knowledge, while the proponents of different approaches, within the hierarchization of knowledge, as well as people who do the manual work and actually produce food, are often framed as uneducated and unsophisticated, or plainly stupid. "Knowing is theory making, hierarchically distinguished from practice or practical activity; it is most closely associated with 'head work' and mentality, not 'hand work' and the body. Knowing is general and abstract (and often atemporal), not particular and specific (and time-specific)" (Heldke, 2006: 155). Scientific knowledge about GMO is sophisticated knowledge, as opposed to

manual and physical knowledge of food production which is seen as primitive. This is how in real life power generates positions within hierarchy – embodied "selves", concrete Others who do not belong to the category of "unified", but come from different positions which shape different experiences, understandings and knowledge. Every position carries in itself the power(lessness) of its very own position. This is an example of scientific narrative wanting to establish itself as a general narrative while excluding the narrative of Others. Therefore, it is important to make space for different "selves" who have different voices, knowledge, experiences, and understandings. In this case, people who actually produce food, different theories and approaches, farmers, peasants, seasonal and migrant workers and all those who are, due to their manual work, placed low in the hierarchy of knowledge, as opposed to scientists who are, because of their theoretical knowledge, positioned high in the hierarchy. This would be a case for self-reflection, epistemic open-mindedness and curiosity.

"Although public policy should be informed by scientific 'evidence', it cannot be dictated by 'evidence'" (Harriss and Stewart, 2015: 60). As I see it, a genuine expert on soil and food must have both theoretical and practical components. The epistemic virtue of intellectual humility and openness, instead of intellectual arrogance, is essential. Again, the question of experts arises in this realm as well. As a layperson, to embrace a particular narrative as truthful, expertise needs "epistemic brokerage" – namely, a trusted authority who can separate the true from the false. In other words, **"epistemic brokers"** give us their particular reading of "complex and contested scientific evidence" (Harris and Stewart, 2015: 52). That is once more one problematic aspect in the power-laden process of articulation and transformation of knowledge. Science is a great tool but not immune to the epistemic vices of arrogance and superiority. This is where the importance of epistemic virtues and applicable epistemology comes to light.

As I have said, people who actually produce food are situated low in the hierarchy of knowledge. "Smallholder farming… remains the most common form of organization in agriculture, even in industrial countries" (Chappell according to World Bank 2015: 719). Yet, as a class, they seem to be invisible and underrepresented, perceived as a lower social class, connected with backwardness and physical labor. Their knowledge is

considered unsophisticated and irrelevant when, in reality, they are the ones producing food. This brings us back to the question of the "self", intersectionality, class as an integral part of one's identity, and the importance of the socio-epistemic context of the cognizer who is bound by power(lessness) and (absence of) voice and representation. Generalization or unification of "selves" turns some into subjects and others into objects with no history or particular experiences. A socially situated "self" bears a specific socio-political identity and this position shapes his/her knowledge. This echoes Benhabib who argues for embodied individuals, concrete Others who are distinguished by gender, class, race, natural and physical capacities as well as cultural differences. All these elements generate different experiences and knowledge about oneself and the surrounding world. An upper-class urban woman buying organic vegetables has little in common with a poor and exploited immigrant or seasonal worker who produces that same food.

In this polarized debate, the problematic aspect of narrative-framing can also come from the other side of the spectrum. As Siddharta Shome writes in her text, "The Social vision of the Alternative Food Movement", the alternative food movement surpasses the realm of food – it aims at a "more sustainable, more environmentally friendly and more just socio-economic order" (Shome, 2015: 523). Another relevant facet of alternative approaches to food production is their articulation of the narrative, often illustrated as escapism and dyed in idealization and romanticism. Usually, the pre-modern, pre-technological way of life and traditional agricultural practices are praised.

Naturally, we should cherish and further develop traditional and useful knowledge about soil and food production because it contains thousands of years of practice and wisdom, yet not idealize past times and lifestyle. Idealization of past times usually comes from the comfort of one's own couch and privileged position. I would not glorify traditional ways of life in their totality because they were oftentimes oppressive, deprived of rights and possibilities, brutal and patriarchal, far removed from the usually romanticized notions.

This kind of escapist approach also implies a complete rejection of contemporary culture, and in so doing, confirms the nature/culture dichotomy. By maintaining that the

“real” nature is far away, in wild mountains, this kind of narrative prevents us from developing eco-consciousness in our real and imperfect micro-local context. We do not need to retreat to mountains and discard all elements of modern culture to make a difference. On the contrary, we must make a difference in our communities, current social landscapes and imperfect conditions. Why not learn and master useful traditional food production with critical reflection, combine it with science and apply it in cities, suburbs and green square surfaces in front of our buildings - an approach based on “power with” rather than “power over” nature? Why must science be exclusively grounded in gene manipulation? Why not focus on the understanding of soil, importance of microorganisms and their interconnections which are completely neglected within the existing paradigm?

To sum it up, how is knowledge about food articulated under the current epistemic conditions? Who possesses **power over articulation** in the first place? Who gets to be heard and who is excluded from the discourse? Is the global food arena inclusive and what are the power relations within? In his important text, “Agricultural Futures: The Politics of Knowledge”, Ian Scoones asks the following question: “How do processes of knowledge framing occur? How do different practices and methodologies get deployed in cross-cultural, global processes? How is ‘representation’ constructed and legitimized? How, as a result, do collective understandings of global issue emerge?” (Scoones, 2018: 844). It seems to me that the local knowledge of people who actually produce food is excluded, much like their **voices** in general. Their knowledge is seen as backward, stupid and irrelevant. This brings us back to Foucault, power(lessness), the “self”, and the situated knower, who is shaped by social forces which determine his/her social position which, in turn, shapes knowledge and understanding. Conversely, “science” is imposed as the only dominant factor in the production of knowledge which uses with its power to discredit the “subjugated” forms of knowledge without giving them a chance. What is this than the resurrection of our beloved Foucault who argued for genealogy – subjugated knowledge or knowledge from below, merged with singular, local knowledge of “what people know”, which creates “anti-science”? Anti-humanist Foucault gave a positive stance towards knowledge, in this case, the knowledge of the oppressed.

Traditional ways of producing food which entail thousands of years of wisdom together with the current growing body of knowledge in sustainable food production need to be taken seriously and as equals in the hierarchy of knowledge. We need an epistemically virtuous science, based on curiosity and humility. Food production which cooperates with nature in a sustainable manner is truly our last resort. New science-based technologies should align with nature and sustainability and go in the direction of understanding the traditional and “alternative”, or rather, “subjugated” forms of knowledge. The discourse about the hierarchization of knowledge and polarization of the debate is pointless because, as a human race, we are running out of time.

In this part of the thesis, I wanted to point out the collective epistemic mess we are facing in this era of informational overload and the importance of epistemic virtues, with food as a strong social factor. The enormous importance lies in the social realm, communal knowledge and shared collective imaginary. We are all social beings for whom testimony constitutes a fundamental way of acquiring knowledge. Whom to trust and on what grounds? This is the question that refers to everything we read or hear, food itself included. Who is an expert? How much are we open towards different ideas? How are power and knowledge intertwined? How is a particular knowledge being articulated into a narrative? Who has a voice and who is heard? In the current context of global warming, climate change, mass extinction and pollution, all reducible to the common denominator of unsustainability, we need a more inclusive framing based on cooperation rather than domination and exclusion. Theory and practice need to work together and soil cannot be understood in laboratories. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija’s hybrid perspective shows that epistemic virtues are greatly important on all levels – we must train our epistemic mechanism both as individuals and communities. What counts is the epistemic conduct of the subject in question, be it a scientist, food producer or an average consumer. Not only personally, but collectively as well must we establish new and better epistemic norms aligned with ethical and political ones on a broader social level.

5.2. Epistemology, food and politics

What is the relationship between epistemology, food, power, and politics? How does this discourse operate and generate “epistemic injustice”? How is that related to us, epistemic “subject/eaters”? To explore these connections, I propose ecological epistemology to be a proper tool for understanding the complex realm of food. In this section, I will focus on impairment on the structural level which, in Fricker’s words, puts epistemic subjects in a disadvantaged position which generates epistemic injustice lying at the root of broader social injustice. Additionally, I will lower my focus from the structural level of injustice to the individual position of the epistemic “subject/eater” in the neoliberal capitalist society in which structural power becomes evident in the epistemic mechanism constituting the “self” or self-knowledge.

To explain the connection between epistemology, food, and politics, I will once again resort to a Marxist conceptual tool, mentioned in the former chapters. One of the essential concepts is that of **“alienation”** which I outlined in a threefold way: alienation of the individual from the product of his/her own labor; alienation from his/her own activity of labor; and lastly, alienation from another person or people. In the context of food, alienation is an essential concept which refers to a “gap between food production and food consumption” (Korthals, 2018: 233). This concept enables unethical conduct and epistemic injustice. In the past, food was produced locally and consumed seasonally because there was no infrastructure or technology to support a different model. Over the last several decades, things have changed drastically.

People who I relate to, whether those who buy my vegetables or come to my workshops, usually have the same story as my late grandparents. Older generations (born before or around WWII) were buying food in modest grocery stores where you could buy meat, flour, sugar, and a few other items. Fresh seasonal vegetables and groceries were sold on the market where the suburban locals would come to sell their goods. Meat was eaten usually on Sunday and holidays (if you could afford it, unless you had your own source of meat). Eggs were usually eaten by old or sick people and kids (surplus was not eaten but usually sold). People outside of the city had small gardens and ate seasonal

food, most of them had a few chickens, maybe a cow or a pig. In the suburbs of Rijeka, my grandma had several chickens and one pig that my father just played with when he was a kid. It may seem cruel that this pig would later end up as food, but my grandma's explanation was that she provided the pig with a good life, and when the time came, the pig provided them with the needed food. This appears as an utterly humane and fair exchange compared to the painful lives that animals live in today's industrial food-production systems. They were living "green" without knowing because there was no waste (there was a compost landfill in the garden for organic waste), there was no plastic and everything was reused as much as possible, such as glass bottles. I do not claim that the past was better, but want to outline how short the food chain was – the process of food production was short and well-known. The complete food system was heavily transformed only recently, with the appearance of cooler trucks and the "supermarket revolution" which started in the 1990s and continues till this day (Reardon and Timmer, 2015: 810). Today we are all consumers clueless of food - how it is grown and where it comes from – we get to know it when we see it on supermarket shelves, wrapped in plastic. Many kids today do not know what a real cow looks like – their first association to cow is Milka chocolate. These are massive and important changes which have major consequences.

The focus of modern food production and consumption is not on sustainability but on profit: "higher yields, more intensive use of nature and more consumption is the logic of the system" (Korthals, 2018: 233). Contemporary food system is driven by capitalism and its logic which generate injustice and oppression. The capitalist mechanism, in which politics and economy merge, lies in the background of the food-related collective imaginary replete with oppressive and dehumanizing norms, stereotypes and prejudices. This mechanism has an epistemic aspect which is present in the process of the constitution of the "self" or self-knowledge with its numerous beliefs, values, and norms that we, as epistemic subjects, acquire from the communal knowledge. It is not enough to simply say that capitalism is bad because it generates evident injustices; it is important to explore how the mechanism in question operates and how it is being reproduced. Ecological epistemology is an appropriate tool for understanding this machinery because

it grasps the multidimensionality of food – it encompasses power, self-knowledge and broader social injustice.

Alienation from or unfamiliarity with the food production process creates spaces not only for different ethical but for epistemic issues as well. Alienation in this sense brings epistemic "subject/eaters" in an unfavorable position – when we get the final, wrapped product in the supermarket, we are clueless as to when, where and how it was produced and processed. We must trust what we are being told and "to trust is to be willingly vulnerable", claims DeNicola (2018: 123). Transparency and trust are very problematic issues today. In our epistemic life, as I have shown in the previous section, we heavily rely on the testimony of other people, in regard to food as well, and this creates the problem of trust and transparency. We have to eat, we have to trust somebody that the food we buy is as claimed – "homegrown", "local", "organic", etc. As DeNicola argues, epistemic communities function on the presumption of trust, but "bullshitting" or misinformation generate cynicism and continual practices of this kind contribute to the "culture of ignorance" (DeNicola 2018: 91). The contemporary epistemic "subject/eater" is in an unfavorable position, alienated from the food production process and, at the same time, our food chain is very long because food is coming from different parts of the world. Consumerism, as a core value of capitalism, enables abundance and choice, while at the same time it generates carbon footprint and opens doors for all kinds of ethical malpractice which have the epistemic misuse of trust in their root. For an average epistemic agent it is hard to form truth-oriented food-related beliefs, taking into consideration the sub-ideal aspect of cognition (as Cassam showed), and the complex social landscape saturated with different power relations effecting the epistemic mechanism which partakes in the constitution of the self or self-knowledge. Ecological epistemology focuses on precisely that – individual and collective formation of beliefs and on epistemic roots of injustice.

Now let us return to Foucault and his theory of knowledge in which power plays a fundamental role in the process of knowledge production. In essence, power and knowledge constitute a discourse, a result of political and economic structures, which operates and perpetuates itself through productive forces, such as communal values, traditions, beliefs, norms, prejudices and stereotypes. The implication is that knowledge

and truth are produced or rather socially constructed. This powerful claim formed basis for a strong critique of science and epistemology. As Foucault argues, instead of truth and knowledge, we have a social construction of truth and scientific discourse which is "infected" with power.

I do not support a "hard", post-modern deconstruction of truth or knowledge, but I think that it enabled a constructive critique of science and knowledge. Science is still and always will be an epistemically superior method for finding answers – with its methods and verification, science enables people to live lives of significant quality and comfort compared to past generations. For the sake of the length of this thesis, let us put class issues aside, while arguing that in general, science provides a modern, comfortable, privileged and long life (to some). It is quite easy to advocate different conspiracy theories or to deny the overall scientific and civilizational legacies from the coziness of one's home and the latest iPhone without being aware of the privileges which that same civilization has provided. Science is not perfect, but it is the best method we have for finding answers. Without science, we would live short and painful lives and probably die at the age of 20 from something as banal as a tooth or ear infection which can be cured with one dosage of antibiotics today. Nevertheless, what I outlined as problems in the previous sections are the effect of power on knowledge, hierarchization of knowledge and implications of narrative formation, as well as the epistemic vices of arrogance, intellectual pride or conformity. With his critique of the power/knowledge nexus, Foucault opened doors for a broader discussion of power and interest in the "knowledge-production" process. Is scientific motivation always a quest for truth? Or should we pay attention to political and economic impacts? Does the "non-epistemic" motivation embodied in career success, money, prestige, power, and similar practical interests interfere and how? How does the capitalist machinery, powered by profit and present in the background of our shared collective imaginary, affect an average epistemic subject in selecting truth-oriented food-related beliefs?

To put this into the context of food, let me offer a few examples. Several days before writing this, there was an article in Croatian newspapers about apples from Serbia and Macedonia, falsely declared as homegrown apples from Croatia (Soldo, 2021). The

article says that the apples were bought cheaply, falsely declared and sold as “homegrown”. Not only that, they were treated with a particular pesticide which was banned in the European Union seven years ago because of its effect on human hormone metabolism. This is not an isolated case and for this reason people are losing trust in those institutions which should control and regulate food. This example casts light on a bigger, structural problem of transparency. The most popular question when people are buying food at the market is: “Is it homegrown?”[16]. There is no guarantee that the food you buy on the market is homegrown and not imported, cheaply bought and sold as “homegrown”. Ecologically grown food can be certified, but the question is how much people really believe in certificates. In my opinion and from my experience, not much, and secondly, how reliable are they really? Are people not, as subjects/eaters, epistemically and politically damaged if they are not buying what they are settled to buy? The lack of transparent and truthful information about the food puts a subject in an epistemically and politically disadvantaged position. Furthermore, cases like this contribute to the violation of trust towards the whole process of food regulation. What I deem necessary is transparent and rigid control of the production and distribution of products, as well as a clear and transparent classification system. Consumers have an epistemic and a political right to know whether the food is imported or homegrown, but more so, how it is grown – is it organically/ecologically or conventionally grown. Afterwards, one can choose what to buy according to their preferences. I am not saying that all of us have to buy the same thing, but we have to have informed and transparent choices. The lack of transparency and misuse of trust place people in an epistemically disadvantaged position which generates epistemic injustice.

Perhaps the most infamous example of consumer distrust towards the food regulation system in Croatia was the case of the biggest producer of organic food, leading in the field for a decade (Valentić and Vrabec, 2021). This notorious case of epistemic injustice is till this day mentioned as a paradigmatic case of the loss of trust in food regulation and institutions which should provide knowledge about food. In 2015 one Croatian newspaper discovered that the fruit and vegetables sold under the label “organic”

[16] “Jel’ domaće?”

and “homegrown” by this particular brand, were actually conventionally grown, imported, bought cheaply at night without declaration at markets, distributed to their venues and sold at ten times the price. The newspapers revealed that this fraud was not an incidental case but a structural problem – they wrote about an organized chain of fraud in the production of healthy food and the problem of organized buyout of conventionally produced food which is later labeled and sold as “organic” (“Ekskluzivni audio”, *Telegram*, 2015.).

After the affair, the business in question crashed and the owner sued the newspaper who brought the fraud into the spotlight. In 2018 the newspaper won the case in court. They wrote another expose in 2021 in which they revealed that after the crash of business, the government issued more than 1 million kuna of financial incentives (nota bene, to the producer who was proven guilty of cheating his customers) as support for organic production of food (!). The newspapers also discovered scams involving eco-certification, monitoring and documentation. This represents a paradigmatic case which testifies that something is wrong in the control and distribution of healthy food in Croatia and, in a broader sense, within those structures which should produce knowledge and truthful information about food. That particular case carved into people’s consciousness and created a feeling of strong distrust towards organically produced food and the social structures that regulate it.

This seems to be a universal practice visible in some recent cases. An incident occurred when British and French food agencies discovered that instead of French beef, what was packed was really Romanian horsemeat (Mihalić Đurica, 2013). Someone made enormous profits off of false declarations. Similarly, there was a great national panic when it was discovered that meat in Romania was frozen 40 years ago, recently defrosted, prepacked and frozen again (Ladišić and Živko, 2016). This occurs every now and then so we cannot call them incidental cases but rather malpractice and epistemic injustice on a **structural level**. Likewise, every so often, one can read about a withdrawal of a particular product from supermarket shelves of because of pesticides. This was the case with contaminated sesame seeds which came to Croatia and all the products made from it, such as snacks or bread spreads, had to be removed off supermarket shelves (“Opasno

po zdravlje", 2021). Sesame seeds were imported from India and it was discovered that they contained a carcinogenic pesticide, ethylene oxide, not approved in the EU because it poses a serious risk for human health. This happens frequently. When people read about these cases in the newspapers, they are deliberately misled as to the true origin of the product, they are epistemically damaged about a fundamental thing such as food, and moreover, they are politically damaged because they are not paying for what they agreed upon.

Due to the alienation from the process of food production, people encounter processed and wrapped products whose declaration they should believe. However, many examples show that they are manipulated and deceived. Such cases, especially leaked in the press, diminish the trust in food regulatory institutions. Behind closed doors, where institutions should do their job ethically and transparently, the sweetness of profit interferes and injustice is generated. The system of food control should be better and based on the basic virtue of fairness. All this leads the "subject/eater" into an epistemically and politically damaged and disadvantaged position. Alienation from the process of food production which occurs in a capitalist context driven by profit, generates all sorts of injustices rooted in epistemic injustice. This capitalist apparatus, in which political and economic structures ensure the creation of a particular discourse and in which knowledge and power are intertwined, is the background of our collective imaginary brimming with food-related norms, values, prejudices and stereotypes. Therefore, this machinery which shapes the social world we are embedded in, also represents the basis of the epistemic mechanisms responsible for the constitution of the "self" or self-knowledge where our beliefs, norms, values, needs and motives are being formed which, in turn, shape our future attitudes, practices and behaviors regarding food.

When it comes to sustainable food production, pesticides constitute an inevitable point. In regard to pesticides and the epistemic issue of trust, I will shortly address the current problem with glyphosate, the most commonly used herbicide for weed control globally, which has its approval in the EU until December of 2022. Germany and France are eager to ban the usage of this herbicide, the EU must decide whether it will be used in the future, while Bayer-Monsanto, one of the biggest producers of glyphosate in the

world, disagrees with the claim of the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) which, in March 2015, classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans" (WHO, 2015). This is a dangerous balance between health and sustainability on one side, and profit on the other. Furthermore, we read about inspections and "allowed concentration of pesticides" or "maximum residue of pesticides" in food. The question is – where is the limit of those concentrations in ecological production certified in Croatia (nota bene, the distinction between "organic" and "ecological" production here)? Who sets the limits and on what grounds? Are controls transparent and just? Why should this issue be excluded from the discourse resulting from the political and economic structures and what is the role of profit in it? People who use pesticides should be transparent about it, they should apply them according to instructions, keep a record and truthfully inform their consumers, and above all, they should have appropriate knowledge regarding the usage and dosage of pesticides. It is mandatory to pass a course on pesticide use, but it is a well-known fact that things work differently in practice – what is lacking is not only thorough education and control of responsible pesticide use or transparent information about their usage, but also education in alternative and organic food production which is still perceived as "mumbo jumbo", although there are so many successful examples that confirm quite the opposite. This is where the epistemic aspect enters the picture. People who produce food should educate themselves and change old-fashioned paradigms. Additionally, education should be institutionally organized and available on a local level, and best if based on a per-to-peer model. This brings us back to the importance of the epistemic virtues of curiosity or open-mindedness.

