The question of ideology in economics, which was highly discussed in the 1960s and 1970s, but almost forgotten in the 1980s and 1990s when ideologies were considered virtually dead, has once again become an important topic. The rebirth of interest in this question is hardly surprising since most economists pretend that their theories should guide political decisions, which can hardly be dissociated from the political ideologies promoted by political parties. But since most economists also claim that their theories are genuine scientific contributions, the need to distinguish science from ideology in economics seems apparently unavoidable. During the first of these two periods, the so-called "radical economists", who were convinced that their approach was the only one which could deal with really significant economic questions, were quick to adopt a view made popular by the philosopher Louis Althusser according to which analyses more or less congenial to Marx's theories were genuinely scientific ones, whereas "main stream" economics was nothing but a set of capitalist-oriented ideologies. When the star of Marxism declined spectacularly in the 1980s, those "main stream" economists were only too happy to oppose their science to the dying ideologies associated with Marxism, socialism and even Keynesianism. However, in the heydays of neoliberal economics, which is constantly invoked to justify political decisions, it became clear that matters are not so simple. In such a context, it is not surprising that economic methodologists and historians put the clarification of the relationship between science and ideology on their agenda. They usually tend to spell out an appropriate criterion allowing us to distinguish ideological from scientific discourses. Such a criterion was looked for since Marx's time, but recent attempts in this direction are characterised by the acknowledgment that we cannot expect to establish a clear cut separation between science and ideology. The need for a distinction does not vanish for all that. For example, Kenneth Hoover, who recently published a book entitled *Economics as Ideology,* refers, in his introduction, (p. 3) to "the shift from ideas to ideology", suggesting with this very wording

that the point is to distinguish respectable ideas from ideologies that "provide scenarios for identifying heroes and villains […and…] invite allegiance to abstractions rather than to living" (p. 6). Alain Leroux, for his part, acknowledges that sciences and ideologies cannot be separated spatially (as different topics), but he claims that they are different "forms of thought" that can, in principle, be distinguished temporally (among successive strategies adopted by a same thinker) mainly through the fact that, in the case of ideology, primacy is granted to a given belief itself over its justification.

In the present attempt to clarify the relation between science and ideology, I will not propose a new analysis of the history of this concept, except for a few brief considerations regarding Marx's views. I believe that Alain Leroux has done a wonderful job on this point, and I totally agree with his analysis even if, as just suggested, I cannot agree with his own conclusions about the nature of ideology. In fact, in this paper, I will claim that none of the attempts to isolate ideologies from non-ideological ideas or from scientific forms of thought are convincing. More generally, I will claim that they are non convincing since it is literally impossible to distinguish ideology from science as long as we associate the two with a particular type of discourse. I will claim that if one can usefully separate science from pseudo-science or from pre-science (as argued by Gaston Bachelard, for example), one cannot separate science from ideology because, in contrast with pre-science and pseudo-science, ideology is not opposed to science as two different ways of referring to a given state of thing would be. It is meaningful to say with Bachelard that what is either pseudo-science or pre-science is not science and that what is science is neither pre-science nor pseudo-science, because among the various attempts to explain phenomena some can meet criteria of science and other not. Though defining such criteria is far from simple, this attempt at a separation still remains a meaningful enterprise. But it would be strictly preposterous to pretend that

what is ideology is not science and that what is science is not ideology, because — as I have claimed in various papers (mostly in French) since the 1980s — science and ideology are not two distinct parts of a given field and that they are rather two ways of functioning which arise from the set of knowledge. This formulation may look rather abstract, but my goal in this paper is to illustrate its content and make it more precise.