Besides that, organic food production is not a new trend but actually older than conventional food production (which was developed only recently, after WWII) and has been largely successfully applied and developed in many parts of the world for thousands of years. Thanks to the internet and accessibility, that kind of knowledge is only a "Google" away. Let us take Denmark, world's leading organic food producer, as an example. The goal of the Danish government is 100% organic production on the national level. Food production and shift towards the organic is organized and supported on a structural level, it is a state-controlled system. Denmark is a global leader in sustainable and organic food production. Beginning in the 1960s when Danish consumers started practicing

environmentally friendly consumption, Denmark is one of the sustainable and least polluting food producers in the world today (Danish Agriculture and Food Council, n.d.). Why not take Denmark as an example of good practice? If one is epistemically open for a change of beliefs and practices, there are so many examples of good practice, from small urban farms to big farms in Australia, nearly the size of a smaller European country. No one has to reinvent the wheel, but simply be epistemically open for modification of one's own belief system. The needed information lies in abundance and available for free on the Internet. What is necessitated is a shift in one's own cognition.

All of the abovementioned examples shed light on the epistemic problem of injustice. Due to the alienation from the process of food production, people have to trust institutions which produce food-related knowledge and that trust is impaired to a large extent. Is not this fusion of food-related knowledge and profit precisely Foucault's discourse created from the power/knowledge nexus? Fusion of profit and knowledge calls for the questions of motive and trust – whom to believe and on what grounds? Our understanding of food discourse is very much disciplined, filled with dubious information and lack of transparency and trust which damage the subject epistemically and politically, creating in him/her the feeling of distrust, confusion, fear, and doubt. This discourse, in which power and knowledge merge and which is fueled by political/economic structures and the inevitable profit, generates broader injustices on a social level. An appropriate tool for detecting this epistemic injustice, as the basis for food-related injustices, represents ecological epistemology which is necessary for the exploration of food from the position of social power. This capitalist-powered mechanism has its roots in the epistemic sphere – impaired knowledge, violated trust and the lack of transparency put the epistemic subject in a disadvantaged position. In other words, there is an interruption in the process of understanding or interpreting dubious knowledge infected with power and profit. In this kind of social context, epistemic subjects must estimate and form their beliefs, manage self-reflection and continue to act, make choices, and create habits pertaining to food.

At the root of this mechanism lies another malevolent epistemic practice which enables its reproduction - **doubt**. Nothing works as efficient as doubt. One of such

examples is the **"tobacco strategy"**, described by Naomi Oreskes and Eric Conway. They meticulously depict the power of doubt, its political and, in my opinion, epistemic implications. This shows precisely that implanting doubt is a point where knowledge and profit merge. It began with smoking: "So long as there was doubt about the causal link [between smoking and cancer], the tobacco industry would be safe from litigation and regulation" (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 5). Oreskes and Conway delineate how two scientists, Frederick Seitz and Siegfried Singer working for the tobacco industry, helped create doubt regarding the scientific evidence which correlated smoking with death. Singer and Sitz, along with several other scientists, did not have scientific evidence which would show that there is no connection between tobacco and cancer – their crucial role was to sow doubt. They conjoined think tanks, foundations, private corporations and the fossil fuel industry, claiming that the link between smoking and cancer "remained unproven". They denied the existence of scientific agreement on the correlation between smoking and cancer (scientists had conclusive evidence of the tobacco-cancer link since the 1950s). The media played a role as well – they repeated their claims as they were "a 'side' in scientific debate", created the impression of scientific "debate" when there was really no debate (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 7). Once again, the importance of narrative framing becomes evident. In this case, the media framed the narrative as if a debate without clear consensus was ongoing. As a matter of fact, there were really no "sides" and no scientific debate. There was scientific agreement in the scientific community that a link between smoking and cancer undoubtedly exists. On the other side, there was a handful of obscure scientists motivated by profit who claimed that the link between smoking and cancer was unproven and the media which presented this as a "debate" when it was clearly not. This doubt about the harm of smoking was a tool for the tobacco industry in the second half of the 20th century, for secondhand smoking in the 1990s and for every other campaign which disputed the facts (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 34). This is a clear example of epistemic injustice in which power, motivated by profit, merges with knowledge. In this case, the mechanism operates and reproduces itself based on epistemic injustice and creating doubt.

It all began with tobacco, thus the name "tobacco strategy", but as Oreskes and Conway show, it was a well-established strategy later applied on different issues, such as

global warming and on a list of environmental and health issues, such as asbestos, secondhand smoking, acid rain and ozone holes. As Cassam argues, the kind of conjunction between science and profit embodied in the “tobacco strategy”, is an example of epistemic malevolence which “undermines knowledge by instilling doubts about respectable sources of evidence” (Cassam, 2018: 1). The most problematic thing is that scientists should generate truth-objective knowledge based on science, but in these cases “they used their scientific credentials to present themselves as authorities, and they used their authority to try to discredit the science they didn’t like” (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 8). This is epistemic injustice with serious epistemic and political consequences.

As Oreskes and Conway demonstrate, the “tobacco strategy” is very much present in the realm of environmentalism which relates to food as well. The name of Rachel Carson comes to mind. She was a marine biologist who wrote the famous book “Silent Spring” in 1962. It may be the most powerful book ever written about environmentalism, which undoubtedly paved the way for the environmental movement. Ahead of her time, Carson courageously and clearly wrote about the harms of pesticide use, accumulation of pesticides in the food chain, and the danger they pose to people and the entire natural environment. Her work is extremely important in relation to food systems. DDT, then heavily used, was similar to glyphosate today. As Oreskes and Conway write, DDT “seemed to be a miracle chemical” – it was cheap, it killed insects immediately and almost entirely, and, following the Second World War, its use expanded in agriculture when farmers began to use it after the US government cheaply sold surplus warplanes to farmers who turned them into crop dusters (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 218). Carson, as a marine biologist, presented extensive and systematic scientific evidence that pesticides were doing grave harm, especially DDT because of the proof of bioaccumulation. She experienced vicious sexist and professional attacks – she was characterized as “hysterical” and “emotional”, a “bird and bunny lover”, a “cat woman”, a romantic “spinster” frantic about genetics. As Linda Lear writes in the introduction to the 2002 edition, Carson was portrayed by the industry as a woman out of control who overstepped boundaries of her gender and her science (Carson, 2002: xvii). Her work was defined as “anecdotal, unproven, inadequate, and wrong” (Carson, 2002: 220). However, the industry spent a quarter of a million dollars to discredit her research and defame her

character (Carson, 2002: xvii). Nevertheless, DDT was banned because of its harmful effect on the environment. Although the pesticide industry tried to depict her as a "hysterical female", in 1972 the EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) decided that there was enough scientific evidence to ban DDT as a pesticide in America except for sale to the World Health Organization for use in countries with endemic malaria and for public health emergencies in the USA (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 216). Unfortunately, the story does not end in the seventies.

Rachel Carson's is a true pioneer who created an immense legacy. Her work cleared the way for a different kind of understanding of the relations between nature and the non-human world. Vigorous anti-Carson propaganda reemerged on the internet in 2007 with accusations that Carson is a mass murderer because the ban of DDT (allegedly) led to millions of Africans dying of malaria. Besides being called a murderer by conservatives, there is a strong anti-Carson voice coming from a New York Times science columnist (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 223- 225). What Oreskes and Conway are stressing as important and what Carson's critics miss is the fact that in the cases of malaria, DDT alone does not suffice. What is necessary as well is "good nutrition, reduction of insect breeding grounds, education and health care" Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 224). In other words, fundamental social and health welfare which is lacking. There is another important fact – mosquitoes are developing resistance to DDT (Oreskes and Conway, 2010: 224). Carson stressed the harm that DDT was doing to ecosystems and argued that we will encounter its consequences. "DDT kills birds, fish, and beneficial insects. And continues to do so long after spraying has stopped. Even today, birds in the Catalin Islands show sigh of DDT poisoning, probably from eating fish that have ingested materials from the sea floor laced with residual DDT, left over from its manufacture in California decades ago" (Carson, 2002: 228). Lancet, the leading medical journal, recently stated that DDT causes significant impact on humans, especially their reproductive health.

> "DDT *does* cause cancer, it *does* affect human health, and it *does* cost human lives. Rachel Carson was not wrong" (…) There is no scientific evidence to support the claim that millions of lives have been needlessly lost, and there is substantial scientific evidence that a good deal of harm – both to humans and the other species we share this planet with – has been avoided (Carson, 2002: 229).

The construction of the revisionist history of DDT, how Oreskes and Conway call the ongoing misrepresentation of Rachel Carson's work, is based on a set of "facts" originating from scientists, political groups and institutes, such as the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, a Libertarian political group, and the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, both of which promote skepticism about global warming, or The Heartland Institute (known for questioning climate science) with "scientists" who have done little, if any, peer-reviewed climate research (Carson, 2002: 232-233). What is important is the question of financial, often "philanthropic", contributions to allegedly independent think tanks (for example, Phillip Morris which paid $ 50.000 to the Heartland Institute to support its activities) (Carson, 2002: 234). As Oreskes and Conway argue, recent science demonstrates that our contemporary industrial civilization is unsustainable and we will have to find new options to produce energy and ecologically less harmful ways to produce food – "science has shown us that Rachel Carson was not wrong" (Carson, 2002: 237). Curiosity, as a fundamental epistemic virtue, here comes to light, enabling us to dig deeper and not satisfy ourselves with superficiality, but rather find truth-sensitive beliefs. We must dig deeper and sharpen our epistemic capabilities in order to find truth-sensitive answers and not content ourselves with superficial information which comes from the collective pool of beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes fueled by profit. To understand food, we must find adequate tools to grasp this vast domain layered with questions of power, self-knowledge, epistemic and broader social injustice. That is why it is not enough to approach the topic of food through economics, nutrition or food politics – food relates to power of our very cognition which is immersed into a complex social world carved by power and capitalism. Ecological epistemology poses itself as an adequate tool for exploration of this multifaceted realm.

Oreskes and Conway's "tobacco strategy" applies to matters ranging from tobacco smoke to global warming and it is essentially an epistemic one – it is grounded in epistemic malevolence embodied in intentional sabotaging of knowledge by dissemination of doubt in credible sources of evidence. This malevolent epistemic practice is deliberately employed as an obstacle in the process of gaining knowledge. Intentional marketing of doubt generates confusion and situates the epistemic subject in an epistemically unfavorable position of confusion and distrust, as well as lack of epistemic goods such as

truth-oriented information and knowledge which is deliberately obscured. Impaired knowledge, violated trust, inserted doubt – this is how food discourse reproduces, generating epistemic and broader social injustice. Oreskes and Conway's examples are clear-cut templates of knowledge infected with power, thus causing doubt which stands in the way of one's understanding (for example, that DDT is harmful for humans and the environment). Alienation from food production and first encountering food on supermarket shelves, wrapped in plastic, contributes to the vulnerability of the epistemic subject. The nexus of knowledge and power generates the lack of credibility of institutions which should generate epistemic goods – reliable, transparent information and knowledge which, by its definition, consists of truth-sensitive beliefs. Deliberate placement of doubt is an example of epistemic malevolence that generates epistemic injustice in the process of understanding and "reading" or interpreting the information which, in turn, lead to our personal choices, habits and practices. On the structural level, instead of being instances which generate knowledge, these examples of "corrupt science" represent practices of hermeneutical epistemic injustices. Consequently, subjects are damaged, both epistemically and politically.

Several examples from the news and Oreskes and Conway's profound analysis testify to how the network of knowledge, institutions, power, personal interest and profit merging into the dominant discourse, position the subject in a disadvantaged position in which he/she is epistemically impaired because knowledge is not transparently transmitted. Impaired, knowledge, violated trust and perpetuation of doubt are all epistemic malpractices which generate and reproduce the dominant mechanism which shapes the social world and influences one's food-related beliefs. Can one really trust that this is "homemade" food produced in Croatia after all discovered malversations, manipulations and frauds? Can one trust that this is organically produced vegetable and pay it accordingly? Is what is written on the label true and can we trust them? Following Foucault's and Fricker's understandings of structural power and epistemic injustice, one can conclude that this disruption possesses a **systematic character**. Injustice is produced by a complex system of social relations and practices. It is a nexus in which power meets knowledge and profit; in which the public meets the private; in which the epistemic meets the ethical and the political; and in which the legal, economic and political

realm are intertwined. This kind of injustice can be understood as epistemic damage towards the broader social knowledge and the epistemic community whose epistemic subject are harmed and injustice is perpetuated due to obscure practices entangled with epistemic vices. This is a clear example of the necessity of Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's hybrid perspective. This is the realm that craves for new epistemic norms aligned with ethical and political norms. We need a new and better framework for understanding food and all domains of society to which it connects. I propose ecological epistemology as a tool for approaching these questions.

From focusing on the structural problems and injustices it generates, in the following pages I will turn the spotlight on neoliberal capitalism which represents the background of an oppressive and unjust social landscape. I will lower the conversation from the structural to the individual level of the epistemic "subject/eater". When talking about food, one must talk about neoliberal capitalism and **class**, which is why a Marxist analysis of class relations is never redundant. Class constitutes the foundation in contemporary industrial food production process since most of the global food is produced by immigrants (from farming, growing and harvesting to processing, selling and serving), who have low wages, often work in dangerous conditions and without legal documents (Labor and Workers in the Food System, n.d.). Sustainability of food production should be applied not only to the environment and consumers, but also to the invisible class of people who produce and serve that food globally and whose voices are not the part of the dominant narrative – peasants, women, seasonal workers, migrants. The underprivileged people who fall from the food narrative, although they carry the process of food production. They are Benhabib's "concrete Others" who should have a voice. Class issues are not observable only in immigrants or the generally exploited and marginalized class of people who serve as a primary force in the food system, but also in the problem of food privilege – healthy and more nutritious food is more expensive than the most filling, often junk food, which is the cheapest. The fact is that the more privileged classes have access to healthier food and more information. Cheap food has its price – for the exploited, invisible, usually immigrant, workers who produce food and/or for the toxic environment which deals with residues of artificial fertilizers and synthetic pesticides.

“Healthy” or organic/bio/eco food also causes class distinction – who can afford organic avocados, a top trend today thanks to Instagram breakfast photographs, flying from a different part of the world? Every year, some new global trend strikes and people who can afford it are eating quinoa one year, another chia seeds, then avocado… All that is good food, “super food”, as it is advertised, but nevertheless, it is coming from a different part of the world, it has a high CO_2 imprint, and it relates to broader social injustices. For example, quinoa was a main food item for Bolivians, but when it became a “hit” for the Western world (praised by Oprah, Dr. Phil or similar famous television hosts), the demand skyrocketed, and quinoa became no longer affordable for poor Bolivians. Additionally, high demands require intensive production, deforestation, and the lack of biodiversity due to extensive production of one specific food leads to unsustainability. Therefore, “super food” for the Westerners has a dark side and for local people it represents social and environmental injustice. Why not eat something local, equally nutritious? Healthy food is more expensive than the conventionally produced food which is cheaper, but at someone’s expense: either nature’s, due to enormous amounts of artificial chemical fertilizers and pesticides, or humans’ – the exploited migrant labor force putting forward all the invisible work. There is no cheap food. In many cases where Western trends dictate the demand and supply of particular food, instrumentalization occurs. Due to alienation and consumerism as a productive force, nature and people who produce food are being instrumentalized and sacrificed as a result of some consumeristic trend.

To understand food in a political context, it is necessary to comprehend the side effects of contemporary neoliberal capitalism inherent in **consumerism** and the accompanying **ideology** in regard to food and consumption. Food can be understood as a cultural category or as a material object in consumer culture, thus part of a broader structure of meanings and practices. Perhaps the most famous is Pierre Bordieu’s analysis of food-related practices between the working class and the bourgeoisie (1979). In short, my point is that food represents more than energy fuel for our bodies – food has a symbolic meaning, imbued with power. Food communicates identities and social relationships in a culture. Food is politics. Moreover, in Linda Barclay’s view, food creates a possibility for autonomous agency – an ability to provide an adequate response to social forces. The contemporary paradigm of consumerism has been challenged by consumers

who “vote with their dollar” and they do it in the direction of sustainability. Commodification of food, current food paradigm, inequalities and social degradation are being challenged by the imperatives of “green”, local, fair trade and sustainable goods with focus on broader social issues, such as health, social justice and sustainability which shows the transformative potential of food politics (Johnston and Mackendric, 2015: 647). Food consumers represent **political actors** who “vote with their dollar” and with their decisions they are supporting collective decisions about food production. Therefore, next to the conventional commodities on supermarket shelves, there are “green”, “fair trade”, “local” and “organic” goods. What has developed is **“ecological citizenship”** – a form of consumer politics which values justice, care and sustainability and which has raised awareness as to what political lifestyle decisions and practices really are, from sustainable shopping to energy reduction at home or the use of a bicycle as a means of transportation over a car. One can cynically argue that although “green”, it is still food produced and delivered via corporate industrial food system. This is correct but we live in an unideal world. It is better to choose goods produced in a more sustainable and less polluting way, in support of local production, or if they have a “fair trade” certificate (which means that a person in the production chain was not exploited, referring mostly to children and workers producing coffee and chocolate) than a “hardcore”, conventionally produced article with a high rate of pollution and exploitation. The choice is clear to me. But in every discussion about ideology, the valid questions of autonomy, choice, and resistance emerge, which I will leave open for another time.

If we inspect food through these lenses, we can see that it represents a strong social factor which greatly influences the constitution of the self and self-knowledge, which is a part of the picture one has about himself/herself and a part of the symbolic image transmitted towards the world; namely, it is an essential part of one’s identity. Through food we communicate ourselves. Food and many decisions concerning food shape one’s choices, values, attitudes, aims, perceptions and aspirations which surpass the level of food as mere energy. One should ask oneself how particular food is produced, where it comes from and what its CO_2 footprint is, who produced it and how, whether food wrapping is taken care of by being separated and recycled, whether meat consumption is reduced

(because meat production has a high CO_2 footprint) – those everyday choices make a huge difference and a number of people ask those questions when buying food. Naturally, corporations are the biggest polluters and we should use the democratic power of protest to pressure those political instances which are ignoring the problem of climate change. But let us not be so cynical and take a chunk of individual responsibility for our personal CO_2 footprint, however insignificant it may seem compared to the level of CO_2 footprint produced by huge corporations. All these aspirations, aims, values, habits and choices are part of one's subjectivity and self-knowledge pertaining to food. At this level, one can see how food and related choices have a big impact on the constitution of the self and self-knowledge.

What also comes in the consumer package is a supporting **ideology**. In writing about Marxism and its core concepts, I have delineated ideology as one of the essential ones, representing the ruling thoughts of a particular historical period. The concept is charged with a negative value and often associated with manipulation. In Althusserian language, ideology constitutes us as subjects. In the context of the food system, "ideology" is applicable to the capitalist mechanism of **health food industry** which ensures that mass consumption of goods is guaranteed through its ideology, especially ruthless towards women. This capitalist mechanism at the same time represents the epistemic mechanism which constitutes the "self" or self-knowledge. Food has become a hyper-commodified object, advertised not only as food, but as a guarantee of health, youth and happiness. Particular food embodies a particular lifestyle and different food trends, accompanied by different supplements, new and exotic "super-healthy" goods from a different part of the world, exist to ensure that you take the right track in pursuit of eternal youth and happiness. The latest trend is "super food" coming from another part of the world which guarantees health and glowing skin of a 13-year-old girl to middle-aged women (aging, besides cellulite, is women's worst enemy, according to dominant culture). Speaking from a Croatian perspective and the vast richness of our biodiversity due to an ideal geographical location, we have numerous healthy and nutritious local counterparts to quinoa, salmon, chia-seeds or avocado, which are coming from the other side of the world with a high CO_2 footprint. Of course, our local food of this kind is irrelevant because

it lacks a strong symbolic meaning of status. Our local kale or mixtures of wild herbs that are nutritiously fantastic do not carry the same symbolic image or status as avocado, whose global popularity comes from Instagram breakfast pictures. Behind mass consumption resides the ideology of profit. The global health and wellness food industry is in constant growth: in 2016 the industry was valued at 707.12 billion U.S. dollars and is estimated to increase to 811.82 billion U.S. dollars by 2021 (Shahbandeh, 2021).

Health and wellness industry relies on ideology communicated through **trends**, which are always changing, never fulfilling the promise, and often in contradiction with other trends. Fluctuation is inscribed in the very meaning of the word “trend”. Each season a new diet is promoted – Undiet, Atkins, Keto, Paleo, LCHF or liposuction diet (the latest one that caught my ear on television). Every so often a particular food or food group is condemned and denounced with some bombastic and dramatic title, usually that it causes cancer, because “a new study has shown”. Trends are constantly changing, information coming from the media and the internet are contradictory, people are alienated from the process of food production and unaligned with seasonal eating because everything is available all year long. These circumstances make the epistemic “subject/eater” even more vulnerable and place him/her in a disadvantaged position because he/she does not know whom to trust and what source of information to take as credible because trends are changing, unreliable and inconstant. Trends are contradictory, they are the heart and soul of capitalism and, in the context of health and wellness industry whose motive is interest and profit, not genuine knowledge. People’s confusion and ignorance are fertile ground for mass consumerism. What represents the sources of food knowledge? Unfortunately, it seems to me, they are bad media articles, social networks and “influencers”. Just remember the “kale woman” whose only credential was the number of likes on her YouTube channel/Instagram account. When did the number of likes or views become a credible source of knowledge and information regarding anything, let alone food and health? Consumer machinery forms the background of our collective food imaginary consisting of trends, symbolic meanings and practices, images and representations, norms, prejudices and stereotypes which are dehumanizing, oppressive and unjust on many levels, especially towards women. This mechanism is epistemically imprinted on us

as epistemic subjects and it finds its roots in epistemic injustice which represents a source of oppression, discrimination, objectification, commodification and instrumentalization.

In relation to consumer machinery which undoubtedly affects one's process of belief formation, social media influencers have an inexplicable status and often enjoy excess credibility. Someone that has been pushing it to the extreme lately is the "Medical Medium" or Anthony William, an influencer with millions of followers on Instagram and Facebook, and one of many celebrities who started a trend of drinking celery juice ("Medical Medium", 2021). BBC wrote an article about him and his website on which he claims that drinking celery juice can cure chronic diseases like fibromyalgia and even provide relief from illnesses, including cancer and diabetes. The problem is that his claims are not supported by science at all and his only credentials are endorsements from many Hollywood celebrities (Wells, 2019). I agree that celery juice is a heathy beverage and that people in general should reduce the consumption of processed food and increase the intake of fresh and seasonally grown vegetables and fruit. However, I consider the misinformation about its miracle work potentially harmful and unethical, especially towards the people fighting serious medical conditions. What made the "Medical Medium" a credible authority for the questions of health, cancer and other serious diseases? Based on what should one trust him as a source of knowledge other than a vast number of likes on his social platforms and the support from "celebrities"? Is it ethical to claim that celery juice can cure chronic diseases like fibromyalgia and even provide relief from illness, such as cancer and diabetes?

The popularity and status of the Medium testifies to him being an excellent businessman who does not hesitate to exploit the ones who are seriously ill by selling them hope, but his popularity also attests to the vice of **epistemic conformism**. As Zagzebski suggests with the concept of intellectual akrasia, "cases of intellectual akrasia include the varieties of believing what you want to believe but know you shouldn't" (Zagzebski, 1996: 15). In other words, there is chaos in the epistemic discourse regarding food, but epistemic agents do bear some responsibility in choosing whom to trust and on what grounds. Nevertheless, social platforms represent a major source of information in general and particularly in terms of food. It is important to stress that fashion, beauty, self-

care, wellness, diet and esthetic surgery industries are precisely that – industries predominantly focused on profit. Social media and the promotion of unrealistic body ideals have elevated beauty, health, the annoying imperative of compulsory happiness, as well as diet and body standards to a whole new level. It does not make an easy task to select truth-oriented beliefs in this kind of social context: in which power overlaps with knowledge and creates a defective and oppressive discourse, in which the boundaries between reality and illusion blur, and in which symbolic meanings, images, representations and an oppressive social imaginary constitute strong productive forces.

5.3. Food, body, and self-knowledge

We are now tackling the realm of the corporeal. In this section, I will focus on the "self" which is relational to and molded by the social sphere; the "self" which is embodied and bounded by the socially shaped body. The "self" or self-knowledge consists of values, norms, attitudes, habits, character traits, capacities, emotions, histories - all those components constitute a "self" as an individual, as I have shown in previous chapters.

One of those essential components is physical body which makes an integral part of one's subjectivity. Perception of one's body or his/her body-image is mediated through the social imaginary, it is not something "natural" but rather greatly culturally constructed. In the context of the perception of our bodies, food plays an important role and represents one of the main factors in the constitution of the "self". To explore food and its relationship with the body, we must understand this complex social context; we must investigate how power is exercised on the body and the epistemic injustice generated in this process. The epistemic "subject/eater" does not reside in the domain of a perfect cognizer, but rather in the realm of human and imperfect; his/her cognition is sub-ideal and immersed into an oppressive **social imaginary**. Earlier, I mentioned Catriona Mackenzie who beautifully writes about women, self-reflection and deliberation; about the "self" who cannot be unresponsive to "dominant cultural metaphors, symbols, images, and representations or, in short, the cultural imaginary" (Mackenzie, 2000: 125). Likewise, this social imaginary applies to our bodies and our relationship with food. **Imagination as a mental activity**, with its affective force and cognitive power, proves essential to internal processes by

which we try to settle our desires, attitudes and goals. Strictly speaking, the social imaginary, defined by its cultural images and representations, shapes one's self-conceptions, experiences and gender identities (Mackenzie, 2000: 125). Who do I want to be? What kind of person do I wish to become? What do I want to look like? Why? What are my values? What are my aims and desires? All these elements are consciously and unconsciously influenced by the social imaginary comprised of images, values, norms, symbols, and representations that we are exposed to from an early age. In Althusser's view, we are simply influenced and marked by them, they are imprinted on us. We are exposed to ideology from birth and constituted as subjects in this complex social landscape. Or, in Foucauldian language - we are immersed into a dominant discourse. Both theoretical approaches emphasize the socially determined ground.[17]

Of course, one has autonomy and critical attitudes, but as members of the culture we live in, to a lesser or greater degree, we cannot remain immune to this oppressive social reality cloaked in generally accepted norms, values, practices and traditions. Although in one's eyes ideology always points to others, no one is really spared, which serves as a good starting point for self-reflection and self-knowledge.

One of the philosophical cornerstones of this thesis, Miranda Fricker, has shown us the importance of the social imaginary and its problematic side, detectable in the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices in society. Following her work, José Medina defines the concept of "social imagination" as "shared modes of representing and relating, which are prior to and independent of particular beliefs and affects" (Medina, 2013: 269). Social imagination affects the formation of our identity and, once internalized,

> "the social imagination permeates the cognitive and affective dimensions of our experience, without being reducible to a mere list of specific cognitive commitments and affective relations. (…) A social imagination is inscribed in our habitual ways of thinking, acting, and feeling" (Medina, 2013: 269).

[17] Foucault distances from ideology because it implies "truth", which is nothing but a mere construct, so he resorts to discourse. Nevertheless, both Foucault and Althusser refer to a deterministic epistemic notion of structural power.

Social imagination inscribes into the individual subject on a collective level, making his/her intimate process of thinking, feeling, perceiving and understanding socially conditioned. How we perceive our body, an integral part of subjectivity, relates to normative body politics as well.

In this part of the thesis, I will focus on one rather intimate and gendered relationship between the "self" and the food. More specifically, I will investigate the corporeal side of that relationship, but also its epistemic aspect, because I deem them intertwined and mutually influencing. We live in an era characterized by women having equal legal rights as men. Yet again, I believe that women have different experiences in the social realm. Women have the right to act, dress, look, work and live as they choose. I am not pointing fingers at the "corporeal enemies" – this is not "hate towards men who hate women", as feminism is often perceived. There exists no physical enemy in this case because I am referring to Foucauldian structural power – the subjectless power which runs through the whole of society, creating inequalities and injustices. I am concentrating on political and economic structures which create the nexus of knowledge and power, resulting in a harmful and oppressive discourse concerning women's bodies. Discourse is perpetuated through productive forces: oppressive social norms, defective values and stereotypes regarding women and their bodies, perpetuation of harmful disciplining practices and generation of harmful emotions about body image. Although this discourse is normalized ("things are as they are") or rather, perpetuated through generally acknowledged beliefs, norms, values and practices, it nonetheless generates oppression, discrimination, objectification and dehumanization which are rooted in epistemic injustice. This oppressive discourse produces docile female bodies and constitutes an integral part of a misogynistic culture to which we belong. Perhaps the strongest productive force lies in its normalization – confirmation and perpetuation of this discourse as a "natural", unquestioned and "normal" pre-existing standard.

I am not focusing on women's choices and their agency, but instead exploring the contemporary misogynistic culture fueled by the capitalist machinery and its power/knowledge nexus in which food represents a force for producing docile and standardized female bodies. It is the same machinery through which the individual and

the collective meet, the intimate clashes with the social, as power and knowledge merge with the “self” and self-knowledge. This machinery has an epistemic component and influences women epistemically because we are absorbed into society. Our norms, beliefs, values and body image are not constituted in a vacuum, but precisely in that social realm, oppressive and unjust on many levels. I say this not to be dragged into a pessimistic void of anti-humanism, but to emphasize the importance of self-knowledge and self-reflection, as well as exploring and modifying personal beliefs. These multiple food dimensions are interconnected and that is the reason why ecological epistemology represents an appropriate tool for investigating this domain. I will begin with the social imaginary, replete with pervasive and oppressive femininity (and masculinity as well, but that is not the subject of this work) stereotypes, values and norms which dictate desirable forms of appearance and conduct (how one should look, act, dress, speak and, of course, what to eat). All this does not retain solely on the surface, affecting only our bodies, but it also goes deeper, influencing our self-knowledge. In other words, all the norms, values, cultural images and representations in the social imaginary condition and shape our knowledge about our physical bodies which relate to our internal value and the totality of our person because physical body constitutes an integral part of our subjectivity. Body stands in direct contact with power and food - it is a point in which power and knowledge manifest themselves through food.

In terms of social body mechanisms, self-knowledge relates to the internalization of a particular collective knowledge or scheme through which one perceives the “self”. There is a **norm** - a gaze of society towards women, and departure or deviation from the imposed norm inevitably shapes the way in which a woman perceives herself. Normalization of this discourse precisely confirms that pre-existing standard. Normalization through widely accepted beliefs, norms and values; regarded as something “natural”, “normal” or unquestioned enables the maintenance of this harmful discourse. Is she “beautiful”, “feminine”, “tomboy”, “too muscular”, “too tall for a girl”? Is not the epistemic grid of the world we live in, with its rules, categories, norms, images and values, inscribed into one’s self-knowledge which represents the very essence of the “self”? We all perceive ourselves and the world through a particular cognitive scheme which one does not encounter in a vacuum, but in the inherently social world. Is not that what “episteme”

truly is at its core? Is not this this a clear example of Althusserian ideology or Foucauldian discourse which constitutes subjects, to a lesser or greater degree?

Let us inspect the body and its relation to food because food and its representation constitute a strong social factor which influences the formation of the "self" and self-knowledge. I will begin with Foucault's "anatomo-politics" of the human body which focuses on man-as-body.[18] From the eighteenth century onward, a disciplinary technique directed at the individual body was established. With the social contract and new political and social institutions, new regimes towards new discourses and regulation of the human body arose in the military, school, hospital and prison systems. All these institutions produced, as Foucault outlines, **"docile" bodies**:

> "The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviors. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A "political anatomy", which was also a "mechanics of power", was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with its techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determinates. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1991: 137-138).

Soldiers', students', patients' and prisoners' bodies were controlled, surveilled and, if necessary, punished. Using this example, Foucault demonstrates how the new political order was maintained. But that disciplinary technique of the individual body surpassed the institution of prison, school, hospital, or family and work. Disciplinary techniques systematize time, space and practices through self-regulating behavior. Control and

[18] Foucault distinguishes between two technologies of power in the context of the body. The first one is "anatomo-politics" of the human body and the second one is "biopolitics" of the human race. While the former seeks interest in the individual-as-body, the latter applies to the man-as-species. Both were established in the eighteenth century, the period of transition to modern societies, when the power apparatus changed along with the new political and social order (Foucault, 2004).

surveillance are best maintained when **internalized** and further self-maintained. Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" – a surveillance system invented in the 18th century by Bentham, consisting of a round-shape building with a tower in the middle in which guards or supervisors reside. The concept was built on the idea that a guard can see all the inmates at all times, but inmates do not know if they are being watched, so they behave as if they are surveilled all the time. "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. (…) Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable" (Foucault, 1991: 201). Something like the boxes which contain cameras which supervise speed on the road – one never knows if the camera really is in the box, and he/she slows down "just in case".

In her famous 1988 essay, "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power", Sandra Lee Bartky writes that Foucault's views on disciplinary control of the body relying on perpetual self-surveillance, truly is the birth of the acclaimed "individualism" and fierce self-consciousness which represents a symbol of modern times with Panopticon as a "modus operandi". Placing this into a feminist context, to achieve femininity and the current body of fashion, which is "an artifice, an achievement" because women's bodies naturally come in different shapes and sizes, women must turn towards strong self-regulating practices. To achieve a desired body, looks and pose, one must turn towards dieting disciplines – appetite has to be monitored with iron will and, as Bartky writes, in that process body itself becomes the enemy (Bartky, 1997: 133). In this case, food represents a strong factor: to achieve the standardized body with a defeminized desired weight and overall looks, food, seen as the enemy, must be taken under control. Food directly relates to the "self" because it molds the body which constitutes an integral part of one's subjectivity. Food is the enemy and our self-knowledge stands in unmediated connection with food – are we "strong" enough to rule the enemy or are we too "weak", lacking the necessary self-control and determination? If we are "weak" in this area, does this weakness penetrate into other areas of oneself to eventually become our epistemic vice? Our relationship with food reveals our character traits, or so claims the social imaginary. Does not the very notion of our body image being mediated through the oppressive collective imaginary represent in its essence a case of epistemic injustice?

There is epistemic injustice at the very core of the idea that there exists a norm which dictates how a desirable female body must look. Discrepancy between the norm and a "real" body reflecting in the mirror is the place where one's "self" and self-knowledge are being constituted - always relational to the norm. It is necessary to understand food through its relationship with women's bodies and take into consideration the power inscribed in the discourse responsible for our very perception of the body. Therefore, we must take ecological epistemology as a tool for that exploration because it merges bodies, power and cognition which are inseparable from food.

However, there is no grand judge who establishes norms about women's bodies and femininity in general. As Foucault postulated – power is everywhere and it comes from every direction. "This disciplinary power that inscribes femininity in the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular" (Bartky, 1997: 142). From media messages reproducing values, norms, as well as cultural images and symbols regarding female bodies, to fashion and beauty, self-care, wellness, diet and esthetic surgery industries which go hand in hand with consumerism in reproducing norms, values and trends, all the way to acquaintances who feel invited to comment on women's weight or looks, viewing weight loss as something to compliment women on and weight gain as something negative about which one should usually be "warned" or disciplined with a pinch of shame - female body is always open for everybody's gaze, comment and further enhancement. Oppressive social norms, as well as defective and damaging values and stereotypes regarding women and their bodies, constitute the productive forces of this discourse. Their internalization and perpetuation as generally accepted values, norms, practices and standards pertaining to women is inherently epistemically unjust.

It is important to stress that femininity and desirable forms of feminine appearance are not "natural" or given, but deeply culturally shaped. The desired body shape with its repertoire of gestures and bodily comportment represented as ideal, as a norm, or as desired **femininity** - is a socially constructed body. In the Renaissance and the era of Caterina de Medici, ideal norms included fair skin and high forehead. Women from Victorian England were disciplined by the norm of a plump body, but their waist was

restrained by a corset to achieve hourglass figure. The twenties were not happy years for "plump" women since the norm changed towards the androgynous figure with flat chest. A few years later, Hollywood actresses, such as Rita Hayworth or Marilyn Monroe, with their curves, rich cleavage and slim waist became the norm. The sixties arrived and they were again not generous towards curved women; Marilyn Monroe would probably be fat-shamed because Twiggy, with her long and slim legs, became the desired norm. 1980s and 1990s were the "supermodel" era with Cindy Crawford who established the norm of a tall, slim and fit body. That continued with "heroin chic" Kate Moss, to mention just some of the ideal norms throughout time.

In our day and age, the norm of "postmodern beauty" rules. Sadly, today's poster woman of ideal beauty is Kim Kardashian and current beauty standards expect that a woman has a slim body, lush bust, large derrière, heavily "adjusted" by cosmetic surgery. I say "sadly" because this kind of body is completely unreal because, although represented on social media as the "perfect body", it is totally redone by cosmetic surgery, fundamentally relying on retouching and Photoshop. Not to mention pathological fear of wrinkles and other marks which give away the fact that the body is alive. Anything that testifies to reality and passage of time, such as scars, wrinkles, cellulite, dark circles under the eyes, stretch marks, skin and body imperfections, represents the "enemy" and causes pathological fear. I remember when a well-known and respected Croatian television host after many years of "battling" with weight loss pointed out that, in her forties, she can finally fit into her high school jeans again. Is her great career becoming irrelevant towards the achievement of the major goal - to fit into high school jeans? It makes me sad and mad that the oppressive discourse still reduces women from complex beings to a one-dimensional creation.

The never-ending quest for the desired perfect body is accompanied with appropriate **disciplinary practices** which produce docile female bodies. This normalizing discourse is intertwined with fashion and beauty, self-care, diet and esthetic surgery industries, as well as food. Besides the constant watch of their weight and appearance, women must master the care and maintenance of skin, hair and overall desired aesthetics. All these disciplinary practices are part of the construction of the female body - subject

and media images of the perfect body play an important role since they produce and generate the image of perfect female beauty which is, of course, ideal, thus unreal and elusive. This damaging discourse objectifies by creating the norm which implies standardized bodies. Through internalization of these widely believed norms and values, and implementation of disciplinary practices upon the body, one actually perpetuates dominant and defective discourse. These claims usually provoke comments, such as “Crazy feminist!”, which just confirms how this damaging discourse is normalized and how the production of docile and standardized female bodies constitutes an integral part of an unquestioned misogynic culture.

Perpetuation of disciplinary practices and the additional normalization of this discourse is epistemically wrong towards women. Discrepancy between the real bodies reflecting in the mirror and the imposed norm of the desired femininity sends message of discontent, discomfort, defect, weakness and imperfection to every “real” woman with a “real” body, skin, hair, proportions, age, etc. The (unhappy) search for this ideal image of women implies an extensive disciplinary project of bodily transformations for women. A woman is never good enough as she is. She is “always in progress”, hoping to approach the norm. Is this not the epistemic root of a misogynistic culture which sends the message that a woman is never good enough? We are living in a culture which massively objectifies women and imposes physical perfection, everlasting youth and the skin of a twelve-year old. Diet, fashion, beauty, wellness, and esthetic surgery industries powered by consumerism enforce defective and harmful norms which are at their core epistemically wrong because of the very message rooted in them. This is the common denominator of harmful normative body politics. These disciplinary practices, which enable perpetuation of harmful discourse, do not affect only physical bodies, but in my opinion, they shape the “self”. Dietary self-monitoring, cult of fasting, different fitness regimes focused on the shrinkage of the body, calorie counting, self-deprivation of food, self-punishment and other self-disciplining regimes do not refer “just” to body regimes, but to subjects as a whole, to women as a whole who are always culturally reduced to their bodies. I do not see how it is possible to amputate the body from the rest of the “self” in an inherently misogynistic culture.

Monique Deveaux criticized Bartky and claimed that she reduced women's subjectivity every so often by treating women as passive, "robotic receptacles of culture, rather than as active agents who both are constituted by, and reflective of, their social and cultural contexts" (Deveaux, 1994: 227). I do not underestimate autonomy and resistance, quite on the contrary. Nevertheless, I always go back to Althusser's understanding of ideology through the process of interpellation, according to which ideology dangerously imposes femininity and body norms, thus affecting one's autonomy. Understanding and resistance is always welcomed, but unfortunately, I am deeply infected with Althusser's anti-humanistic stances on ideology and interpellation. Strong cultural images and representation of women coming from a phallocentric cultural repertoire are part of the ideology in which women are interpellated from birth. In Athusser's words, ideology never states "I am ideological"; we are all immersed in it and nobody, or no female body, is spared. In other words, everything is discourse and we are part of it. It seems an extensive emotional endeavor to rinse all the oppressive social norms forced on women's selves. The degree of oppression varies, but nobody is left out.

Contemporary society's collective imaginary is oppressive and unjust on many levels, but it is especially oppressive, unjust and dehumanizing towards women. The standards are impossible to reach because the underlying problem of misogyny is inscribed into collective beliefs, norms, practices, values, traditions and habits, and perpetuated as "normalized" or "naturalized" discourse – generally accepted and unquestioned communal knowledge accompanied with practices. "The way things are." One can say that the fashion industry is becoming more inclusive because big brands are representing different bodies in their commercials. But are they rewriting their policies motivated by real change and inclusion of different body types or are they being politically correct? I consider the "Body Positivity Movement" quite ineffective and a bit hypocritical because women who tell other women to "love and accept" their bodies are usually beautiful, skinny, young women with perfect skin who already zealously chase the ideal. The real problem is misogyny which cannot be fixed with superficial fixes and patches. It is a structural problem rooted in the very foundation of the society to which we belong. We have a long way to go in order to accept real women's bodies, differing in size, color, shape and age. The power of discourse resides in the epistemic mechanisms through

which the “self” is constituted. I very much support resistance through self-reflection and change of imposed collective beliefs – my intention is not to diminish the power of autonomy and possible resistance, but to outline the impact of this defective naturalized discourse which, despite our living in a liberal society, remains unquestioned. Indeed, we are free to act as we wish but our cognition is very much shaped by the collective imaginary consisting of many oppressing values and norms which, precisely because generally accepted, pass as unaddressed.

Another important angle of social construction of women’s bodies is that it is greatly driven by **consumerism**. Power and knowledge merged into this oppressive and impaired discourse regarding women’s bodies, operates through power relations present in our collective imaginary, consisting of oppressive social norms, defective values and stereotypes regarding women and their bodies, disciplinary practices which objectify women’s bodies with the accompanying emotions of shame, discomfort, discontent and disgust, as well as the overall normalization of this discourse. To go one step back, to the source – this discourse is a result of political and economic structures in which consumerism represents the core value of capitalism, creating this oppressive and defected discourse driven purely by profit. Media and advertising industry are promising a fit, thin, healthy and ageless body achieved by consumption of specific food, food supplements, skin-care products, diet and fitness programs, mobile applications, books, fitness clothes and gear. Today, more than ever, “healthy” food promises a fit, thin, eternally youthful and healthy body promoted on social networks. Perhaps the most common word after December feasts is “detox”. We have to “detox” our body, “purify” it, “clean” it - we must “sanitize” it, as Sedgewick claims (Sedgewick and Frank in Probyn, 2000: 139). It seems as if the rhetoric comes from an advertisement for drain or sewer plungers rather than the discourse concerning female bodies. Food is a mechanism of constant reinforcement of this harmful discourse regarding normative body politics, ergo, it is a strong social factor which dramatically influences the constitution of the “self” as well as self-knowledge or knowledge about ourselves, our habits, values, behaviors and character traits.