**Applications vs Ideologies**

I consider attempts to separate ideology and science unconvincing because, with any of them, it is easy to find counterexamples which show that ideology is quite compatible with what was supposed to be free from ideology. Alain Leroux is perfectly right to criticise economists who have associated ideology and value judgements, not only because they unduly dissolve the notion of ideology which refers to much more than value judgements, but because a systematic exclusion of value judgments from a discourse does not free it from ideological content. Milton Friedman's famous 1953 methodological paper is based on the notion of a "positive economics" which must systematically exclude value judgments, but were Friedman strictly faithful to this program, his economic thought would not have been necessarily free from ideological connotations. I will come back to the fact that ideology has little to do with value judgment, but Leroux's relatively prudent considerations about the primacy of belief over its justification does not work either. After all, Thomas Kuhn's acclaimed *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was devoted to showing that *scientists* usually do not reject their beliefs when the justification they invoke "does not succeed in forcing the judgement" and that in such occasions, they rather search "for another justification". Conversely, it is not clear that those many sociologists and economists who were Marxists in the 1970s and became defenders of neoliberalim in the 1990s — in many cases after passing

through the spectrum of positions associated with socialism and liberalism — should be freed from any suspicion of ideological views since they did not hesitate to frequently change their belief. My point is not to claim that we should improve on Leroux's criterion, which incidentally contains various well grounded nuances, it is that this criterion corresponds to a quite interesting but unsuccessful attempt to accomplish the impossible task of discriminating ideology from science.

But claiming that ideology cannot be separated from science does not imply that they cannot be conceptually distinguished. Thus, the question remains: what is ideology if it is so closely mixed with science? To answer, I think that it is useful to come back to Marx' and Engels' thoughts on the matter since it is generally admitted that their writings are at the origin of our debates about ideology. In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels refer to ideology in order to promote the view that ideas (associated with philosophy and religion) are systematically determined by socio-economic contexts. Taken literally, this way of thinking seems to suggest that ideas are vaporous epiphenomena that simply «reflect» the real activity of human beings. If they are nothing more, it is clear that they could hardly have a very efficient impact on the "real" world on which they would passively depend. But in his political and historical analyses, Marx, without using the word "ideology", explains the behaviour of the members of the bourgeoisie by invoking conceptions which are fundamentally associated with their class. Later Marxists have systematically developed this way of thinking and denounced the way dominant classes rely on rightist ideologies to maintain entire populations in submission. In this construal, ideologies have an important causal impact in class struggle. But are ideologies inoffensive and evanescent reflections of the real world or powerful and pernicious mechanisms largely instrumental in structuring societies?

It is evidently not true that philosophies are nothing but reflections of the socio-economic context, Hegel's philosophy, in particular, is much too complex and subtle to be reduced to such a status, but what is true is that socio-economic structures generate specific needs in a society and that ideas can hardly be successfully developed if they are not in some way a response to those needs. Among those needs we might distinguish theoretical *needs to understand* to which ideas can be a direct response, but let us concentrate on practical needs. Among the ways ideas can respond to such needs, we must distinguish *applications* and *ideologies*. The notion of scientific application is well known and it clearly illustrates that scientific ideas, at least, can efficiently respond to humanity's growing needs. It is also well known that these applications are usually efficiently developed only when they are required by such needs. Leonardo's ingenious apparatuses were quickly forgotten because there were no social needs for them in the Renaissance, whereas, in the second half of 18$^{th}$ century, a whole set of similar devices were successfully developed and, in this case, they radically transformed the way of living and producing of the Western world and later of the whole world, because those devices were required by the growing needs associated with the development of international trade.

However, some other needs can hardly be satisfied by scientific applications. This is the case of the following needs many people have frequently experienced: the need to obtain the adhesion of other people to one's views, the need to be elected by them, the need to dominate other people without generating a revolt of the dominated, the need to exploit to one's advantage the situation of others and, more fundamentally, the need to feel fully justified when benefiting from such advantages and to spontaneously refer to a set of reasons allowing one to present one's behaviour as perfectly acceptable. Such needs can only be satisfied by

the development of a set of appropriate ideas. However, such ideas cannot be applied like scientific ideas, but rather function in a ideological fashion. But what characterise this ideological mode of functioning? *An ideology is at work when a discourse, irrespective of its scientific or non-scientific character, is more or less consciously mobilised in such a way that it allows to actions commanded by passions or interests to find justifications and rationalizations able to make them acceptable*. What kind of ideas can do this job? There is no reason to think that the appropriate ideas must be different from those which, in other circumstances, are scientifically applied. For example, Keynes' ideas can be applied by a Minister of Finances whose Government has decided to stimulate production and to reduce the rate of unemployment. But the same Keynesian ideas may function ideologically if the same Minister of Finances in an electoral campaign invoke the authority of the *General Theory* against opposition parties to claim that increasing State expenses was required in order to reduce unemployment among the working class without bothering too much about possible consequences like inflation and deficit which might be corrected by appropriate interventions in due time. Naturally, Friedman's ideas which also can be applied scientifically will work ideologically in the hands of the members of the opposition party which would invoke them to blame the Government because inflation has to be controlled with appropriate monetary policies that, once in power, they will apply in order to protect the country from a financial disaster. Thus it is impossible to distinguish ideological from scientific ideas because the same ideas can function either scientifically or ideologically.

**A matter of credibility**

What is required for ideas to function ideologically is that they are susceptible to in some way promote the interests of those (either classes, parties or individuals) who invoke

them in order to justify their actions, but these ideas must also be capable of gaining the respect of people that must be convinced in the process. Therefore, these ideas must be credible; otherwise they will not have any ideological impact. For example, in the middle ages, when the authority of Christianity was respected by almost everyone in Europe, the ideology of the divine right of kings exerted an immense influence over populations which not only remained submitted to the kings but full of deference for the royalty. Kings and the aristocracy's need to maintain their authority over populations as well as their need to convince their people to fight in horrible conditions to defend themselves and the ideas that they promoted, along with their need to transmit their authority to their heirs, were largely satisfied by this ideology on which they could rely because it was intrinsically mixed with an highly credible religion that claimed that any Power originates from God. Similarly, today Islam is a religion which is highly respected by a very large part of the population in many countries. The need apparently experienced by various leaders of these countries to maintain an absolute authority, to impose an oppressive law on women, and even to induce their people to chastise, even through terrorism, those whose behaviour is judged unacceptable is efficiently satisfied by the invocation of an appropriate, though contested, interpretation of Islam. But emphasising in this fashion the way that Christian or Islamic thought works ideologically to allow members of dominant classes to satisfy their need for a fully justified domination is in no way a judgment on the validity of Christianity and Islam whose foundations are neither weakened nor strengthened by these considerations. A religion that we would consider perfectly true from any point of view would just be better suited to function ideologically since its credibility would normally be enhanced. It is impossible to separate ideological elements from valid religious elements since the ideology of the divine right of kings, for example, is not a set of false or deceiving propositions which could be sorted out of the Christian dogma. Rather, it is intimately linked with the Christian idea that since

everything has been created by a God who takes care of his creation, it seems reasonable to respect whatever is not clearly reprehensible in the present worldly order. This was quite enough for the medieval aristocratic class to consolidate its power. But why should this mechanism work less efficiently if it was admitted that the Christian religion is absolutely true?

In our time, the only set of ideas which is endowed with a comparable credibility is science. In common parlance, saying that a proposition is scientifically established has become almost synonymous to saying that one has no choice but to admit it. Therefore, science is now the best soil for ideologies to take shape. Naturally, many scientific conclusions, like most of those produced by physicists, cannot be very helpful for classes or people who look to justify or rationalise their behaviour. Some conclusions of the biological sciences can sometimes do the job, but it is the social sciences which can work ideologically in the most efficient fashion since these sciences directly concern human behaviour. And among them, economics is possibly the most susceptible to develop efficient ideologies, not only because it bears on very sensible economic interests but also because it is considered by many to be the most respectable of the social sciences. This is the reason why, from its origin, economics was put to ideological use. From Boisguillebert to Quesnay, Turgot, Smith, Say and Ricardo, the most brilliant economic analyses were intrinsically mixed with the ideological promotion of the interests of a specific class, either the agricultural class or the bourgeoisie. Any attempt, like Schumpeter's, to separate what is scientific from what is ideological in these contributions is doomed to failure since what was efficient in promoting classes's interests was not the occasional value judgments of these economists, it was their most respectable analyses themselves. What has strongly contributed to promote free trade, and has comforted capitalists and policy makers in their fight to introduce measures which