“Bio-marketing” is one consumeristic tentacle of wrong self-image pressed upon the subject with her ideal body, health, wealth, never-ending youth and happiness. Self-care industry, as a domain focused on active care about one’s health and wellness, goes hand in hand with consumerism. From this perspective, it becomes obvious that food constitutes a strong social factor which influences constitution of the “self” and self-knowledge. Food is more than energy – it relates to a wider social imaginary with female body and inner emotional landscape, which is part of our self-knowledge. Food is more that food – it is a vehicle for self-discipline regimes and a building block for one’s sense of “self” which needs constant enhancement. Internalization of social norms regarding women’s bodies which are always and undoubtedly intertwined with self-monitoring and self-discipline regarding food, affects the bodies and subjects as a whole. “Something is ‘internalized’ when it gets incorporated into the structure of the self” (Bartky, 1997: 145). Not just aesthetically, but epistemically and politically as well. Perpetuation of this normative body politics is really the perpetuation of power relations which are a driving force of this flawed discourse. Internalization of these norms and values also stands as a question of power related to one’s cognition – it represents individual and collective food-related beliefs and the understanding that the generation of those beliefs is rooted in epistemic injustice which is at the core of further injustices of objectification, dehumanization, discrimination or oppression. Therefore, ecological epistemology is a useful tool for grasping this complex domain where food, power, self-knowledge and epistemic injustice entangle.

In this pursuit of adequate bodies and looks, one cannot avoid to talk about **“healthy” food** and all of its “super food” versions and supplements. What is represented as “healthy” is a trendy, fluid concept that changes every season. It is culturally shaped, ever changing, always one step ahead in the consumer race. What was considered “healthy” twenty years ago (for example, non-fat milk or cheese) is blacklisted today. Some things change because science makes progress, but the largest part of the healthy-food discourse I find to be motivated by consumerism and trends, very little by scientific claims. Due to different trends and diets in the media, usually in contradiction with the “last hot trend”, people are confused and distrustful, which brings us back to the problem of alienation from food production. And this is an epistemic issue. In the dichotomy

heathy/junk food, one can argue that “healthy” refers to unprocessed food (fresh fruits, vegetables, wholesome grains, proteins and “good” fats), while “junk food” refers to processed food, consisting of “empty” calories (food which is nutritionally poor, filled with sugar and salt). I am a passionate supporter of organic, local and seasonal food production. However, the fact that “bio/eco/organic” is now the latest trend, combined with a strong neo-liberal imperative of profit, lack of regulation and transparency in food industry, it provides a lot of space for ill-informed or unscrupulous behaviors.

One new but not surprising manifestation of this discourse comes from social networks, mostly from Instagram. In her article, Wilson refers to Jordan Younger, a 23-year-old influencer, whose case I deem paradigmatic (Wilson, 2017). As Wilson writes, Younger was a “wellness” blogger from New York who had a brigade of followers on social networks, successfully selling her five-day cleanse program for $25. Younger believed that she ate the heathiest when eating “gluten-free, sugar-free, oil-free, grain-free, legume-free, plant-based raw vegan”. Unfortunately, far for being super healthy, she got sick; she lost her period, she started losing hair and her skin got an orange tinge from all the sweet potato and carrots (the only carbohydrates) she was consuming. She got diagnosed with **orthorexia** – an eating disorder which implies obsession with consuming “pure” food within a rigid and restrictive diet regime. Her recovery included psychological help and expansion of the range of food she was eating. However, her transition from strict veganism to pescatarianism was turbulent on social networks where she faced rage and angry messages, including death threats; she lost thousands of followers who accused her of being a “fat piece of lard” lacking discipline to be truly “clean” (Wilson, 2017). It became clear that this trend or obsession with eating “clean” is more than a trend; it is a belief system, as Wilson writes, in which food is not just fattening but it became impure. This does not come as a surprise if one considers the whole defective discourse regarding women’s bodies. Of course, this is a consumeristic trend which changes the way one perceives and consumes food, and it heavily affects the (healthy) food market. Blended with a well-tried and effective force of emotions, such as discontent, discomfort, shame and disgust, it ensures the reproduction of this harmful discourse. There is a well-known spectrum of emotions regarding women’s bodies and food, such as terrifying fear and guilt, and to that register we can add the imperative of purity as a new form of an old

discourse. This paradigmatic case relates to questions of epistemic authority, epistemic virtues and self-knowledge, but mostly, it says a lot about the dominant narrative concerning women's bodies.

In 2016, Dunn and Bratman wrote "On orthorexia nervosa: A review of the literature and proposed diagnostic criteria", articulating a new diagnostic category of eating disorders with an "obsessive focus on 'healthy eating'", involving such criteria as emotional distress related to food choices which are seen as "unhealthy"; compulsive behavior and/or mental occupation regarding dietary practices; violation of self-imposed dietary rules which cause fear of disease and sense of impurity followed by feelings of anxiety and shame, etc. (Dunn and Bratman, 2016: 11). What I consider necessary is understanding these phenomena as extensions of the harmful and impaired normative discourse regarding female bodies. Orthorexia is a new manifestation and a new category, but actually an effect of the same old harmful discourse. The consequence of that impaired yet generally accepted discourse is that girls and women have a complex relationship with food. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating, avoidant and restrictive food intake, purging, night eating, to the newest orthorexia, are classified eating disorders which should not be analyzed without taking into consideration the norm of thinness culturally imposed to young girls and women from an early age.

Food is much more than a set of calories; it is deeply rooted in the social imaginary and holds a great symbolic image. "The frame of eating juxtaposes the near and the far, the individual and the social, the natural and the cultural" (Probyn, 2000: 8). From a cultural perspective, I could not agree more with Probyn's definition of eating which refers to much more than restoring the energy level but it "becomes a visceral reminder of how we variously inhabit the axes of economics, intimate relations, gender, sexuality, history, ethnicity and class" (Probyn, 2000: 9). In this corporeal politics, in which a strong normative politics enforces a particular body image, I understand food as a strong social factor that surpasses the indispensable energy level, a social factor that influences the constitution of the "self" and self-knowledge. Food stands as the axis of control – it relates to one's character traits and self-control. Ultimately, owing to unrealistic body standards, weight loss is culturally regarded as something to compliment other people on, it is seen

as a “victory”. To achieve an ideal body, one must refrain from food with iron will and endure all disciplinary regimes. Food relates to “self” because normative body politics demands control, self-discipline, strong will and persistence, so food is undoubtedly intertwined with one’s “inner world” or self-knowledge. After all, is not the one who never manages to lose weight “a looser”, “a quitter”, someone who lacks “strong will” and “determination”? This does not include only the physical aspect of the body; it involves the epistemic domain which relates to the person as a whole. When everything is considered, there are no winners.

Food is a strong social factor connected with one’s character traits and **emotions**. “Cogito, ergo sum” is focused on ratio, while ignoring the impact of emotions on our cognition. In relation to virtues and cognition, Zagzebski notes that effects of emotions are viewed as negative; understood as an obstacle, they are disruptive of reason – “one gets the impression that if a person had no emotions at all, there would be no problem with her practical judgement” (Zagzebski, 1996: 129). Emotions are not something desirable and they should be erased with a good set of reason and self-control. “Men are more rational; women are more emotional.” This common stereotype is based on idea that men are rational, thus in direct connection with their logic, while women do not have this unmediated access to pure logic and cognition due to their emotions which stand in the way and constitute part of “women’s nature” (as if men do not have a physical body run by hormones). Male cognition is directly related to reason, while female cognition is influenced by her physical body – a woman’s reason, logic, character and judgment abilities are limited by her hormonal system. Women are “emotional” or “hormonal” which directly influences their cognition and, of course, there is “intuition”, a method of cognition typical for women because they are more “in line” with their “nature” than men. Within the social imaginary, there still exists a strong misogynistic prejudice that men are supremely logical, while women possess a “second-rate” cognition, impaired due to them being “infected” with emotions, intuition and hormones – women are their physical bodies and their cognition is determined by their bodies.

The sheer existence of this prejudice in the collective social landscape as something generally accepted is harmful and epistemically unjust to women. This

prejudice is also harmful for men because it reinforces another harmful stereotype which associates masculinity with the lack of emotions, thus mutilating men who are equally emotional beings as women. But as I have hopefully shown, we are more than ratio – our imperfect cognitive machinery consists of many "bugs" and emotions have a strong influence in this process, regardless of sex/gender. Besides, emotions should not be regarded as negative. Indeed, I believe they strongly influence cognition. Zagzebski considers emotions in her claim that beliefs and emotions are "intimately connected"; more specifically, she argues the following:

> "It should be recognized that beliefs often seem to be the outcome of instinctive processes, no more voluntarily than our digestion, and even when they are produced by reflective thought, we may find our cognitive processes leading us inexorably to a particular belief – one that we may not even like – and that suggests that is not *we* who direct the process but that we are more appropriately described as acted *upon*. The sense of being acted upon is probably even stronger in those cases on which a belief is influenced by emotion…" (Zagzebski, 1996: 59).

Usually perceived as obstacles to reason, I consider emotions a bearing capacity of our inner world, reachable to us via introspection. Through introspection we can achieve self-knowledge and a required understanding of one's values, character traits, perception and actions involved in critical reflection and revision. Referring to internalization of oppressive social norms which lead women to associate their self-worth with physical appearance and attractiveness to man, Mackenzie argues that this oppressive socialization functions by systematically damaging the subject's normative competence which governs feminine appearance (not in respect to capacities for critical reflections in other realms) (Mackenzie, 2002: 153).

In the context of the body/emotion/food nexus and Zagzebski's notion of a close bond between emotions and beliefs, perhaps a paradigmatic case is the experience of trying on a baiting suit in a dressing room with those unflattering lights. "I am too fat/not skinny enough/too skinny/too short/too old/my legs are too…/my breast are…" – is not this reflective, completely involuntary and compulsory thought, the reflection in the mirror shaped by patriarchal and misogynistic culture, the very productive force which enables

the dominant discourse? In my opinion, the message of inadequacy or “not being good enough” does not apply solely to a body in isolation, but is generally epistemically harmful.

We are not raised in a culture which celebrates bodies and differences. We are all raised in a patriarchal, misogynistic culture with a strict and unreachable norm of beauty which does not associate women with their person as a whole, or their cognition, or their accomplishments, but primarily with their physical bodies. “You have to suffer to be beautiful”. No matter the amount of disciplinary control of the body, mental comparison with the ideal, deeply internalized norm and the discrepancy that arises from that comparison always cause the emotions of discontent, shame, discomfort or disgust. And I believe that women generally perceive their bodies with those emotions.

That is exactly what Espleth Probyn tackles when she claims how mechanisms of disgust and shame are productive forces in thinking about the body. “…one of the effects of experiencing shame and disgust is a sense that categories of right and wrong, agreeable and distasteful, desirous and abominable, are rendered pressing and tangible” (Probyn, 2000: 135). Precisely those emotions represent the productive forces which perpetuate this dehumanizing discourse regarding women’s bodies and the power inscribed in this discourse is the same power engraved in the epistemic mechanisms which form the “self” or self-knowledge.

Our culture raises women from an early age to find flaws in comparison to the female norm. Body image is socially influenced; it is imposed through the ideology of an ideal female body and accompanied with a particular emotion. It is not just a mental process, but an emotional as well. To some degree, every woman will fail in this harmful disciplinary search for the ideal body. Emotional feeling which follows from this search for ideal femininity is **shame** – her body is deficient, and she failed in that regime and search (Bartky, 1997: 139). Shame seems to be a common denominator for all deviations from the ideal norm of femininity. “The depth of these women’s shame is a measure of the extent to which all women have internalized patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability.” (Bartky, 1997: 145). The shame of going to the beach and the shame of showing the real body, far from the imposed norm, exposed to gaze and judgement of others. Shame is a

strong productive force inscribed into the epistemic mechanisms through which “self” or self-knowledge is constituted.

Wallis Simpson once allegedly said that you can never be too thin or too rich. This statement has inscribed into popular culture with positive connotation. Let us go to one extreme side of the spectrum, towards a visible transgression and departure from the norm in which women are obviously reduced to pure subjects. Probyn writes about young girls who have been diagnosed with anorexia nervosa and placed in a hospital recovery program. This example perfectly portrays Foucault’s understanding of knowledge and power and its implications for the subject. In this institutional space, those young girl’s bodies, presumed to be or diagnosed as anorexic, are “scrutinized, and obsessively read for proof” (Probyn, 2012: 3). In Foucauldian terms, medical science has defined them as “anorexic” or “deviant” in a way which departs from the norm, and through this practice these young girls are “normalized”, that is, put into an appropriate place within a discursive institutional order. As Probyn points out, “the framing, treatment, and knowledge about anorexia nervosa is a perfect example of how a discursive formation grounded in the visible comes into being” (Probyn, 2012: 4). Anorexia nervosa is an interesting case of discursive order because it is written on the body. “This regime of visibility, which overdetermines understanding of subjectivity, has come to imprison anorexics as objects of scrutiny for several discursive institutional orders: medical, feminist, educational, academic, journalistic, and psychotherapeutic. In the evocative words of one recovering anorexic: ‘sometimes I fell as I’m made of glass – like I’m transparent. And everyone can see right into my insides. It makes me want to scream, ‘Get out! Get out of me!” (Probyn, 2012: 3). This social understanding of anorexia nervosa is hypocritical because anorexia nervosa imposes shock, it is a sort of taboo as if we do not live in a culture in which women are culturally enforced to be thin and always pursue shrinkage; as if we do not live in a culture which imposes harmful normative body politics to girls from an early age; as we do not live in a culture where women are arrogantly reduced to their bodies and those same bodies are measured, evaluated, disciplined, shamed, ridiculed or sexually objectified.

Not that these girls are solely labeled as “anorexic”, thus medically classified, but they are reduced to that imprint as people to become mere subjects. Probyn refers to Rebecca Lester who writes that “the debilitating illness of anorexia nervosa is read like a text – a symbolic struggle played out in the ‘language’ of the body – to the degree to which we begin to wonder if we are talking about real woman at all” (Probyn, 2012: 3). According to Probyn, this dehumanization is part of the discursive formation: “They (girls) complain they are ‘treated like a stereotype’. They say of the nurses: You get those looks, it makes you feel less than a human being” (Probyn, 2012: 3). Their whole existence is essentially reduced to their visible bodies which have seriously transgressed according to the social norm. How does this social labeling and placing into a particular epistemic framework impact the subject? Probyn writes about the “sensation of being made visible, of being known” (Probyn, 2012: 4). Girls are not just labeled but are reduced as human beings to their visible bodies which are visibly departed from the norm: “…you have to wear people’s knowledges of you as an anorexic. Pinned to one definition your subjectivity is erased, other people’s knowledge of you is worn as a suffocating cloak” (Probyn, 2012: 4). How does this dehumanizing reduction impact one self-understanding and how does it affect the subjectivity of the girls in question? And what does this say about the generally accepted societal norms and values?

On the other side of the extreme spectrum we have obese people. Their epistemic imprint is also visible on their body. They testify to the fact that food is more than food – it relates to self-control. Obese people lack in self-control, as the widely accepted stereotype suggest. Their body testifies to their laziness, weakness, lack of discipline and lack of persistence. Because of that they deserve disgust evident in deeply morally disturbing reality shows in which obese people are trying to lose weight under the “tough but fair” fitness instructors. Obese people are being exploited for the purpose of entertainment of those who are “better” than them, ergo not fat, or closer to the norm and having more power. In these shows they are ridiculed, humiliated, dehumanized - punished because of their lack of self-discipline by a usually borderline sadistic fitness “guru” with cheap psychology. They are shamed because of their “disgusting” bodies which exemplify their epistemic weaknesses, their epistemic vices. “How could you do this to yourself?” is the common opening, patronizing question with a pinch of contempt and disgust. Participants,

then, in shame, justify themselves, almost apologizing to us, the viewers. Humiliation of these people is unwatchable. “In this way, the body in shame, incited by disgust, then reappears as a judge of the body, itself and others. To repeat, the body shamed before the sight of the body disgusted becomes a passionate witness to itself. Shame makes our bodies a judge, but a judge of what? Well, in simple terms, a judge or our affects as actions” (Probyn, 2000: 145). Men work out without t-shirts and women work out in sports bras, so their naked body is always on display, as a testimony and punishment for their epistemic failure – laziness and lack of self-control. These people are objectified and humiliated for the purpose of entertainment. All of this unfolds under the firm fist of a borderline sadistic “guru” or fitness instructor. Again, what does this say about society’s broadly accepted norms and values?

How does a picture of the anorexic or obese body affect us, the voyeuristic third party? What are the emotions about the anorexic body or its polarity, obesity, both visible and exhibited to everyone’s gaze? Images of the anorexic body seek to bring out shame – “the anorexic fills us with shame, and we bow our heads before her image”, while the obese one evokes disgust which “acts to make the reader want to push away the image, to expunge the sight and the closeness of the obese person” (Probyn, 2012: 6). There is no “way out” of ideology or discursive order. Our gaze of the anorexic body is shaped by the existing grid of understanding. By stating, “These women’s state represents a departure from the norm.”, they are being normalized and put into place. Besides the institutional order, “our” (the common people’s) gaze verifies the discursive institutional order.

Thus, on the one extreme side we have anorexic bodies, and on the other side we have obese bodies. Do not let us be deceived, we are all in the same spectrum, anorexia and obesity being the opposite sides of the spectrum. “Look at her cellulite.” (cellulite is, by far, the worst woman’s enemy), “She has gained weight.”, “She lost too much weight.”, “She has small breasts.”, “She is so old.”, “You are so thin, do you eat at all?”, “You look good for your age.”, “Do not be lazy, get your ‘beach body’!”, “She should hit the gym and get her pre-pregnancy body back.” Other people’s gaze confirms the existing discursive order which functions as a productive force. Shame and disgust are productive forces

through which, as a misogynistic culture, we reproduce an oppressive and harmful normative discourse and dominant corporeal politics manifest it on a micro level. It is a Foucauldian execution of decentralized micro-power, coming from nowhere and everywhere. Panopticon at its best. Furthermore, they influence epistemic subjects as well – the ones who gaze and the ones who are gazed at are both in an epistemically unjust position; the ones who gaze and exercise power are at the same time reproducing the defective discourse, having internalized it as the generally accepted norm, while the ones who are gazed at face the injustice of powerlessness by being put "into place" in the discursive order.

As a society, we should stop with the pathologization of food. A misogynistic society forces unbelievably strict social standards on girls and women. If girls and women weigh too much, they will be "undesirable" to men and society in general (because their worth in this culture is still primarily corporeal) and it is bizarre that this is still our cultural standard. The message is that you can never be "too thin", and yet again, if you diverge from the given framework and become "too thin", such a girl or a woman will be said to have a "mental illness" or mental disorder – she will be labeled as deficient, as an epistemic subject as well. When you see an anorexic body, you will be overwhelmed with shame and the idea that "something is 'wrong' with her"; her epistemic "wrongness" is written in the body. Likewise, when you see an obese person, you will feel disgust flavored with judgment and the idea that the person must be lazy and a quitter, which is also the case in which corporeal notions are translated into the epistemic domain of the subject.

Although we are free subjects, armed with free will and equal legal rights, I think it is important to underline the impact of an oppressive discourse which affects the constitution of the "self" and one's self-knowledge in the context of food and its connection with the body. We are individual subjects, but we are also members of a broader community. Moreover, as I have hopefully shown earlier in the thesis, our critical reflection is not given or universally objective, but rather mediated through broader social relations in our culture. Our self-knowledge or knowledge about our values, norms, attitudes, habits, character, aims, aspirations and body image is negotiated via social relations. In

particular, when addressing the issue of body image, food and our relation to it represents a strong social factor.

As a society, we should stop with pathologization of food and should turn towards the social realm and its problematic beliefs, norms and values regarding women's bodies and their relation to food. Social standards pertaining to women's bodies are brutal, oppressive, harmful, dehumanizing and misogynistic and they result in a distorted image and value of women. In the end, the result of this oppressive discourse concerning women's bodies is general bodily discomfort and shame. Its unhealthy norms in regard to women's bodies and food damage one's self-knowledge and distort one's image of themselves as knowers.

As Mackenzie argues and I have outlined above, internalization of oppressive norms concerning women's appearance impairs women's capacities for critical reflection on the norms which guide physical appearance, but it does not impair women's capacities for critical reflection in other domains (Mackenzie, 2002: 193). Notwithstanding, if from an early age the message about women's bodies is that they are not good enough, how is it possible not to be distorted as a cognizer, as a "self"? Power inscribed in this harmful discourse is the same power underlying the epistemic mechanism which molds the "self" or self-knowledge. One's perception of oneself as a person is generally inseparable from one's physical body because physical body is an integral part of subjectivity. I am not just my ratio, I am also my body and my emotions. On the collective level, women are still estimated, judged and labeled through their bodies. A continuous message that your worth comes from your "not good enough" physical body, affects one's constitution of the "self" and self-knowledge because our physical body and thoughts about it are inseparable from one's self-knowledge. "Women have won their legal rights, what else do they want?" – I, as a woman, would want a more just society with the cultural imaginary not based on misogyny.

5.4. Conclusion

We live in an era of "post-truth", "fake news" and "bullshit" or, in DeNicola's words – in the culture of ignorance which does not hold dear truth-sensitive beliefs. Food does

not escape this social context. It is not easy to navigate in a vast amount of information today, and consequently, it is not simple to select truth-sensitive beliefs from collective beliefs related to food. How particular knowledge is articulated matters immensely and the importance of the narrative is clear in the strongly polarized science/nature debate. Considering the fact that we live in the Anthropocene, in which the harsh and aggressive human impact returns to us as a boomerang, the epistemic virtues of open-mindedness, curiosity, self-reflection and humility, have never been more important.

Since most people today are alienated from the process of food production, we are condemned to trust the institutions that produce knowledge and information about food. “Tobacco” strategy articulated malevolent practices which represent obstacles in the process of understanding food knowledge. The fusion of knowledge with power and profit takes its toll on trust pertaining to food. So much information and so many institutions not being transparent about food quality leave the subject in an epistemically disadvantaged position. Injustice in the process of understanding concrete practices or problems and the lack of transparent transmission of information place the epistemic subject in an epistemically disadvantaged position. When injustice is generated by a complex system of social relations and practices, we can refer to a systemic character of epistemic disruption. Subjects are put in epistemically disadvantaged positions in which their knowledge is impaired and their trust violated, while the lack of transparency leads to overall confusion and animosity towards the institutions which should produce truth-oriented beliefs. When we lower the problem from the social to the individual level, the subject becomes entangled in a complex web of neoliberal consumerism, food industry based on the ideology of health, youth and abundance, as well as epistemic conformism. Epistemic responsibility and epistemic virtues here display their importance and linkage with self-knowledge.

Cultural circumstances concerning food surpass food as the sum of calories or source of energy. But food has its symbolic meaning and power in the social imaginary. Imagination as a mental activity becomes important because body constitutes an integral part of subjectivity and our perception of our bodies or body-image is strongly mediated through the social imaginary. In that process food represents a strong social factor.

Foucault wrote about docile bodies and the power of internalization which is perfectly applicable in the knowledge/power discourse regarding women's bodies. We are all exposed to the process of internalization of cultural beliefs, values, norms, meanings, images and representations arising from the cultural imaginary. This sphere forces a particular norm of the female body. Dominant discourse concerning women's bodies generates a never-ending meeting of the norm, with its disciplinary practices leaving imprints not just on the physical body, but on self-knowledge as well. Body image, mediated through the social realm, intertwines with consumerism, fashion, beauty, health, cosmetic and aesthetic industry, in which the restrictive disciplinary practices boosted by consumerism, offer "healthy" food, supplements and diets, but mostly, fake promises. Of course, bio/eco/organic represents more than an attempt to eat more healthily, but from the perspective of the industry, it makes a very profitable niche.

Looking at this discourse from such an angle, food constitutes a mechanism of constant reinforcement of harmful normative body politics, ergo, a strong social factor which seriously influences the constitution of the "self" and self-knowledge. This can be observed in the reduction of women from beings to mere bodies and in their "not fitting" to a particular body norm, which is epistemically damaging. It is epistemically wrong to send women the message that they are first and foremost valued through their bodies and that their body is "not enough" because they do not fit into the norm. This defective discourse develops as a result of political and economic structures and it operates by means of the productive forces, such as oppressive social norms and values, which arrive from the collective imaginary and which reproduce as generally accepted values and norms; damaged stereotypes about women and their bodies existent in the social imaginary; disciplinary practices exercised upon the body; and through the reproduction of emotions, such as shame, discomfort, discontent and disgust. Internalization of these false and dehumanizing belies, norms and values ensures normalization of this discourse and its perpetuation as an unquestioned and generally accepted "modus vivendi". This discourse is oppressive, harmful and epistemically defective towards women. Sheer internalization does the epistemic harm to women because the power interwoven into this harmful discourse is the same power which resides in the epistemic mechanisms responsible for the formation of the "self" and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is always

relational towards the social realm whose oppressiveness and injustice reside in its beliefs, norms and values pertaining to women and their bodies.

Body is an integral part of one's subjectivity and collective understanding of women and their bodies influence the individual understanding. Epistemically unjust beliefs and norms in the collective imaginary constitute roots for further oppression, objectification, discrimination and dehumanization. These are all aspects of a deeply misogynic culture, however "advanced" we may be as a society in terms of technology, law or any other sphere. On a cultural level, the discourse regarding women's bodies and food is deeply problematic and it is impossible to understand food without taking power into consideration. Ecological epistemology helps us explore and untangle these harmful individual and collective food-related beliefs, as well as epistemic and others causal injustices present in that domain, while taking power and self-knowledge into consideration. In this collective imaginary it is not only hard to approach information and select food-related beliefs as truth-oriented, and furthermore, but also difficult to handle self-reflection, revisit and possibly modify or enhance our belief system which represents the basis for our future actions, behavior, choices and habits. Hence the importance of ecological epistemology – it helps us understand this complex process and aids us in "thinking" better about the intricate realm of food.

6. SOLUTIONS

After delineating the complex epistemic mess that we are faced with, it would be rather unfair to finish in a pessimistic tone. Within the "post-truth" social context and keeping in mind the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition, it is not easy to arrive at the truth-oriented beliefs regarding food or any other matter. I often think about one DeNicola's thought which I mentioned before. He wrote that "knowledge carries cost. We are forever changed by our knowing" (DeNicola 2018: 31). He continues by saying that learning disrupts our cognitive comfort – it displaces us and forces us to revise or abandon the life we know (DeNicola 2018: 37). In other words, we cannot "unknow" something. Learning carries a certain responsibility which explains why epistemic conformism is sometimes appalling as an easier route. Taking into consideration the effects of climate change that we are witnessing, one must be aware that, as a humanity, we are on a wrong trajectory concerning our relationship with the non-human world. And we are running out of time. What should we do? Without a doubt, politicians, governments and corporations bear the greatest responsibility. They should start making massive fundamental changes, not just by announcing them but actually implementing them on a global, national and local level. The epistemic "subject/eater" surely has smaller, but nevertheless real responsibility on a micro-level. What can an epistemic subject, an ordinary person, do in everyday life in regard to food and food-related beliefs? How to better navigate in this informational chaos and vast pool of collective beliefs pertaining to food? Exploring the power of one's cognition in relation to this topic, on the individual and collective level, seems to be an appropriate task for ecological epistemology.

6.1. Consumers, producers and virtues

> "The deepest etymological roots of *curiosity* lead to the Latin word *cura* (care). To be curious is to care about what lies beyond the boundary of our knowing" (DeNicola, 2018: 119).

I will begin this section with the importance of epistemic virtues which, in a way, represent a prerequisite for responsible epistemic agency applicable to all life areas, including food choices. In my opinion, apprehension and cultivation of epistemic virtues

constitutes a necessary precondition for self-knowledge, a key for resolving epistemic and broader social injustices on the individual and collective level. As character traits, or collections of attitudes and dispositions that ease the acquisition and distribution of knowledge, Jose Medina associates virtues with the oppressed groups in society, and epistemic vices with the privileged groups. believe this is applicable to the general social landscape. He highlights the epistemic virtues of humility, curiosity/diligence and open-mindedness as mirror images of the epistemic vices of arrogance, laziness and close-mindedness (Medina, 2013: 30, 42). One should strive towards epistemic humility, curiosity and open-mindedness. In an epistemically challenging context, I find epistemic virtues crucial in the process of collecting and critically processing the information, accepting it or discarding it or changing our own beliefs and values accordingly. We are humans, ergo, epistemically imperfect, and it is necessary to take into consideration the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition. As Medina notes in accord with Cassam, we are all lazy on occasion, lacking the motivation to learn more about a certain issue, but **epistemic laziness** becomes a problem when it turns into a **habit**. Medina argues for **responsible epistemic agency** which requires a minimum of diligence because knowledge demands work and active participation on the part of the epistemic subject (Medina, 2013: 33). One should analyze or actively engage with his/her personal beliefs, question them and be employed with the "inner world" which shapes his/her actions, choices and habits, leave material imprint in the world. To question dominant collective beliefs, norms, values, traditions and practices – to be critical towards the social imaginary which is often oppressive and unjust. To my understanding, all of this forms responsible epistemic conduct. Question oneself – is Facebook or any other social network truly a relevant source of information about food, health or vaccination?

Processes like socialization and acculturation influence the epistemic character of a subject, which implies the importance of an epistemic community. As a result, in everyday life, epistemic subjects are usually unaware of their epistemic attitudes, dispositions and sensibilities, as Medina argues (Medina, 2013: 53). People are inattentive of their epistemic character and how it affects the processes of making claims, assessing, questioning and doubting – processing takes place every day and applies to food-related issues as well. However, people bear responsibility for their cognitive actions,

practices and consequences – they are responsible for their epistemic character or rather, their attitudes, dispositions and sensibilities (Medina, 2013: 53). Of course, one is not responsible for the norms or attitudes existing in their family or community but at some point, one must take responsibility for their own epistemic character developed in that community and for sustaining the influence.

> "…this involves becoming aware of who one is, where one is, and where one comes from, that is, understanding one's social trajectory and positionality. In this sense, responsible agency requires understanding oneself (at least minimally), which, in turn, requires understanding others…" (Medina, 2013: 53).

Therefore, responsible epistemic agency requires awareness of one's epistemic character or rather, self-reflection about one's self-knowledge consisting of beliefs, attitudes, desires, character traits, perception, practices, habits, decisions and actions. As Medina maintains, to be a responsible epistemic subject, one must possess self-knowledge and knowledge about others. I once read a slogan in one of Cassam's writings which made me think – we must **improve epistemic posture**! Since one is aware of the importance of physical posture in the physical world, one should become aware of the importance of epistemic posture in intellectual life (Cassam, 2018: 16). If one thinks about it, this is a game changer. Our body, muscles and bones would atrophy if we did not take care of them. So would our cognitive mechanism. This implies an active role of a responsible epistemic subject who analyzes and questions the internal world and the world around him/her, and takes responsibility for his/her actions. As Zagzebski notes, "The learning of virtue consists in part of learning the extent of proper doubt and proper inquiry" (Zagzebski, 1996: 154). Our epistemic character and virtues themselves require training and practice. What poses an issue is dealing with a vast amount of information. I have outlined the problems with the internet and its algorithms: people become isolated in their own understanding of the world, without so much as contact with different ideas or notions, let alone a debate. We all need more fact-checking on the internet. As I have tried to outline in the last chapter, the power of an oppressive discourse lies in its normalization and internalization of its discursive order. It is like trying to become critical to something which is part of one's own cognitive scheme or rather, become critical towards the internalized and accepted knowledge. Hence the importance of epistemic virtues and self-

reflection - one must sharpen one's own "apparatus" in order to select beliefs and accordingly access what one reads or hears. Responsible epistemic subjects must have awareness of their inner world – their emotions, character traits, beliefs and attitudes. One should become aware of their cognitive capacities, as well as vices, bugs and limitations through self-reflection and introspection. This means taking responsibility for one's life and actions.

It applies to all aspects of the world and the "self", including the focal point of this thesis - beliefs about food. As food consumers and food producers, responsible epistemic "subject/eaters" must sharpen their epistemic tools but moreover, nurture open-mindedness, flexibility and readiness to change beliefs, habits and practices and acquire new information and knowledge. Because we live in the Anthropocene, witnessing mass extinction, climate change, pollution and other burning issues, this is the last chance to abandon the vice of epistemic stubbornness, arrogance, superiority and close-mindedness and open towards different understandings and practices based on cooperation rather than exploitation and dominance over nature. At the source of our internal inventory, by means of which we review our beliefs and cognitive schemes, **curiosity** constitutes the force which enables it all.

Curiosity is a fundamental epistemic virtue, a tool which should mark every epistemic agency. To be curios about answers and knowledge, about new understandings and questioning what is generally accepted. Nenad Miščević, in his book "Curiosity as an Epistemic Virtue", regards curiosity as a central epistemic virtue, as motivation to obtain knowledge and understanding. According to him, curiosity can be either pure (an epistemic subject is simply curious without any practical goal; this is "intrinsic curiosity"), or practical (there is external motivation), or it can be mixed (Miščević, 2020: 7).

Humans, as "finite and relatively ignorant beings", are in constant need of update of information in order to function. In that sense, Miščević argues that curiosity is a motivating epistemic virtue and a truth-focused motivating virtue, assuming that our goal is to arrive at true beliefs and knowledge. In his view, "curiosity is the central and the foundational epistemic virtue. It is foundational since it bestows epistemic value, and

central since it organizes other epistemic virtues" (Miščević, 2020: 139). Curiosity represents the main force which leads us towards knowledge and understanding. It constitutes the foundation for epistemic engagement and the fundamental bearer of epistemic value. While truth is the primary goal, a mere true belief is not a fundamental bearer due to isolation from the supporting structure, so Miščević argues for the minimal kind of knowledge which represents the bearer of epistemic value whose supporting structure consists of justification or reliability (Miščević, 2020: 232).

Once again, I will refrain from entering the debate about truth monism, but rather focus on epistemic virtues of a subject. I agree with Miščević for whom curiosity figures as a motivational force in science and in your inner life characterized by the curiosity to "know thyself". In that sense, curiosity is a tool for introspection, leading us towards self-knowledge which makes a vehicle for change. Without the curiosity about oneself, one is a black box. I do not mean the Zen/New Age "bullshit" embodied in water bottle messages telling you to "Find your true self", "Become the queen that you are", "Discover the lioness in yourself", as part of the annoying consumeristic imperative of compulsory happiness. I am referring to the descent into our inner world replete with emotions, insecurity, doubts and unpleasantness. This is a complex world which gives birth to our attitudes, desires and character traits that coincide with our stereotypes, prejudices and unquestioned norms and values – the place where knowledge about oneself is born and the little voice in one's head called "me" resides. Self-critical and uncomfortable descent into oneself constitutes this realm. We must know which beliefs motivate actions, habits and practices. In terms of food, it is necessary to grasp its multidimensionality consisting of questions of power, status anxieties, oppressive discourse, as well as epistemic and other injustices. Ecological epistemology, as a branch of social epistemology, serves as a great tool for understanding this multilayered sphere.

One must be curious about food and not settle with a simple "Yes, yes, it is homegrown!", but dig deeper than the general paradigms concerning food production. Where does this food really come from, how is it produced and what is its wider social context? What am I supporting when I buy this produce? Whom should I believe and on what grounds? Who is an "expert" and which standards must one fulfill? These are

everyday cognitive processes involving something as fundamental as food, but food refers to much more – it leads us towards self-knowledge and the realization that every decision bears political consequences. In assessing and selecting our sources and beliefs, we must train our epistemic virtues, especially curiosity, open-mindedness and intellectual modesty, in order to achieve understanding of some particular issue. Miščević depicts this by stating that "curiosity is directed to the 'new, ambiguous, complex, obscure, uncertain, mysterious, contradictory, unexpected, or otherwise not understood'" (Miščević according to Silvia, 2020: 101). Its central goal is to achieve **understanding**, rather than arrive at isolated items of knowledge, which makes it epistemically valuable. "The interest in complexity leads to the desire to understand, the crucial epistemic desire" (Miščević, 2020: 124). While selling my own vegetables at the local markets, besides sale, I acquire a precious thing – observation of a great number of people who always appall me as to how easily they give their trust to traders unknown to them. "Is it Istrian Swiss chard?" – "Yes, yes, homegrown Istrian Swiss chard." – "OK, one kilo please." – How and why do you believe that statement? On a human level, it says a lot about people and their need for cooperation and trust, which fills me with optimism, but it simultaneously opens doors for various epistemic vices that we must be aware of. Furthermore, it is important not to mistake trust for epistemic conformism which strips one of responsibility but ultimately comes with a great cost.

Armed with curiosity and considering the complex social epistemic landscape, diminished trust in structures and institutions, apathy and passivity of the "little people who cannot make a change", the question is whom to trust and on what grounds? With postmodern tradition and its legacy of cynicism, "post-truth", "fake news", annihilation of the concepts of truth and knowledge, doubts and the loss of trust in experts who are sometimes infected with interest, profit, and power, yet with science as the most reliable path towards knowledge - where do we stand and how to enlighten this epistemically schizophrenic situation? In DeNicola's contemporary "culture of ignorance", it seems that everybody has an opinion – do all opinions carry the same epistemic weight and what is the epistemic agent's responsibility in forming beliefs? How to approach, estimate and select food-related beliefs?

An answer to what makes critical thinking an intellectual or epistemic virtue can be found in Prijić-Samaržija's beautiful writings about the virtues of love towards knowledge, intellectual firmness, courage, vigilance, humility and intellectual autonomy. She articulates this fine line of thought that responsible epistemic subjects should cultivate and train. **"Critical thinking"** refers to an endeavor for independent evaluation of arguments and evidence in contrast to automatic acceptance of beliefs originating from others or authorities (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 9). She defines critical thinking as the constituting intrinsic substance of all epistemic virtues and the essence of epistemically responsible conduct (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 5). I consider critical thinking a clear answer to perplexing contemporary epistemic imaginary we operate in as cognitively limited creatures. According to Prijić-Samaržija, it is not optimal for an epistemic subject to opt for trust without critical thinking, and likewise, nor is it intellectually virtuous to maintain personal findings based on critical thinking regardless of experts' opinions. Therefore, epistemic subjects need to establish a fine balance between personal and expert opinion, which is the trait of epistemic quality.

As I argued earlier in the thesis, traditional epistemology was operating on the pretext of perfect cognition in idealized circumstances, neglecting sub-ideal epistemic conditions. We function in sub-ideal but real social circumstances characterized by personal cognitive and social limitations, which is why epistemic subjects cannot know everything about everything and shape beliefs without adequate competencies, capability and motivation to form first-class epistemic beliefs (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 9). In real-life and sub-ideal epistemic circumstances, epistemic subjects cannot always generate the best epistemic results as it was assumed within the context of ideal epistemic cognition. Under the sub-ideal conditions, the trust towards experts can be epistemically more responsible than reliance on one's own limited capabilities. Once again, postmodern and social constructivist tradition abolished truth and epistemic criteria for differentiation of opinions - all opinions are equally epistemically valuable and there exists no need to rely on other people's opinions, including that of experts. The only relevant epistemic value in this context is the critical social position of resistance towards the domination of others, especially experts who are seen as privileged elites or bastions of social power. As Prijić-Samržija outlines, these assumptions generate and maintain the stereotype of

contraposition between the trust in experts as epistemic authorities on one side and epistemic autonomy on the other side (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 9).

She outlines four reasons which constitute the notion of **epistemic self-sufficiency**. Firstly, in the context of traditional epistemology, other people's testimony was considered less reliable than one's own observation due to their epistemic vices. Secondly, postmodern legacy is reflected in the doubt of objectivity and truth and in the abandonment of objectivity and neutrality, which represented the reasons to trust the experts in the first place. Thirdly, epistemic egalitarianism implies the resistance against other people's domination, including intellectual domination. Lastly, "wisdom of the crowd" suggests that many people with different opinions will generate greater epistemic quality than an isolated individual or expert (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 10-11).

Where would we be if we abandoned the experts who still embody the best guides towards knowledge and truth? Of course, not all people who hold the position of an expert are objective experts. Prijić-Samaržija states "reputational" experts as one such case. As I have mentioned earlier, there are no universal experts – an expert in one field is not an expert in another field. More importantly, the position of an expert does not imply a privileged position of a person with fundamental authority in society – they are given epistemic trust simply because of their supreme competence in a particular field. I agree with Prijić-Samaržija's starting position is the definition of experts as a non-privileged political elite (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 12). In comparison to other epistemic seekers, despite not being absolutely objective and neutral, their training, detection of wrong beliefs and problem-solving make them "experts" and more suitable for the search for truth (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 11). With their education and experience, experts are epistemically superior in a particular matter. However, we are dependent on other people's testimony, as I have shown previously. Experts may be susceptible to ideological, theoretical and other orientations which can influence their claims, but not more than the general population. Likewise, "wisdom of the crowd" does not generate epistemically quality beliefs (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 12-13).

I strongly agree with Prijić-Samaržija's claim that the right path lies somewhere in between – objective epistemic quality in sub-ideal but realistic circumstances can be arrived at by means of one's own critical thought and trust towards experts, with the latter not standing in opposition to critical thought, but rather being part of one's critical thought and epistemic autonomy (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 15). It is not epistemically responsible to stubbornly insist on one's beliefs despite being aware of knowing less – epistemic autonomy does not exclude trust in experts. With this line of reasoning, Prijić-Samaržija takes a position between traditional epistemology which ignored the social dimension of the imperfect cognizer and postmodern reductionist position which abandoned the normative dimension of epistemology. We depend on other people's testimony of other people in everyday life. Prijić-Samaržija offers the ideal of **"independent dependency**" – an epistemically responsible and virtuous subject as a critical thinker uses "his/her own head"; however, critical thinking as an epistemic virtue incorporates elements of intellectual trust and intellectual humility, without slipping into the epistemic vice of epistemic dependence and regulation from others (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 18). By practicing "independent dependency" one improves his/her epistemic conduct. Precisely this epistemic training is as necessary as training our physical bodies in order to remain healthy and strong.

This is immensely important in DeNicola's "culture of ignorance", in which epistemic subjects overconfidently form beliefs without having enough knowledge and in that process, they rely on stereotypes and prejudices, while neglecting reliable and responsible research and evidence, and as a consequence, develop "my own truth" (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 18). This personal access to "the real truth" generates knowledge of those with "higher awareness", who can "really see the truth" about propaganda and conspiracies, making it possible for pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, anti-intellectualism and unhealthy skepticism towards science to flourish. This implicitly suggests that virtuous critical thinking must exclude trust in experts or epistemic authority of any kind (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 19). We all know at least one annoying "independent thinker" who "knows the real truth", while we, "the common folk", have not yet arrived at that "level of consciousness" which would enable us to see "the truth". The epistemic virtue of critical thinking demands **independence and autonomy** as prerequisites for assessing

whether the best epistemic result will be achieved by independent research or trust in epistemic authorities. The essence of relying on one's own epistemic strength consists in exactly that and not in preference of one's own attitudes and beliefs just because they are his/her own (Prijić-Samaržija, 2020: 9).

I would like to refer once again to Quassim Qassam who offered interesting, important and useful points on the topic of "Sensemaking in Democratic Politics" (Cassam, 2021). Cassam asks how to make rational sense of actions and choices of our fellow citizens which are unclear, surprising, eccentric or self-defeating to us. Whether they are Trump voters, science-deniers, or in this case, indifference to or denial of climate change and devastating ecological consequences. Cassam advocates **"sensemaking"** for several reasons. Firstly, there is a pragmatic argument according to which we must understand why people act the way they act or what is their motivation. Secondly, there is an ethical argument imposing the moral obligation to try to understand and make sense. Thirdly, there is the concept of "Othering" by which some groups of people are so far from the norm that they constitute "political aliens". I would add that "Othering" represents a fundamental question of identity which relates to Seyla Benhabib's differentiation between "generalized" and "concrete" Others whose identities are distinguished according to gender, race, class, cultural differences, etc. "Other" refers to the difference we cannot understand and, as every "Othering", it is based on power and hierarchical position of superiority, or in Cassam's case, inferiority of those who have unreasonable beliefs and actions. Cassam proposes "sensemaking" as an emphatic antidote to Othering which implies inferiority and alienation and Medina's notion of "insensitivity" which entails numbness towards the lives of others. Cassam's "sensemaking" is really a response: an effort to understand and connect with the lives and perspectives of others, an attempt to make sense of Others who dwell far from our understanding. He calls for empathy necessary to connect and make sense, for radical interpretation or finding reason in them and for narrative reconstruction or "making sense of Other's sensemaking".