had disastrous consequences for many of their compatriots, was not the personal value judgements of David Ricardo — which are relatively sparse in his work — but his most scientifically interesting contributions like the comparative advantage theory. Similarly, Keynes and Fiedman's thoughts had a tremendous ideological impact in the 20th century because their scientific analyses themselves nurtured ideological campaigns. Since an underemployment equilibrium is possible, *it clearly seems to be* the duty of the State to intervene in order to counter this situation. If it is factually and scientifically documented that such interventions generate a high level of inflation and increase national debts to a level such that interest reimbursement becomes a sizable part of the State budget, *it clearly seems to be* the duty of people to engage in anti-taxation movements. The personal opinions of Keynes and of Friedman are far from being as important for these ideological goals as their scientific contributions. Their scientific contributions are so inseparably linked to the ideologies associated with their thought that the theory of underemployment equilibrium, which was considered by many Keynesian economists as one of Keynes' most important scientific contribution, was flatly described by Schumpeter as "the ideology of underemployment equilibrium" (1949, p. 271). This astonishing divergence of interpretation is easily explainable by the fact that the results of Keynes' analysis — or of Keynes' "model building" to use Schumpeter's terminology — became an integral part of an interventionist ideology.

But saying that economics and ideology are intrinsically linked in no way discredits economics as a science. Evidently, I do not claim that this omnipresence of ideology itself warrants the scientific character of economics, but it nonetheless seems reasonable to say that the most scientifically compelling conclusions of economics are those which have the highest probable chance of working ideologically since they are those which can the most efficiently do this job. An attempt to separate science from ideology is like an attempt to separate a good

quality wine from wine producing drunkenness. Not only would such an attempt be absurd, but it is even probable that, for a given person, the most delectable wine is the one which has more chance of producing drunkenness since one will normally drink a larger quantity of a delectable wine than of a tasteless one. Attempting to take ideology out of a science in order to isolate a pure science is like attempting to take alcohol out of a wine in order to produce a wine of the purest kind! Therefore, saying that a theory frequently functions as an ideology is no more equivalent to claim that this theory is not scientific than saying that a particular wine gets people drunk is equivalent to claim that this wine is a bad wine! The reason it is impossible to take ideological elements out of a science is straightforward. It is that ideology is not a particular type of discourse which could be distinguished and separated from the scientific discourse, it is a particular function exerted either by science or by religion or by anything else credible enough.

This does not mean that any thesis defended by economists can be considered scientific since its pretension to scientificity is not damaged by its potential ideological bias. As it is the case for any scientific discourse, the scientific character of economists' discourse can be criticized on various grounds. Consequently, pure scientific theses can be isolated from pre-scientific or pseudo-scientific statements, from pure value judgments or from wishful thinking which are frequently met in the writing of economists. My only point is that once this decantation has been done and once we have genuine scientific theses in hand, we have precisely what may have a powerful ideological impact, just like once wine has been decanted from any impurities, the beautiful and attractive elixir obtained is precisely what has the most chance of occasionally producing drunkenness. This is not unique to economics. Let us think, for example, of anthropology and psychology where many studies have been developed about differences between races. These were full of value judgment and wishful thinking, but they

were progressively criticized and replaced by much more careful scientific studies whose conclusions mention significant nuances and counteracting factors. Certainly, the discarded value judgments were in many cases a manifestation of a crude racist ideology, but it is the resulting pure scientific studies which have the most chances of exerting a really efficient (though frequently mediated) ideological impact among those who, when refusing to rent their house to members of a racial minority, comfort and justify themselves by saying "after all, they are different from us".

**Ideology and utopia**

Now, it is not sufficient for an efficient ideology to draw on the conclusions of the most respected scientific contributions. It must also seduce. Therefore, Karl Mannheim's famous distinction between ideology and utopia is misguided. It suggests, at least implicitly, that an ideology serves the interests of a dominant class turned towards the status quo or even towards its past in order to defend its acquired privileges, whereas an utopia is the voice of a dominated class turned towards an attractive future which promises a better world usually characterised by freedom and fraternity. This distinction is mistaken because any ideology is turned towards the future and promises a better world. This was understood by Henri Lepage who rethorically entitled his two books written by the end of the 1970s "Demain le capitalisme" and "Demain le libéralisme". Samuelson and Friedman also understood this when, in somewhat different contexts, they both claimed that capitalism was never tried, implying that even Western democracies should be considerably transformed in order to allow capitalism to function properly and to make a better world possible. It is true that an efficient ideology may actually contribute to the preservation of the status quo, but it succeeds in doing so by proposing an attractive picture, usually associated with the idea of progress, of a better

tomorrow. Conversely, an utopia is, just like an ideology, a process based in religion, in science or anywhere else, through which classes and individuals find justification and rationalization for what favours their own interests as they see them.

Marx's thought illustrates this particularly well. What made Marxism a powerful (utopian) ideology which has transformed the world, possibly more profoundly than any other, is not the multiple value judgments — despite their extremely sharp and trenchant phrasing — which can be found everywhere in his work. It was rather the scientific theses developed in *Das Kapital*. Though most of these theses look today highly contestable, by the end of the XIXth century and even later, they were reasonably perceived, at least by members of oppressed classes and also by a number of intellectuals, as the most scientific analysis of capitalist societies. If Marx's thought was acclaimed by so many people with so various intellectual formation, it was not due to the answer it brought to some academic puzzles, nor to the potential *applications* of his scientific thought. In fact, any attempt to apply his thought to manage capitalism, which he seriously analysed, would have been rather odd for obvious reasons; and when it comes to the management of a communist society, about which he said relatively little, his thought was virtually inapplicable. The exceptional impact of Marx's scientific contribution was essentially *ideological*. For populations oppressed by capitalism and, centuries before Marx, longing towards a better way of life, all avenues looked blocked except maybe the one leading to armed revolution. But how to justify such an enterprise, which implies the killing of many people, when the goal is to realize a fraternal society and when experience has shown that such revolutions almost never terminate in the establishment of the desired society? Nothing was more susceptible to confirm the revolutionaries in their enterprise than the Marxian analyses, which were deemed to have scientifically shown that a revolution was inevitable and necessarily victorious and that such a revolution was a

condition for the birth of a communist society. The authority of a scientific analysis was required to justify a violent and deadly action by presenting it as the almost necessary way of establishing a fraternal society. Without the help of Marx's scientific thought, Stalin would have had more trouble justifying the fact that the road towards the building of the promised communist society implied the death of most of those who entertain views different from his own and the forced, or almost forced, labour of the rest of the Russian population. "Utopias" like Marxism can hardly be distinguished from ideologies in a very compelling way. But this ideological character of Marx's thought does not preclude its scientific significance. On the contrary, it implies that, beyond the fact that it has the seductive power of any utopia, this thought, as a scientific contribution, was credible enough to exert an exceptional impact over innumerable populations, and this long after its scientific content — like the content of most scientific contributions of the same period — had been seriously challenged.