I strongly support Cassam's notion of sensemaking and deem it intertwined with the epistemic virtues of curiosity and open-mindedness which regulate sensemaking - in order to truly understand Other, one must discard the epistemic vices of intellectual

superiority and arrogance. I am in line with Cassam who considers sensemaking a prerequisite for de-radicalization empowered by the increase of effective counter-narratives (which resonate with the audience) to radicalization-narratives. There is no easy answer – our epistemic apparatus must me trained. We should make an inventory of our own personal beliefs and not let them become rigid and calcified. We should exercise our epistemic virtues, question and fight our epistemic vices and practice genuine critical thinking. Self-knowledge is knowledge about one's mental and emotional states – knowledge about the "real me". Virtues are a vehicle which enables us to immerse into and cultivate that specific knowledge. Learning about one's beliefs and cognitive vices means taking responsibility. Exploring and understanding our food-related beliefs means taking responsibility for our relationship with the non-human world and for our future actions, behaviors and habits.

6.2. Shifts of paradigms

> "I am pessimistic about the human race because it is too ingenious for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially." E.B. White[19]

We are witnessing a more inclusive framing of epistemology. The philosophy of knowledge recognizes autonomous knowers as cognitively limited creatures modeled by the surrounding socio-epistemic conditions. Much like the changes on the epistemic horizon, we necessitate shifts in knowledge about food production and consumption. As I have shown, each individual epistemic "subject/eater" bears personal responsibility to train their cognitive apparatus, develop virtues and practice critical thinking just like we physically exercise to become strong and resilient. Besides the epistemic paradigm, as a civilization we also need a shift in food paradigms. Although discussion about climate change exists and we witness it with our own eyes (rising temperatures and ocean temperatures, heat waves, fires), somehow it still does not concern people in everyday life. There seems to be no sense of connection between a personal use of seven plastic bags while grocery shopping on a Saturday morning and the universal problem of plastic

[19] Rachel Carson's legendary book „Silent Spring" is prefaced by this quotation from E.B. White.

pollution and global warming. Just as people are alienated from the food production process, they seem to be alienated from global ecological problems.

An absolute authority and luminary, a man whose beautiful, velvet voice represents a synonym for the natural world, David Attenborough, has recently written the influential book, “A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future”, accompanied by a documentary which will hopefully touch people worldwide. Both his book and documentary are shockingly realistic, utterly heart-breaking and alarming – as a human race on this planet, we do not have much time left. Wilderness is reduced to 35%, ocean fish are disappearing, plastic waste is contaminating every single inch of our planet, land is saturated with mineral fertilizers, chemicals, pesticides (especially nitrates and phosphates), deforestation is threating rainforests, biodiversity is vanishing, bees and pollinators are rapidly disappearing due to pesticide use, we are witnessing devastating fires and heat waves – the future is now and it is apocalyptic. However, as stated earlier, this does not pose a new problem. The countercultural New Left from the 1960s left us a valuable heritage in environmentalism. In September 1972, Arne Naess coined the term **“deep ecology”** and thus made the distinction between “shallow” and “deep” ecological movements. As a concept, it represents a fundamental shift in decentralization of the human interest and focusing attention on the rest of the natural world which has intrinsic value. Back then, this was thought to be a radical move.

In the vast theoretical corpus of environmental philosophy, Andrew Dobson’s “Green Political Thought” (briefly mentioned in the chapter about the “self”, it was first published in 1990 and had its fourth edition in 2007), stands out as a beautiful articulation of the contrast between **“radical” and “reformist” environmentalism** which clearly reflects today’s crisis. Do we have time for reforms or do we need radical changes to live on this planet? Without doubt, we need new understandings of food as a complex and multidimensional topic. Dobson underlines that “**’environmentalism’** argues for a managerial approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or pattern productions and consumptions; **’ecologism’** holds that a sustainable and fulfilling experience presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the non-human natural world, and in our mode of

social and political life" (Dobson, 2007: 3). According to Dobson, ecologism is a strong positive political ideology because it provides an analytical description of society, prescribes a particular form of society with accompanying beliefs, and offers a program for political action (Dobson, 2007: 3). Earth has limited carrying capacity, as well as productive and absorbent capacity. In other words, Earth is finite. Its finitude makes infinite population and economic growth impossible. Taking into consideration our current position and situation, we have no option but to go "radically green" which implies "living a different kind of collective life" (Dobson, 2007: 13). To start living new kinds of "greener" lives, we must individually and collectively examine our food-related beliefs. We must understand how these beliefs form and what consequent epistemic injustices they generate.

In terms of environmental care, Dobson outlines two main arguments which observe the relationship between human beings and the non-human world. Firstly, there is a distinction between **anthropocentrism** and **biocentrism**. Namely, we can distinguish between the **anthropocentric position** according to which humans should care for the environment because it is in our best interest and the **biocentric position** according to which the environment has an intrinsic value surpassing the instrumental human value (Dobson, 2007: 15). This imposes the question of **biospherical egalitarianism** which is problematic because, as Dobson voices Naess, "any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation, and suppression" (Naess in Dobson, 2007: 34). Such an understanding opens a Pandora's box of questions and doubts. I will not go further in that direction due to the lack of space and hope to return to this issue in my future writings, but I firmly believe that the non-human world has its own intrinsic value and that the interconnectivity of different facets of the system is the right way to perceive the world. Nevertheless, the fact that I am writing and thinking about this topic speaks for itself. It sits well with my notion that every part of the whole of my garden bears its significance: the plants; the soil; the birds and the bees; the slugs; Đuro, the domicile, non-poisonous snake who inhabits my garden longer than I do and who beneficially eats small insects; and finally, there is me. Every segment has a role and place in this small eco-system without any superiority. I am very much aware of the devastating power of the slug or stinkbug or the fundamental importance of the earthworm for soil and humus. Aphids also commonly

appear on my French beans, but if they spread too much, I cannot ascribe them the same value as my French beans. I will have to do some preparation, usually with ashes and nettles, to reduce them in number so that my French beans could survive and I could eat them or sell the surplus at Saturday market. Therefore, I must agree with Dobson who proposed hierarchies or degrees of intrinsic value as a possible answer to this debate (Dobson, 2007: 140).

It seems to me that we cannot distance ourselves from anthropocentrism but, as Dobson argues, there is a weak and strong meaning of the word. The weak meaning implies a **"human-centered"** view, while the strong meaning implies a **"human-instrumental"** perspective**.** In the weak sense, anthropocentrism is the "unavoidable feature of the human condition", while in the strong sense it "carries a notion of the injustice and unfairness involved in the instrumental use of the non-human world" (Dobson, 2007: 42). I recognize this to be an important issue but, for the lack of space, let me conclude by saying that, since we are humans who can think and act upon nature and the non-human world with quite a strong impact, we have a moral and every other responsibility to do it with maximum care, respect and justice for the non-human world which does not have a voice. We have an obligation to change "instrumental anthropocentrism" which is incorporated into the dominant discourse driven by relentless capitalism and lust for profit because it brought us as a civilization, to where we are – at the brink of extinction. As consumers, people must become aware of their responsibility, of epistemic and broader political and ethical injustices concerning food. To be aware of this injustice, we must be motivated by curiosity or some other epistemic virtue in order to glance into our self-knowledge in which our food-related beliefs reside. It appears to me that a change must take place in the way we understand our place in the non-human world.

Dobson notes one feature of environmental philosophy – "its failure to make itself practical" (Dobson, 2007: 51). Now is the time to change that with new knowledge and understandings of our relationship with the non-human world, based on the epistemic virtues of curiosity and humility and the overall respect and care. Exactly here can we can detect the importance of humanities, philosophy, and social/applied epistemology being

practical because it relates to how we learn, see and understand things, choose to trust, change and shape our beliefs, and consequently, our practices and habits. This is an answer to those who consider philosophy and humanities in general redundant. They cannot be redundant simply because they play an essential role in broadening our horizons and knowledge as well as in cultivating knowledge and understanding between humans and culture. Without humanities, one's world would be devastatingly poor.

The second of the two main arguments that Dobson distinguishes in regard to the relationship between human beings and the non-human world, is the distinction between atomism and holism. The importance rests in the starting point from which we gain knowledge – we either obtain knowledge by "isolated examination of the part of the system", attributing intrinsic value only to individual organisms, which holds for **atomism**, or we recognize a wider picture of synthesis or mutual dependence, influence and interconnectedness, attributing intrinsic value to the non-human species, whole eco-systems and the ecosphere, which implies **holism** (Dobson, 2007: 10-52). Joe Marocco questions "our dogmatic faith in the limitless capabilities of scientific inquiry", especially when scientific knowledge is applied to complex environmental problems (Marocco, 2008: 307). In his opinion, scientific methods are usually successfully reductive, but the interaction between human culture and nature exceeds reductionism because it cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas or pure physical laws. Environmental problems should be understood in the broader context of interconnectivity and mutual dependence – the world we are vastly ignorant of.

As Norman Uphoff notes, the relationship between plants and microorganisms is now being discovered parallel to the research regarding the relationship between human bodies and the "human microbiome". Uphoff suggests that plants should be understood as systems rather than isolated organisms because they depend on their connection with the microorganisms in the soil and around their roots and shoots – plants "are not carbon-based, machine-like entities that are primarily dependent upon *our* inputs, and whose genotypes need to be redesigned to become more responsive to inputs that *we* provide them" (Uphoff, 2015: 210). This is a fundamental shift in the perspective and understanding of plants based on interconnectivity.

In terms of environment and its complexity, science does not give us a description of the world but a description of one aspect of it in very abstract and reduced terms and from an isolated and limited perspective (Holdrege, 2008: 326). The connections in nature are complex and abstraction, isolation or reductionism lead to fragmentation which does not do justice to nature. For example, pesticides were considered useful in the short run because they kill particular organisms but, in the long run, they are deadly because they do not kill just the targeted organisms – they kill everything, including bees and pollinators necessary for pollination and creation of food. We must look at the bigger picture. Everything is connected in nature and fragmentation as an approach, as we are witnessing, simply does not work. We must do better. With the concept of **"land"**, Dobson invokes Aldo Leopold who defines it through **interconnectivity**: "the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (Dobson, 2007: 33). We should all return to the land and understand the world from another point of view.

It would be unfair not to briefly mention a justified critique of "deep ecology" which, as a radical concept, begs a lot of questions. Timothy Luke argues that the narrative of romanticizing and idealization of nature in the overall anti-modern discourse of "going back to Nature" is problematic and unrealistic. In today's context of climate change, the concept of the **"Anthropocene"** is increasingly used. The Anthropocene refers to our current geological era characterized by immeasurable human impact on Earth or, as Timothy Luke describes it in the introduction to his book, "Anthropocene Alerts: Critical Theory of the Contemporary as Ecocritique", "a new epoch of great loss, growing instability, and grand catastrophe" (Luke, 2019: 1). Luke notes that the Anthropocene narrative focuses on massive proliferation of fossil fuels in the last 250 years which resulted in "rapid climate change, extensive biodiversity loss, and deep ecospheric disruption triggering today's unanticipated and unwanted worldwide state of emergency" (Luke, 2019: 1). He asserts that the deep ecology movement arose in the 1970s as a reaction towards the reform environmentalism of the 1960s which consequently grew as a response to extensive explorations of nature during the global economic expansion after World War II (Luke, 2019: 46). At its core, deep ecology calls upon new ethical conduct towards nature. Smog, man-made radioactive elements, DDT, synthetic plastics, as well

as “increased population, pollution, resource depletion, nuclear radiation, pesticide and chemical poisoning, the deterioration of the cities, the disappearance of wildlife and wilderness, decreases in the ‘quality of life’, and continued economic growth and development under the rhetoric of progress” required radical solutions because they were interrelated in the eyes of deep ecologists, such as George Session (Luke, 2019: 47).

Deep ecologists tackle the problem of **domination** – domination of humans as isolated, separated and superior to the rest of the natural world (Luke, 2019: 50). Luke argues that the issue of dominance is part of a larger cultural pattern of Western obsession with domination, as Critical Theory confirms. I tried to address this as a great issue connected with the power inscribed in knowledge which creates discourses that perfectly tie with the epistemic vices of arrogance, conformity or close-mindedness. Distinctly articulate, Luke exposes a burning desire in the deep ecologist movement to overthrow the heritage of the Enlightenment and revert human consciousness back to a more mythical world. He detects the “myth of man’s fall” who once lived in a state of innocence but was catapulted into a state of corruption and alienation due to technological domination (Luke, 2019: 55). Luke distinguishes a romanticized mystification present in the philosophy of deep ecology and merging of different cultures into “one ‘primal’ cultural pile” from carefully selecting cultural norms and ignoring wars and conflicts, slavery, tribalism, sexism or racism. Ritual, magic and myth are counterparts to the Enlightenment’s postulates of science and technology (Luke, 2019: 56). The same applies to those today who romanticize and idealize past times and practices, sometimes accompanied by misanthropic tendencies and contempt towards “the modern”, while at the same time they enjoy the comfort of the contemporary age. Is not this part of the highly strained and polarized Science/Nature debate which represents the old Culture/Nature debate mentioned in the previous chapters?

The self” also plays an important role in the “deep ecology” narrative. As Luke observes, implicit in the narrative of deep ecology is the part concerning the “self” and self-knowledge by which humans will find their essence and “true self” far from the modern Western “self” – they will discover themselves in Nature. The “self” stands in connection with nature which will lead them to their maturation and spiritual growth (Luke, 2019: 61-

62). This kind of understanding of people and nature can often be observed in the anti-modern “going back to nature” discourse, a part of the wider escapist Zen/self-help culture which can transform into irritating “positivity” known to celebrate the excessive imperative of “inner peace” and happiness. As Luke interestingly notes, spending time in nature, “finding oneself”, finding peace, maturity and joy, and enjoying outdoor activities, such as hiking, fishing or sailing, which represented a clear path to ecological awareness to deep ecologists, are inseparable from the “highly industrialized, overstylized modes of corporate leisure”, which brings us back to the issue of class (Luke, 2019: 68-69). I would also add consumerism because all of this relates to the ideology of leisure time, personal fluffiness and improvement and surely, all the gear that comes in the package which ultimately sells a particular “lifestyle”. We should go “back to the land”, grow food and work on the land, without escapism or romanticizing of past times.

However justified Luke’s critique may be, I view those first “deep ecologists” in a positive tone, as brave eco-partisans and pioneers who articulated that human approach based on domination and exploitation of nature is faulty. They had different ideas, many of them unpractical or undefined, some even utopian, idolizing the discourse of “going back to the state of ignorance”. Nevertheless, as trailblazers, they established the foundation for a different kind of understanding of the natural world and our place in it. For this reason alone, they deserve merits. Bearing all this in mind, particularly the notions of anthropocentrism and atomism/holism, can we form new beliefs, understandings and knowledge guided by the virtues of epistemic curiosity and humility rather than arrogance and superiority? We do not need to turn into misanthropic creations who despise the comforts of modern life which gave us longevity and unimaginable quality of living. Why not just reshape the dominant discourse regarding nature and food production/consumption starting with our own personal beliefs?

In this final part, I would like to stress that the **current paradigm of food-production** is also unsustainable. The proof lies in heat waves and extremely hot summers like the current one, fires all around the world, soil erosion, global warming, water and soil pollution from artificial fertilizers and synthetic pesticides, plastic pollution, eradicated eco-systems and wildlife, production of tasteless food with low nutritional

value. Food production on the industrial level or intensive chemical-based farming is one huge contributor to the problem. We need new to create space for new understandings. There are various movements on a global scale: regenerative agriculture, organic food movements, alternative agriculture, natural farming, alternative food movement, biodynamic, permaculture, etc. All of these approaches to food production may utilize slightly different methods, but they have a common denominator – sustainable food production focused on soil regeneration, respect for nature and animals, and sustainability, without the use of artificial fertilizers and synthetic pesticides. There are numerous examples all across the planet, from small urban farms around the world to Australian farms the size of Slovenia, which demonstrate that different and sustainable approaches to food production are possible on every level. But we also necessitate an epistemic shift – a more holistic and humane understanding of the natural world to which we belong.

> "This approach, broadly characterized as "agroecological", can be undertaken either as an alternative or as a complement to what is called "modern agriculture". From and ecosystem perspective, crops are not regarded as isolated species, with other organisms seen mostly as competitors or adversaries (weeds, pests, or pathogens). Nor is the soil treated as an essentially inert medium, in which the plants being grown are primarily dependent upon farmer's inputs. Rather, agroecological approaches aim to capitalize on symbiotic relationship among the huge number of complementary species, both flora and fauna, that cohabit agroecosystems. This strategy is not some kind of backward or atavistic version of agriculture. In fact, it derives from contemporary knowledge of disciplines such as microbiology, soil ecology, plant genomics and proteomics, and epigenetics" (Uphoff, 2015: 203).

Norman Uphoff claims that we need new knowledge, new ways of seeing and understanding things – we need a different **paradigm** in the heads of farmers, researchers, scientists, government, academic and private-sector institutions, as well as consumers when it comes to food production. I consider ecological epistemology an appropriate tool for facing the multidimensional domain of food in which the questions of power, self-knowledge, epistemic injustice and food coincide. In this new architecture of food knowledge, the epistemic virtues of curiosity, humility, open-mindedness and critical thinking figure as important elements. Personal ambitions, competitive drives, intellectual

arrogance and other vices should be suppressed because we have run out of time. Farmers need to be epistemically open to new facets of knowledge and methods regarding food production. We need to turn towards local and peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge which require epistemic open-mindedness and curiosity. Traditional ways of "My father and grandfather did it and I will do it the same way" do not function anymore because the environment, conditions and the overall context have changed. The way my grandmother grew produce completely differs because the climate is different and we need different models and solutions. I will take from her knowledge and wisdom that which is applicable and valuable, but I will adjust it to my current context. Researchers, scientists and academics need to be epistemically open to "alternatives", and ready to overcome potential intellectual pride, arrogance and superiority. Government should be focused on environmental problems and, just like the private sector, should understand that there will be no profit if we continue with devastation and exploitation of nature in an unsustainable food production process. Consumers, as the final link in the chain, also have a responsibility and power to change things at the local or micro level. We need a concrete peer-to-peer distribution of new knowledge and understanding at the local level. We must learn to grow our own food in a sustainable and organic way.

Luke calls deep ecology **"utopian ecologism"** without a practical program and plans for implementation and, like many other revolutionary programs, it lacks a "theory of transition" (Luke, 2019: 73). I see the answer in the local domain – local changes at the micro level (hopefully accompanied by global changes at the macro level). All this change begins at the source where our food-related beliefs form. Those beliefs represent precursors for our future actions, habits and practices with concrete material imprints. Hence the importance of grasping the power of one's cognition in regard to the complex subject of food. Ecological epistemology serves as a great aid for approaching this burning issue.

As I said earlier, we need to go back to the land. Not by romanticizing the past, giving up everything modern and going off the grid. What I mean is "going back to the land" in a contextual, local and everyday sense. "Contextual" implies that I do not believe in universal and ideal recipes for global transformation, but in making changes based on

our local context. Taking into consideration Croatia's position, climate, abundance of sun, water and uncultivated land, our priority should be food sovereignty by filling the fields and meadows with organically produced seasonal food. We should not just feed ourselves, but export our beautiful, organically grown food. Big farms, small scale urban farms, worker cooperatives – we do not have to reinvent the wheel because there already exist local solutions for every situation. And what is global than the totality of local, contextualized situations? According to Luke's "Anthropocene Alerts", ecological issues are "global, borderless, and transnational" (Luke, 2019: 82). However, solutions can be achieved at the local level (naturally, I do not refer to global corporations which make the biggest pollutants and bear the greatest responsibility). As Luke writes,

> "living in balance with local bioregional surroundings while still tied to larger networks of communication and expertise, communities can turn into sustainable commonwealths… (…) But it could develop openly once people and communities embed themselves ecologically in the immediate region. Knowledge of place should attend to the particularities of that ecoregion by suspending universal standards in favor what is suitable to each community. Otherwise, inappropriate cultural codes, housing forms, dietary patterns, apparel styles, technical implements, or energy systems unsuited to particular environments will give way to foreign disciplines of technological domination" (Luke, 2019: 82).

Growth in exurban communities develops **localism** in economic activity, political decisions and social structures by which state, county and local governments are being compelled to be more responsive, participatory and effective (Luke, 2019: 39). A whole new thesis can be written about citizen movements which aim at local self-sufficiency in food, goods and services. But let us just say that every subject has responsibility to withdraw from consumer society to **"voluntary simplicity"**, to use the term Luke borrows from Duane Elgin (Elgin in Luke, 2019: 40). Local community is truly the sphere where revolutions begin – be they epistemic, political, ecological or of any other nature. Once again, we arrive at Prijić-Samaržija's hybrid perspective in which the epistemic and the political/ethical align.

This "return" to the local and seasonal reminds us that, besides the current unsustainable food production paradigm, the existing **food consumption paradigm** is

also unsustainable. The epistemic “subject/eater” must take partial responsibility for the food choices he/she makes daily. Globally available and unlimited consumerism leaves behind a massive carbon footprint and natural devastation. Ecologically sound living is not just a lifestyle anymore, it is an imperative. Natural resources are finite and the overly increasing growth and consumption come at a great cost which will pay both the present and the future generations. Personal responsibility and epistemic virtues become of essence. I often hear – why bother with recycling when international corporations make the worst global polluters? This cynicism may be alluring, but it really reflects a denial of personal responsibility, no matter how smaller it may be in comparison to that of an international corporation. I cannot change the world, but if every person quit using plastic straws for a day, that would mean several million or even billion of straws less in the ocean and in the sea every day. In my opinion, that would not be bad at all.