Before concluding these considerations on revolutionary ideologies, it is interesting to observe that the American and French Revolutions were sustained by ideologies which were founded on philosophy in a time where the basic postulates of political philosophy were endowed with a rarely contested authority, which makes them almost as credible in countries influenced by Enlightenment as were Christianity in Middle ages and science in 20th century. But, here again, its ideological fertility should not in any way discredit the 18th century political philosophy.

**Economics and ideologies**

Let us sum up by underscoring the implications of this view for economics. Most economic theories function, and function efficiently, as ideologies or, if one prefers, most of

them play an ideological role. That means that economists have to live with ideologies and to acknowledge that claims concerning the death of ideology are nothing but expressions of wishful thinking. Since people necessarily have particular economic interests — whether determined by their class or not — and since these interests are favoured by political measures associated either with liberalism or conservatism or protectionism or socialism or nationalism or racism or any other ideology, a great number of scientific contributions in economics provide a strong support to some of these ideologies. Consequently, they have great chance to be financially and otherwise supported by those whose interests are favoured by these ideologies. But the fact that so many contributions in economics, especially if they are scientifically acceptable, provide a set of arguments and some respectability to such ideologies and that they are favoured by their adepts does not affect the content of economics as such. The scientific value of economic contributions is a quite different affair. It must be judged with different criteria, like testability, falsifiability, explanatory power, systematicity, etc. which are discussed by the epistemology of economics. These criteria may be and have been invoked to challenge with more or les severity the scientific character of various economic contributions, but such challenges should have nothing to do with ideology.

In conclusion, I will consider a few more examples of economic contributions which are susceptible to function ideologically. I have already mention those of Smith, Ricardo, Marx, Keynes and Friedman, but some other contributions may help to clarify the point. In the 1960s and 1970s, the famous debates between the two Cambridges was clearly and almost openly a debate between two ideologies. Each significant paper published by Joan Robinson, Pasinetti, Garegnni or other Neo-Ricardian economists was perceived as an attack on the "Main Stream" and on the capitalist ideology and consequently as good news for socialist oriented economics. Conversely, most papers on this topic by Samuelson, Solow or other neo-classical

economists were seen as a defence of the orthodoxy which brought some relief to the pro-capitalist camp and tended to discredit their adversaries. Nonetheless, it seems clear that most of these papers constituted remarkable scientific contributions to the understanding of economic phenomena. In fact, both sides responded at various degrees to a need for *understanding* and to an i*deological* need; and, as usually acknowledged, if neo-classicals have finally considered themselves victorious in this debate, it is because their views was judged more capable of responding to the need for *applications* required by the economic community.

During the last decades, it is mostly the economists whose thought was associated with neoliberalism who have been frequently accused by leftist thinkers of being nothing but ideologists. The case of Hayek is paradigmatic, and it could be shown that the ideological character — whether characterised as neoliberal or neoconservative — of his contributions in the last decades did not undermine their philosophical significance, which should be discussed on quite different grounds. However, I will concentrate on purely economic contributions by discussing the cases of Gary Becker and of Ronald Coase. Few economic analyses have raised as much indignation as Becker's discussions of "human capital". The ideological content of such a notion is explosive. On one side of the battle field, it was quickly adopted by promoters of capitalism and liberalism who found there a way to reinforce their conviction that labour is just a factor of production to be treated as any other and that its quality and market-value is nothing but the result of choices taken by the workers. On the other side, thinkers oriented towards humanism and syndicalism saw there a direct attack on human dignity and on the fundamental right of the workers to be treated with equity, rather than being put on the same footing as machines. The ideological debate was generously nurtured by Becker's analyses of family, marriage, drug-consumption, criminality and artistic