Neoliberal consumerism resides in the dominant discourse which shapes the way Western people globally understand, produce and consume food. Dobson writes about the distinction between needs and wants, suggesting that many needs actually represent wants “converted” into needs. The reality of our material consumption lies in the fact that we are drowning in trash as a human race. However, it seems that people do not perceive the connection between personal responsibility and agency. For example, those who get five plastic bags for five different shopping items do not realize that this particular action of theirs contributes to the problem of plastic waste. I do not claim that cloth bags at markets will solve this problem, but by buying we make a choice and give our support to someone or some method of production. Will you support sustainability or devastation? Personal choices and lifestyle arise from self-knowledge, and that personal choice is part of a bigger community. Dobson detects two problems: the first lies in persuading people to live more ecological lifestyles and the second makes it a class issue because there are always masses of people who cannot engage in this exercise due to lack of money (Dobson, 2007: 120-121). Is green consumerism just one niche of neoliberal economy and “radically green” presents the only solution? Green consumerism is a non-ideal situation, but the bigger problem consists in our criticism of non-ideal changes and methods while we do nothing. We do not need ideal solutions, let us start with the non-ideal ones.

It is not enough to recycle more (because recycling is also an industrial process) or hope that technology will somehow change the situation for the better. What we necessitate is a fundamental change in ourselves, starting with epistemic virtues which are a prerequisite for self-knowledge. This shift from the dominant discourse about nature and the surrounding world has an ethical and an epistemic component. It is epistemic in the most intimate sense of the "self" - it shifts the human from the center and, as Dobson claims, "it involves the cultivation of a sense of self that extends beyond the individual understood in terms of its isolated corporeal identity" (Dobson, 2007: 38). What emerges is **"ecological consciousness"** which relates to our identification with the non-human world "and the understanding that such identification is a premise for our own self-realization" (Dobson, 2007: 38). All the knowledge and understanding of the bigger picture is conditioned by the epistemic virtues of open-mindedness, curiosity and humility, thus causing a change in one's values and practices. In this case, epistemic virtues directly coincide with self-knowledge (as the Socratic tradition has been claiming for millennia). "Ecological consequence" is epistemic by its very own nature.

We need better ethical conduct aligned with the non-human world and this begins with individual and collective reflection and questioning of our food-related beliefs. We need high-quality, seasonal, local food. We need more gardens. We need more knowledge about food. We need to teach kids in schools how to grow their own food and how to take care of nature, animals, and the environment. We need more quality knowledge which can generate sustainable practices. We need to train our epistemic posture and critical thinking. We need more curiosity, modesty and epistemic virtues. We need to take personal responsibility. We need to divorce from the idea that those who work on the land were bad at school. We need to surpass the bourgeois mindset according to which food production or any other physical work represents something degrading and shameful. I found much joy in Andrew Dobson's sentence which maintains that "the sustainable society is substantially living 'in place' and developing an intimacy with it and people who live there…" (Dobson, 2007: 84). Let us discover our "place" and let us be discovered by that place. I fear that this might be the last chance for humanity to get there.

6.3. Epistemology, food and emancipation

> "Our globe is warming, our forests are shrinking, our water tables are falling, our ice caps are melting, our coral is dying, and our fisheries are collapsing. Our soils are eroding, our wetlands are disappearing, our deserts are encroaching, and our finite water is more and more in demand. I suspect these to be the early warning signs of a world approaching its carrying capacity - we cannot call on the lessons of history to help us evaluate the seriousness of these problems because it is an entirely new paradigm. Ecologically, we are sailing in uncharted waters while moving at unprecedented speed. We have lost our anchor, and our navigational instruments are out of date. We are going to a whole new destination." (Lamm, 2008: 60).

Ignorance is underestimated. People usually associate it with stupidity. We live in an era of epistemic arrogance and superiority, driven by the dominant discourse of control and domination over nature. It brought us to the current situation in which Earth is literally burning. Instead, we should unashamedly embrace ignorance as our starting position which will in turn invite the epistemic virtues of curiosity and wonder. Earlier in the thesis, I focused on ignorance and DeNicola's curious remarks on the subject. Witte et al. discuss ignorance in the context of knowledge and ecology. They note that in the Western tradition, knowledge and ignorance represent opposites, ignorance being a synonym for stupidity. Such a starting point in the knowledge-based worldview should change because ignorance does not equal stupidity (Witte et al., 2008: 252). This is in line with DeNicola who argues for two meanings of ignorance: the first, a rather negative one, represents a diagnosis of our contemporary culture, and the second one constitutes a precondition for knowledge, a positive mental state, a potential for knowledge; this means that ignorance and knowledge "presuppose each other" - ignorance precedes knowledge and they are mutually dependent (DeNicola 2018: 38, 187).

Ignorance makes a constant in our lives. Ignorance is transformative on the epistemic and personal level (DeNicola, 2018: 162). DeNicola writes about the epistemic map of knowledge and ignorance, a personal map on the individual level and a map of human race on the collective level (DeNicola, 2018: 67). I find this fascinating. So much would change if we, as a human race, converted our starting position from vanity to humility. Vitek and Jackson are on the same track when discussing ignorance in the

context of environmentalism and sustainability. The Enlightenment, with its scientific, political and economic revolutions, molded the knowledge-based worldview which remains our perspective till this day. Nonetheless, ignorance is still a rule and much of our basic knowledge turns out to be wrong. That is not a bad thing – "wrongness" is a fundamental part of learning, ergo, knowledge. With ignorance in our mind, the epistemic vices of intellectual pride, arrogance, rigidity or close-mindedness fade. When we recognize our ignorance, we can individually and collectively rethink our beliefs pertaining to food and the non-human world. Ecological epistemology is a tool for understanding this complex domain which cannot be grasped solely through economics, agriculture, nutrition or food politics, but rather based on the exploration of the power of our very cognition.

As humans, we lack humility. We are arrogant in our idea of superiority. If we take as our starting position personal and collective ignorance which seems incomprehensibly vast (interestingly, DeNicola talks about "mapping" the ignorance), as well as the complexity and interconnectedness of the natural world**, epistemic vices**, such as intellectual arrogance, become dangerous. In this constellation, the GMO debate can be seen from a different angle. As Harris and Stewart argue, "no amount of science can finally prove that there can never be harmful effects, for the environment or for the health of humans and of animals" (Harris and Stewart, 2015: 46). Thus, if the risk proves to be too great, if simultaneously 1/3 of global food ends as waste, and finally, if we have alternative and sustainable methods of food production, let us take humbler, more secure paths and safer, more sustainable solutions. As Steve Talbot echoes Jack Turner, "the limits of our knowledge should define the limits of our practice"; in other words, we should not meddle with the wildlife just as much as we should not meddle with the atom or the structure of DNA – for we are not wise enough (Turner in Talbot, 2008: 102).

Experts are often wrong not because they are stupid or mean but because of the way knowledge works – it emerges from ignorance and it is based on trial and error. But ignorance in combination with epistemic arrogance and intellectual pride is a potentially deadly combination. Wendell Berry gives a fine definition of arrogant ignorance which he recognizes "by its willingness to work on too big scale, and thus to put too much at risk. It fails to foresee bad consequences not only because some of the consequences of all acts

are inherently unforeseeable, but also because the arrogantly ignorant often are blinded by money invested; they cannot afford to foresee bad consequences" (Berry, 2008: 38). Ignorance does not equal stupidity; we should take ignorance as our humble and realistic starting point. As Vitek and Jackson suggest, no matter how much we discover about the natural world, ignorance will always be present and instead of ignoring it, "we must begin to create post-Enlightenment systems of thought that acknowledge ignorance as an initial operating condition in a living universe" (Vitek and Jackson, 2008: 8). Ignorance as an initial position welcomes the epistemic virtues of humility, curiosity and open-mindedness which I consider adequate tools for challenging our dominant and oppressive, complex food narrative.

In short, we need new understandings, new knowledge and a new approach to nature which can be provided by ecological epistemology. As Jackson writes, "we can never do better than nature. Nevertheless, we can do better than we are currently doing" (Vitek and Jackson, 2008: 31). Recent shifts in epistemology, its potential application to real-world issues and the focus of virtue epistemology on the epistemic conduct of the subject, gives new meaning and importance to epistemology. A branch of social epistemology concerned with the complex issue of food, which I call ecological epistemology, represents a great tool for analyzing the multilayered realm of food where power, knowledge, self-knowledge, epistemic injustice and broader social injustices overlap. In the context of nature, the interconnectedness of its components and our limited knowledge, we need epistemic virtues of curiosity and humility and the "ultimate vision of epistemology that is centered on the interaction among understanding, knowledge, and ignorance" (DeNicola, 2018: 195).

Epistemology which considers ignorance not some shameful deficit of knowledge but a starting point should be cultivated in the individual and in society. I have demonstrated that knowledge does not constitute something individual or isolated; the individual knower is a member of a wider epistemic community, of a social environment which should support, cultivate and govern epistemic excellence and virtue. I will illustrate this with an example. The organic food movement as a potential solution to local/global environmental problems and a bearer of deeper social change which agitates for health,

justice, sustainability and democracy, has grown worldwide into, what Tomas Larsson calls, a **"transnational 'epistemic community'"**. This community occupies a powerful position with the ability to influence policy decision-making (I would add that it depends on the county and sensitivity of governmental authorities and institutions); for this reason, the agricultural movement, antithetical to conventional or industrial production based on synthetic pesticides, artificial fertilizers and transgenic seeds, is growing progressively (Larsson, 2015: 744).

What is the connection between philosophy, epistemology and food? We are living in an age which underestimates the value of the humanities. "I do not care for the opinion of a philosopher, I want an epidemiologist's opinion", said one comment below an interview with an established philosopher on the topic of vaccination, anti-vaccination movement, and understanding and accepting information. But this is truly the task of a philosopher. How to learn? How to approach beliefs and information? How to select information, how and why change beliefs? Whom to trust and on what grounds? Among others, this is the job of epistemology and the reason why the humanities are essential in our era which often sees them as redundant. We learn how to think and how to improve our thinking. We live in a time when knowledge is easily accessed, yet we belong to a culture of ignorance. Conversely, a different type of ignorance, that which serves as a precondition for knowledge, represents an excellent approach because it enables the inventory of individual and collective food-related beliefs. Ignorance requires us to question the vast collective imaginary consisting of many damaging beliefs, norms, values, prejudices and stereotypes, as well as traditions, customs and practices which constitute the unquestioned productive forces of a normalized and perpetuated oppressive discourse.

Dobson legitimately argues that probably the most noticeable characteristic of environmental philosophy is "its failure to make itself practical" (Dobson, 2007: 51). Ecological epistemology comes to the rescue. It meets the questions of the "self" and self-knowledge in relation to power, dominant discourse, and epistemic and broader social injustices. With an emphasis on epistemic virtues, it investigates the epistemic agency of a subject or his/her epistemic conduct. Self-reflection, epistemic self-care and epistemic

training seem to be answers to many questions. One of them is environmentalism and food production because food represents a strong social factor which strongly influences the "self" and self-knowledge - our values, attitudes, desires and aspirations that power our actions and habits which leave a mark in our social world. Therefore, food relates to more general issues of environmental and broader social justice. Epistemology has an important aspect – its applicability in our everyday life.

Roberts and Wood write about Nicholas Wolterstorff's distinction between analytic and **regulative epistemology**; the former refers to the production of theories of knowledge, rationality, justification and similar occupations, whereas the latter attempts to generate "guidance for epistemic practice" (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 21). They describe regulative epistemology as a response to weaknesses in people's epistemic conduct, and not only is it practical and social, but it also has an emancipatory element because "this kind of epistemology aims to change the (social) world" (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 21).

Furthermore, according to Roberts and Woods, Wolterstorff differentiates between two kinds of regulative epistemology: the **rule-oriented** kind, exemplified by Descartes, focuses on the procedural guidance for acquiring knowledge, avoiding error and acting rationally, whereas the **habit-oriented** sort relies on Locke's writings and targets subject's habits because "we need not rule-books, but a *training* that nurtures *people* in the right intellectual *dispositions*" (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 21-22). As they assert, Locke aims to reform culture and adjust the practices and their book represents a return to Locke and the seventeenth century tradition which addresses personal disposition of an agent instead of direct rules of epistemic action. This kind of epistemology seeks the constitution of the subject's character and is greatly education-orientated (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 21-22).

Besides curiosity, which I consider a virtue-generator for understanding and knowledge, I also find important the virtue of humility, which Roberts and Wood oppose to the intellectual vices of arrogance, vanity, pretentiousness, snobbishness and domination. It is precisely "domination" that represents a dominant epistemic vice in the sphere of nature, sustainability and food production. As I have tried to show up to this

point – science is a great tool which enables some of us to live long and prosperously, but we really know very little about nature and the interconnectivity of its elements. This suggests to me that our starting point should be ignorance and humility, not arrogance or intellectual pride based on dominance, which is part of the ruling discourse that shapes the general approach to nature and its resources. Although, one should not mistake knowledge for rejection of knowledge. As Anna L. Peterson claims, ignorance is just an "acknowledgement of how much we do *not* know, coupled with an awareness that anything we claim to know, perhaps especially about human and unhuman nature, we know only partially and tentatively, and this is always subject to revision" (Peterson, 2008: 126). Insofar, humility becomes an epistemic virtue necessary for ethical conduct towards nature. When it comes to nature and consequently food, we need different and better understandings and approaches than the current one.

Why virtues? As Roberts and Wood claim, we focus on virtues in order to "increase our practical understanding of the inner working of the intellectual life" (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 323). They emphasize the virtue of love for knowledge, intellectual firmness, intellectual courage and caution, humility, autonomy, generosity and practical wisdom. I wrote a great deal about Miščević's notion on the virtue of curiosity which constitutes a generator for intellectual life. DeNicola sees wonder as beholding the unknowable (DeNicola, 2018: 190). In his environmental philosophy, Dobson refers to John Barry's notes on the cultivation of **"ecological virtue"** as being in line with ethical conduct of green citizens and critical attitude towards anthropocentrism (Dobson, 2007: 191). A common denominator for all of them is a virtue that will lead us to new knowledge and different conduct with the world, ourselves and, in the case of this thesis, food production and consumption. Virtues are mechanisms that lead towards self-knowledge which I regard as a remedy for various epistemic injustices standing at the root of many broader social injustices. Cultivation and exercise of epistemic virtues and their alignment with ethical and political virtues, as proposed by Prijić-Samaržija through her hybrid perspective, I deem a panacea for many (epistemic) injustices.

What I consider to be an axis for change is openness to epistemic change, for which **self-reflection** and **self-knowledge** pose essential means. Explained by Roberts

and Woods, openings for change rest in the urge to seek perceptual input, support for our beliefs, deeper understandings and practices, such as investigating, reading, studying, looking and conversing (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 183).

> "…always learning, thinking, taking in new information, intelligently encountering views different from, and even opposed to his own, and applying his own framework in new situations that it may fit (or seem to fit) inly imperfectly. Because epistemic practice involves continuing adjustment, the agent needs not only a certain tenacity with respect to the putative intellectual goods in his possession, but also an openness to what may occasion revisions and improvements in them" (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 194).

One should not be intellectually weak nor intellectually narrow, rigid, or dogmatic. Roberts and Wood allude to an epistemically firm person with a well-developed noetic structure or rather, a consistent set of beliefs, understandings and memories which will evolve parallel with the **growth** of the person. This leads us back to Cavell's notion of growth as a fundamental characteristic of the "self", discussed in the earlier chapters. It is a scheme through which we interpret and understand the world and ourselves, and whose parts change as we revise it (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 210-212). Essentially, an epistemic subject should be well acquainted with his/her inner world consisting of beliefs, values and attitudes; he/she should always be open for new information and constant, epistemically firm, yet balanced between flexibility and rigidity, evaluation of his/her inner world which testifies to his/her curiosity. This brings us back to Prijić-Samaržija's notions of critical thinking and independent dependency and the overall responsibility and enhancement of our epistemic conduct, an approach suitable and wise in all aspects of life. All of this applies to food as well – critical analysis of personal and collective food-related beliefs, and understanding the broader picture and the epistemic roots of injustice. This creates space for a critical address of the dominant discourse characterized by generally accepted beliefs, norms, values, practices and behaviors which are socially normalized and perpetuated.

I have tried to demonstrate the connections between the self, self-knowledge and epistemology. Self-knowledge is a particular kind of knowledge – on the one hand, it is ours, private and intimate, while on the other hand, it is tied with the public, social sphere

because it is influenced by our epistemic community and shaped by dominant socio-epistemic conditions. Virtues become important because self-knowledge couples with the virtue of curiosity, necessary for understanding oneself and the surrounding world. No matter how small and insignificant changes of an individual's beliefs may appear in comparison to burning global issues, a responsible individual, the epistemic "subject/eater" represents a strong force for change. One can do a lot: pick up litter from the beach, grow one's own food, recycle, consume less and more local, teaching children how to grow their own food, not use plastic straws. Do what everyone of us you can. Multiplied by millions and billions – an individual makes a change. At last, every decision is political.

Medina beautifully writes about, what he calls, "intimate aspects of our epistemic life" (Medina, 2013: 18). Every road to self-knowledge begins with "exposing ourselves and making ourselves vulnerable"; self-questioning and self-reflection involves observing ourselves from a different perspective, analyzing our own beliefs, values, habits and attitudes in order to recognize our own limitations and epistemic "bugs" so that we can improve and change them (Medina, 2013: 18). This carries the virtues of curiosity, humility, epistemic courage and openness. Medina uses Charlene Seigfried's notion of the **"perplexed subject"** who is confronted with existential discomfort by which he/she can continue to hold particular beliefs or call them into question (Seigfried in Medina, 2013: 20). Resistance and change can start here, in the gender and racial arena, or in the environmental arena in which one has to accept responsibility for the environment and nature because our everyday decisions bear consequences and impacts. Our beliefs affect our actions, choices, practices and habits. Hence the importance of being aware of one's food-related beliefs. Epistemology begins with us – the imperfect subjects, infected with wrong beliefs, epistemic vices, prejudices and stereotypes, sometimes marked by epistemic laziness and avoidance of responsibility with the cynicism that an individual cannot make the difference.

"Food politics" or "politics of the plate" includes ethical, conscientious and political consumption and it is clear that consumers represent political subjects who can "vote with their wallet", which opens the subject of class issue. However, I think that, on a micro

level, subjects have power in everyday food and environmental choices to which they can and should take a stance. In this context, one can refer to **"responsibilities of a resistant subjectivity"** (Medina, 2013: 16). Medina focuses on the questions of privilege, racism and heterosexism, while I find it applicable to environmental issues, our relationship with the non-human world and consequently, food. To "resist" means to take a stance and the first stance is an epistemic stance – firstly, change beliefs, values and attitudes at the personal level, and secondly, at the social level or at the level of the epistemic community which should articulate new understandings and knowledge. Medina frames **"epistemic resistance"** which occurs at the individual level, but groups also must take responsibility for the epistemic circumstances – this is a shared epistemic responsibility which must respond to the epistemic vices of conformism, arrogance and sloth (Medina, 2013: 48-49). As Joe Marocco argues, deep changes take root in local places – where we live, work, eat and play. Furthermore, ignorance-based environmentalism makes a connection between what is done locally and the consequences it produces globally. Civic environmentalism stresses the importance of understanding the local nature of environmental problems because climate change arises as a local problem which has global consequences and is created by a complex build-up of individual actions (Marocco, 2008: 318-320). Epistemic resistance starts with curiosity which questions the generally accepted food-related beliefs; it continues through the exploration of collective beliefs and understanding of how epistemic injustice occurs and what kind of additional injustices it provokes. Questioning food-related beliefs constitutes a way to address the oppressive and unjust discourse which reproduces by means of its productive forces residing in impaired values, norms, stereotypes and disciplinary practices. By questioning the generally accepted beliefs, one calls into question the reproduction of the dominant narrative. All of this begins with epistemic resistance.

In the context of consumed food and beverages, the company that produces the most popular drink on Earth is at the same time one of the world's worst plastic polluters and its manufacturing sites gravely contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. While we can blame the corporations for causing climate change, we are the ones buying their products and "each of us, by our modern existence, is responsible for the perpetuation of climate change; each of us is part and the parcel of the problem" (Marocco, 2008: 320). I

do not wish to tackle the ethical dimension of the carnivore/vegan debate, but would it not be ethical to eat less meat if we know that animals must be fed with large amounts of grain grown on vast fields of monocultures which eradicates other animals' habitats, forests and rainforest, while requiring great amounts of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers which damage the soil, water and microorganisms, and that the beef and dairy industry represents one of the biggest contributors to global greenhouse gases because cows generate methane (which has a strong warming power) through their digestion and waste? This is not "vegan ideology" but responsible action required by our contemporary context of climate change. It is precisely this that I consider responsible epistemic conduct – not to refute individual change as insignificant or trivial because it is not. Every change starts at the source – in our cognition where beliefs which conduct our behavior form. I do not find it wise to underestimate the power of one's influence in the epistemic community.

We should all think about the energy we consume. We should all try to buy and eat local food which did not travel from the other part of the world, saturated with pesticides and chemicals in order to stay fresh for an unnatural amount of travel time. We should take responsibility and view ourselves as responsible "doers". Naturally, the change must transpire individually and collectively, parallel with structural changes. Usually, this does not go easily, but let us train our epistemic persistence and critical thinking and not give up. I do not want to patronize. I simply believe that all of us must find a new, more sustainable way of living if we want to survive on this mistreated and overly exploited planet. In my opinion – the much needed change starts with our own food-related beliefs. It is hard to select those beliefs in a complex social landscape, but it is as hard to handle one's self-reflection. The importance of our beliefs lies in the fact that they represent a starting point for our future actions, behaviors and habits pertaining to food. All of this constitutes part of the broader social picture in which power, discourse and epistemic injustice, which gives rise to other kinds of injustices, occur. It is quite a strenuous task trying to grasp food in this wider context, but we must do so because, as a humanity, we are running out of time. Ecological epistemology presents itself as a tool for apprehension and action on this subject.

Science still guides us best towards the truth because it is based on experiments and verification. However, science does not know all the answers, it is not perfect or finite, but based on trial and error. I propose **ignorance-based knowledge**, in which ignorance (not stupidity, nota bene) represents the starting point accompanied by the virtues of humility and curiosity, as opposed to the current vices of arrogance and narrowmindedness. Discourse is a consequence of political and economic structures and it results in oppression and injustice; many individuals and institutions are corrupt; profit, conflict of interest and institutional biases pose a problem. Institutions and their representatives should have integrity, consistence, transparency and responsibility – in other words, epistemic virtues aligned with ethical/political virtues should become the norm. Individual and collective responsibility in the decision-making process should be epistemically evaluated. As Snježana Prijić-Samaržija argues, epistemic responsibility implies one's tentative or conscientious analysis of evidence in the decision-making process (Prijić-Samaržija, 2018: 68). The virtue of epistemic responsibility supports an innovative approach by which epistemic subjects play an active role, with their cognitive processes and achievements being evaluated in the domain of scientific research or the decision-making process in society. We can thus detect that virtue epistemology constitutes an effective framework for social epistemology. Experts are people who have mastery in a particular domain, but they should surely not be understood as a political elite of any sort. The analysis of the dominant discourse illustrates how often knowledge becomes corrupted, infected with power and wrongly commercialized, but that does not mean that "all science" is bad or that there is some grand conspiracy against humanity with Mr. Burns from The Simpsons as a mastermind.

All this has brought us to what Lorraine Code calls **"ecological thinking"** which

> "is not simply thinking *about* ecology or *about* the environment: it generates revisioned modes of engagement with knowledge, subjectivity, politics, ethics, science, citizenship, and agency, which pervade and reconfigure theory and practice alike. First and foremost a thoughtful practice, thinking ecologically carries with it a large measure of responsibility… [As to] how it could translate into wider issues of citizenship and politics…the answer, at once simple and profound, is that ecological thinking is about

imagining, crafting, articulating, endeavoring to enact principles of ideal cohabitation" (Code, 2008: 189).

Greenhouse gases, fires, floods, extremely high temperatures, droughts, extinction of wildlife, unsustainable industrial agriculture based on synthetic pesticides and artificial fertilizers, industrial activity, deforestation, polluted soil and water… We are in an extremely bad situation. We do not have time to establish and perform an "ideal solution" – let us make non-ideal solutions with non-ideal epistemic "subject/eaters" on a global level. With that in mind, I am reverting to Medina who writes about a commitment to a non-ideal theory which represents a commitment to **meliorism** or "to making things better without being shackled to any particular picture of 'the best'. Rather than starting from an ideal picture of problem-free society, nonideal theory starts from the diagnosis of specific problems and complaints in our society, and it sets out to investigate how to address these particular problems" (Medina, 2013: 12). The planet is burning; we do not have more time. Let us do what we can, let us articulate new knowledge and approaches, let us act as we can and know now. As Wendel Berry writes, "great problems call for many small solutions" (Berry in Vitek, 2008: 47). All begins at the source – at the individual level, where beliefs concerning food and the non-human world are formed. That is the starting point for greater social change.

We need new imaginations and new knowledge, as well as articulation of alternative knowledge and voices or, in Foucault's terms, "subjugated knowledge". We need inclusion and participation of marginalized people who actually produce food and reconsideration of the status and relationship between experts and citizens. We need a more integrative society in which local voices with concrete problems and actions are heard. "Global" does not mean much, unlike "local" which creates space for direct action. Is not that the meaning of "praxis" which belongs to, as Roberts and Wood write, a sphere where we can make a difference, where we can change the world thanks to our actions (Roberts and Wood, 2007: 305). We need more epistemic curiosity and humility rather than epistemic arrogance and dominance. We need new knowledge whose starting point is ignorance powered by the epistemic virtue of curiosity. Hopefully, the cultivation of epistemic virtues will result in alignment with ethical/political values in the social world, as

Prijić-Samaržija's hybrid perspective presupposes. The first step is imagination. We must become finer people who have better epistemic conduct and who treat nature more benevolently. We must displace ourselves from a high-power position shaped by arrogance, dominance and exploitation. In order to survive, we must produce food in a sustainable way and consume it as responsible epistemic "subject/eaters". Knowledge about one's own character, values and habits holds a key for broader social change. All the above questions concerning people and their complex relationship with food lie in the domain of **ecological epistemology** which represents as necessary tool for grasping this multidimensional matter.

6.4. Conclusion

In a general social sphere, we are living in an epistemic mess. The way we understand particular phenomena is shaped by current socio-epistemic conditions related to dominant discourse. Food is one of those phenomena. Philosophy can tackle many questions and issues and one can always pejoratively say, "Do not be philosophical!", but that only indicates how they poorly understand in what philosophy truly consists. In my view, epistemology is practical and can be applied to real-world issues. It relates to how we approach information and beliefs, how we estimate them, how we select whom to trust and on what grounds, how we handle self-reflection, and how we shape and change our beliefs. Furthermore, it conveys how we continue to act, make choices and create habits on every subject – from vaccination to food.

We should not underestimate the importance and power of epistemic virtues. I honestly think that regulative epistemology, based on epistemic virtues, constitutes a valuable tool for the much needed epistemic change which I consider a precursor to broader political change. For example, the articulation of the concept of "sexual harassment" paved the way for transformations on the political, legal and ethical level for women. On the more personal level, one can stay calcified in his/her own cynicism and passivity, arguing "I cannot make a difference, so why even bother.", or can make a change on a micro level. And all great battles must start somewhere, no matter how small or irrelevant the place may seem. Epistemic curiosity, open-mindedness and humility

make an axis for the development of new understandings and knowledge regarding food and the overall human relationship with nature and the non-human world.

In my opinion, Prijić-Samaržija's ideal of "independent dependency" represents the goal of critical thinking. An epistemically responsible and virtuous subject must have elements of intellectual trust and humility. As a critical explorer, one must think with "his/her own head", but at the same time remain aware that we tremendously depend on other people's testimony in everyday life. We must improve our epistemic posture by finding the right balance and always reflect on and adjust our cognitive world. We must actively work on the improvement of our cognitive apparatus and take responsibility for our cognitive actions. The first step towards that is curiosity. Medina writes about epistemic resistance, a beautiful concept which I see as an impulse for change. It starts at the personal level and continues onto the collective level by questioning the collective imaginary consisting of many widely accepted food-related beliefs, norms, values, prejudices, habits and practices that are really productive forces of an oppressive and damaging discourse which is normalized, unquestioned, internalized and perpetuated. The trajectory of change begins with epistemic resistance at the personal level and ecological epistemology serves as a tool for such change. I find Cassam's emphatic notion of "sense-making" extremely important. We need to cultivate virtues of open-mindedness, try to understand the Other, regardless of how far he/she is from our understandings, and attempt to make sense of their sense-making so that we create space for dialogue and an effective counter-narrative. In order to truly understand the Other, one must possess the virtue of curiosity and open-mindedness.

"Ecological epistemology" is an instrument for addressing current individual and collective beliefs pertaining to food and the non-human world, as well as epistemic injustices which are generated within those beliefs. At the same time, it is a tool for new food-related understanding and knowledge because our current paradigms of food production and consumption prove to be unsustainable. New understanding and knowledge must come from a multidimensional approach because I believe that food can be grasped only if we take into consideration the multiple forces that relate to food – self-knowledge, power, dominant food discourse and consequential epistemic injustice.

Current food production and consumption paradigms are unsustainable and we should change them. Instead of the epistemic vices of arrogance, dominance and superiority, we should both individually and collectively cultivate the epistemic virtues of curiosity, modesty and compassion for nature and the non-human world. We do not need to dominate nature, we should cooperate with it. Corporations represent the biggest polluters, while industrial and agricultural industries constitute the largest producers of greenhouse gasses. For this reason, change should naturally happen on the structural level. However, we are not freed from individual responsibility. Although the greatest pressure lies on institutions, let us all take a part of personal responsibility and change our habits and lifestyles into more sustainable ones. We should start with an inventory of our self-knowledge consisting of widely accepted beliefs, finding motivation in epistemic curiosity.

All begins with ignorance. As humans, we are ignorant. We have only discovered a small portion of this magic of life and universe, yet we behave as gods on Earth, driven by our arrogance and competition. Of course, we think, create culture and have enormous potentials ("Cogito, ergo sum."), but it does not mean that we are superior to nature in any way. What it really bears is more responsibility and obligation to act with kindness and respect towards the world which has no voice of its own. Ignorance is an excellent starting point. There is no shame in being ignorant. Embracing ignorance, personally and socially - I find this liberating. Body and bodily maintenance are so important in our contemporary culture, but no one talks about epistemic improvement and training. Regulative epistemology is just that – it gives us guidance for better epistemic practice and responds to our epistemic conduct. I regard it as an emancipatory element because it provides us with recipes for the improvement of our epistemic behavior in order to better understand our inner and the surrounding world, filled with profane phenomena which, after all, make life. At the same time, I consider epistemology something rather intimate because it helps us to expose and face our inner lives - we become vulnerable and, as Medina and DeNicola argue, vulnerability is the route to change and taking responsibility. Regulative epistemology allows us to dive into our inner world of emotions and beliefs, to analyze and understand our practices, values and habits on a deeper level. In so doing, we create

a possibility for personal cognitive adjustments and revision of our beliefs. This brings us back to Marcia Cavell's notion of "growth" as an essential characteristic of the "self".

Food is a strong social factor which greatly influences the "self", self-knowledge and food-related personal values, choices and habits. "Personal" food choices, although "one's own", exceed that level because they leave a strong imprint on the material world. Likewise, they are not completely "mine" because I inherited them from the collective pool of beliefs and norms. In that sense, beliefs are a two-way epistemic asset – it is personal insomuch as it is social and communal. Because it simultaneously communicates personal and social, private and public, it relates to complex issues of power and knowledge, self-knowledge, status anxiety, as well as epistemic and ethical/political injustice. To encompass the vast domain of food, ecological epistemology constitutes a useful tool for questioning the power of one's cognition about food and the social imaginary consisting of many impaired food-related beliefs, norms and practices. At that source, at the very site of one's cognition, the possibility for change occurs.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, my aim was to examine how epistemology relates to food, or rather, how we can better understand food in its contemporary and complex context through epistemic lenses. In this sense, I find epistemology to be utterly practical, so we can very much speak about applied epistemology. In the first part, I tried to outline that social epistemology can be employed as a framework for questions of "self" and self-knowledge because the "social" has a strong impact on the definition of "self" and self-knowledge. The latter represents one's knowledge about his/her own beliefs, values, norms, character traits, aspirations, and emotions which power one's choices, habits, and actions. In the second part, I tried to show how concrete knowledge about food relates to questions of "self" and self-knowledge, stressing that food in general is a social factor which strongly influences the constitution of the "self" or one's self-knowledge.

I started the quest for the intersectionality between epistemology and food with shifts occurring in social epistemology. They enabled examination of the epistemic subject as a situated knower who is shaped by his/her social conditions. Accordingly, epistemology opened itself for understanding of the social forces which influence one's cognition. I relied mostly on Snježana Prijić-Samaržija's book, "Democracy and Truth: The Conflict between political and epistemic virtues", which stands as one of the pioneering examples of applied/social epistemology. The shift towards the "social" is perceived as somewhat revolutionary in epistemology which has, so far, ignored the social context of the knower. Due to this change, epistemology was able to focus on the epistemic conduct of the subject and the evaluation of his/her epistemic virtues (epistemic responsibility, curiosity, or courage) and epistemic vices (epistemic laziness, prejudices, or stereotypes). All this has proven to be in connection with food when I later analyzed the epistemically imperfect "subject/eater". Epistemology also creates space for examination of its relation to justice and politics. Epistemic injustice, as a concept representing epistemic impairment, proves to be important here. The second part of the 20th century was a period when traditional epistemology was challenged by the school of thought which rejected its key normative concepts such as "truth". This will later be known as postmodernism. As time has shown, it left important consequences on our contemporary culture, often

described through the notions of “post-truth”, “fake news” or “alternative facts” which testify to how hard it is to arrive at truth-oriented beliefs. In current cultural context, I find epistemic virtues to be in direct connection with the “self” or self-knowledge. As I see it, epistemic virtues are profoundly important because they serve as a precondition for self-knowledge which is a remedy for problems originating from epistemic and broader social injustice.

Every epistemic “subject/eater” is the bearer of the “self”, an essential concept in this thesis. “Self” is a loose and hard to grasp notion. It can be approached from different angles, but I was interested in the point where the epistemic meets the social. Social Constructivist Theory, radical and avant-garde at the time, opened doors for the questioning of everything. The critique was aimed towards ideology, science, and language. Whereas the positive outcome made everything open to question, the negative outcome was relativism, an essential characteristic of postmodernism. Those tectonic shifts enabled us to understand social dynamics, power and power relations. Culture influences the “self” and self-knowledge (values, beliefs, norms and behaviors). “Selves” are socially situated rather than being a unified category. “Selves” are conditioned by their specific position which determines experience, understandings, and knowledge. Moreover, “selves” are embodied and “Concrete”. Critical theory, Marxism, feminist and civil-rights movements, as well as many other movements, such as environmentalism, originated in the era of social liberalization. Popular at the time, Marxism represented an important theoretical framework for understanding the power dynamics in society. In my view, it still makes a valuable approach because of its core concepts of class, class consciousness, alienation, and ideology. I relied on Marxism in my desire to detect the point of intersectionality between epistemology and food because its theoretical concepts help us understand the problems in today’s world shaped by social power. Althusser and Foucault’s unique views on the relationship between individuals-turned-subjects and the social structure make important, useful and applicable tools for understanding contemporary phenomena.

“Self-knowledge” is another fundamental concept in this thesis. Every “self” bears accompanying self-knowledge, that is, “internal” knowledge connected with one’s intimate

world of beliefs, norms, emotions, values and mental states which shape decisions, practices, habits and actions. Cassam's notions of self-knowledge gave us theoretical space for better understanding of epistemic subjects immersed into the social world. Cassam differentiates between trivial and substantial self-knowledge: the former represents immediate and transparent knowledge of our immediate states, while the latter constitutes the "raw" material inside of a person, consisting of emotions, values, desires, character traits, etc. This distinction enables two different cognitive apparatuses: the first is the perfect cognizer, "Homo philosophicus", divorced from any social context and the main figure in epistemology for millennia; the second is the imperfect cognizer, "Homo sapiens", characterized by a number of epistemic "bugs" and vices. The latter is referred to as the epistemic "subject/eater" throughout my thesis. This constructivist approach to human cognition helps us understand epistemic subjects in their social environment better, while shedding light on the sub-ideal aspect of one's cognition. Furthermore, it helps us understand the imperfect epistemic "subject/eaters" who must function in a harsh, postmodern social environment characterized by daily informational overload.

In this quest for the alignment between epistemology and food, epistemic virtues play an important role. I perceive them to be in direct connection with self-knowledge – their apprehension and cultivation makes a prerequisite for self-knowledge. Virtue epistemology constitutes a beautiful and useful framework for the questions of "self", self-knowledge, and self-knowledge in relation to food and the non-human world. I agree with Nenad Miščević's notion of curiosity as a fundamental epistemic virtue that leads us towards self-reflection of our inner world of thoughts, beliefs, and values. Besides the epistemic virtue of curiosity, open-mindedness, humility and receptiveness also represent integral parts of a person or the "self". They help us understand ourselves and the world around us, including food as one of its components, as I showed in the second part of the thesis. To critically reflect on ourselves and the surrounding world in a more refined way, epistemic virtues prove to be of significance in this inquiry. Cultivation of epistemic virtues affects our process of belief-formation. I believe them to be helpful in approaching , selecting , estimating , discarding, or implementing information into our belief-system. In addition, they seem a useful tool for managing the process of self-reflection. Based on beliefs, one continues to act, make choices and create habits and practices. Hence the

importance of ecological epistemology which is focused precisely on beliefs on the individual and collective level and epistemic injustices which are created in that process.

In the second part of the thesis, I focused on food as a strong social factor which influences the “self” and self-knowledge. Food makes an important aspect in the social context and it bears many meanings. I outlined how hard it is to navigate through today’s epistemic landscape. Articulation of a particular narrative in this context bears great importance, one cannot overlook that facts and how they are introduced is not separated from the beliefs and values of those who present them as evidence. Additionally, people are in a disadvantaged position because they are, in Marxist language, alienated from the process of food production and they usually just encounter the final product - food wrapped in plastic, lying on supermarket shelves.

In this kind of reality, people are forced to trust the institutions which produce information and knowledge about food, often infected with political and economic structures which have profit in mind. Due to cases of malevolence, epistemic “subject/eaters” are in an epistemically disadvantaged position. Impaired knowledge, violated trust and the lack of transparency put the subject in an epistemically disadvantaged position which makes it even harder to make truth-oriented food-related beliefs. This is the case of disruption systematic in character. There is another form of epistemic injustice occurring on individual level, in which the power inscribed in the defective and oppressive food discourse represents the same power present in the epistemic mechanism which shapes the “self” or self-knowledge. Neoliberal consumerism with its fashion and beauty/self-care/esthetic surgery/diet industries generates oppressive social norms concerning woman’s bodies, as well as damaging values, stereotypes and disciplinary practices for the bodies which operate as productive forces of this flawed yet normalized discourse. Internalization of this damaging discourse with its harsh normative body politics is epistemically unjust towards women. Within social imagination, food carries a strong symbolic meaning and power. In this oppressive discourse, female body is a point where power and food meet and food is a strong social factor which influences the “self” and “self-knowledge”. Harmful body politics merges impossible body images and norms with consumerism, fashion, plastic surgery, as well as beauty, health and wellness

industry, in which disciplinary practices executed upon the female body are forced together with the whole enterprise of “healthy” food, “super food” and supplements.

Today’s social realm is complex and I consider applied/social epistemology as a remedy for many real-world issues, food being one of them. It can help us in the process of approaching and processing information upon which one acts. This is where the importance of epistemic virtues, in a practical sense, emerges. Epistemic curiosity, open-mindedness and humility should lead us towards new understandings and knowledge and reshape the relationship between the human and the non-human world. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija’s concept of “independent dependency” encompasses epistemically responsible and virtuous subjects who balance “thinking with their own head” and dependence on the testimony of others. With a little push from epistemic curiosity, one should actively work on self-reflection and improving his/her cognitive apparatus. Cassam’s empathetic notion of “sense-making” here figures as important because it bears the inscription of the epistemic virtues of curiosity and open-mindedness.

I believe that “ecological epistemology” constitutes a necessary tool for grasping the multidimensional matter of food in which power, knowledge, self-knowledge, status-anxiety and epistemic and broader social injustice merge. It pertains to new and urgently needed understandings and knowledge about food production and consumption. We are running out of time because our current practices prove to be unsustainable and ultimately create devastation. Individually and structurally, we should be guided by the epistemic virtues of curiosity, humility, and open-mindedness, but above all compassion and respect towards nature which does not have a voice of its own. We should discard the epistemic vices of arrogance, dominance and superiority because they did not lead us far. Our starting point should be ignorance, intertwined with humility and wonder. That is what I imply under the term “ecological epistemology” which carries invaluable significance because it provides guidance for better epistemic conduct and much-needed support in (self)reflection of our norms, values, emotions, behaviors, epistemic communities and the surrounding world. I maintain that epistemology is an emancipatory and political project of hope, but at the same time, something rather intimate which, in Medina’s words, makes us vulnerable and displaces us to some different place, marked by insecurity.

Simultaneously, this place empowers because it equips us with responsibility and autonomy, or the ability to provide an adequate answer in a complex social context. Medina's "epistemic resistance" suggests that change is possible at the very source where our beliefs which impact our future actions are formed. Ecological epistemology focuses precisely on that – on the power of our power within the demanding social imaginary. Climate change is a political issue whose greatest chunk of responsibility hold governments, politics and corporations. Nonetheless, one should not underestimate responsible epistemic "subject/eaters" who think critically and train their cognitive apparatus and who are aware of their responsibility and the power they have on their micro-local level. In the end, every change begins on a local level and "global" is nothing more than the sum of "locals".

With this thesis, I will have hopefully contributed a bit to the domain of philosophy focused on human cognition, that is, epistemology. Alvin Goldman redirected human cognition towards the social realm. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija delineated the course of epistemology and connected it with the political arena, giving us guidance for better, critical thinking and a route for a righteous social world in which the epistemic and the political align. Furthermore, Quassim Cassam offered us a new understanding of self-knowledge as non-immediate and typical for us, imperfect humans. Nenad Miščević provided valuable insights on curiosity – our great weapon of choice. Miranda Fricker articulated epistemic injustices which we encounter in the process of cognition. And I have tried to show that epistemic injustice very much abides in the domain of food as well. In this intersection of epistemology and food, I have opened a new issue in which individual cognition meets social cognition pertaining to food. Taking into consideration the broader context of climate change, I consider this issue extremely important. I tackled those matters which I found significant and, in this process, many questions remained unanswered. This work is only the beginning of my broader investigation where food and epistemology meet. Hopefully, my thesis will be a call for better epistemic conduct and credit of epistemic virtues, a signal for new understandings of our relationship with the non-human world, and a plea for direct, local action. Let us plant more trees and plants, let us make more gardens and locally grown food. Not so long ago, this part of Croatia was feeding itself with healthy, beautiful food grown in the hinterland of the city of Rijeka

and was sold on Rijeka's main market. Inspired by that, my agenda is not by any means modest. Hopefully, Rijeka will be abundant with small urban farms and gardens which will once again feed its citizens with organically and locally grown food. As Voltaire's Candide would say - let us cultivate our garden.

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