development which, since they were treated in a similar fashion, looked in itself ideologically reductionist and anti-humanistic. Moreover, his postulate of "stable preferences" suggested that any form of publicity was perfectly innocuous and that difference in tastes is a matter of rational choice in such a way that any control that a State could impose to freedom of advertising looks illegitimate. However, once this ideological content of Becker's thought is acknowledged, why should we conclude that its scientific value is affected by it? Becker's innovative analysis opens new avenues by emphasising structural similarities between phenomena pertaining to quite different domains. In this way he explored the possibility of applying to the analysis of these phenomena methods which have been successfully used in economics. Thanks to these analyses, mechanisms explaining various aspects of those phenomena were revealed or clarified. This is quite enough to claim that Becker's contributions are undoubtedly of a scientific character. Certainly, one might test their results and conclude that they do not pass an appropriate test, one might claim that such analyses cannot do much more than providing formal models that translate in a rigorous but pedantic manner conclusions that common sense can reach, one might claim that a maximizing postulate is much too strong to really explain the phenomena discussed or that the postulate of stable preferences is unsustainable, etc., but, justified or not, all these objections to its scientific significance have nothing to do with the undeniable ideological content of this theory, whose ideological impact is strongly *reinforced* by its remarkable logical consistency.

The ideological impact of a single paper by Ronald Coase was possibly still more radical. Coase never claimed that it is indifferent whether it is the polluter who has to pay for polluting or the victim of pollution who has to pay for getting rid of it. However, he established, with the help of theoretical models, that, *in an imaginary world free of transaction costs*, the optimal degree of pollution, *from the unique point of view of an efficient*

*allocation of resources,* is obtained irrespective of the fact that the rights are held by the polluter or by the victim. In spite of the severe explicit restrictions according to which this conclusion should not be applied to the real world and supposes that the crucial question of the repartition is not taken into account, the so-called Coase theorem has boosted a pro-market and pro-capitalistic ideology by suggesting a way to dissolve the problem associated with the notion of externalities, which up to then was becoming more and more cumbersome to the development of capitalism. Neoclassical economics had convincingly shown the merits of a market economy, but how to deal with the fact that economically significant activities — whose pollution generating activities were seen as a paradigm — were going on *out* of the market? Coase's paper suggested a theoretical way to internalise all those activities within a *potential* market. That was sufficient to defuse the problem that externalities raised for any ideology based on the virtues of the market. Moreover, the very fact that the theorem proposes a theoretical solution to the allocation problem without taking into account the repartition of rights strongly contributed to turn attention uniquely towards the question of optimal allocation whereas, up to then, externalities were perceived as a major problem because the *unequal repartition* of rights among those affected by the use of a resource generated an incapacity to trade and therefore a non-optimal allocation of this resource. Thanks to Coase theorem, the defenders of free market and of capitalism could concentrate on the question of allocation now, in principle, solvable without consideration for the repartition and, in this new context, they could more easily forget the fact that such inequalities imply that economic activities can make victims among the people. Rarely has an ideology been so strongly and immediately reinforced by a scientific contribution, but why should the scientific character of this fascinating contribution be affected for this reason? Certainly, quite legitimate moral arguments can be raised against the dangerous ideological consequences of such contributions, just like moral arguments are regularly raised against the dangerous

applications of research in nuclear physics or in genetics, but this does not affect the scientific character of these disciplines. One may also underscore that equally valuable scientific considerations must be taken into account to have a correct picture of the question of markets and externalities, but no scientific contribution in any domain is complete by itself and the necessity of invoking other considerations to acquire a correct picture of the situation is quite normal in science. More crushing arguments of a logical or empirical nature can be raised and have been raised against the consequences of Coase's theorem, but this process, typical of what regularly happens in science, has nothing to do with the fact that such genuine scientific contributions, precisely because they are highly credible, may have a direct and significant ideological impact.

Therefore, instead of attempting to separate science from ideology, a task which is doomed to failure, economists should accept the fact that ideologies are here to stay. However, thy should avoid being naïve enough to think that scientific results, which help to understand economic phenomena and sometimes make possible useful applications, legitimate in any way the ideologies that they unavoidably contribute to reinforce. Consequently, in order to condemn such ideologies, or eventually to fight against them, one does not have to deny the scientific value of the theories on which they rest.