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THE POLITICAL AND MAN

Basic features of social ontology

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VOLUME I

SOCIAL RELATION, UNDERSTANDING, RATIONALITY

VOLUME II

SOCIETY AS POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

VOLUME III

IDENTITY, POWER, CULTURE

Panagiotis Kondylis

SOCIAL RELATION

UNDERSTANDING

RATIONALITY

From Kondylis's unpublished text, edited by Falk Horst

Translated by C.F. from the original German - Kondylis, Panajotis: *Das Politische und der Mensch. Grundzüge der Sozialontologie*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, Band 1, Soziale Beziehung, Verstehen, Rationalität, 1999.

Reference was also made to the Greek language translation, which was accorded minimal weight as it was not a translation by Kondylis himself - Κονδύλης, Παναγιώτης: *Το Πολιτικό και ο Άνθρωπος*, Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο, μετάφραση: Λευτέρης Αναγνώστου, 2007.

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Preliminary note

Panagiotis Kondylis departed this life on 11. 7. 1998 owing to a mishap and consequently left behind his social ontology, which was conceived as three volumes, in the form of a fragment, because there is only a textual version of the first volume. Of the approximately 900 handwritten pages, approximately 10 pages are missing in regard to the final subchapter "The formal (form-related) parameters of language and their content-related concretisation by the social relation", whose material (supporting thoughts, evaluations of the literature) are able to give us sufficient indications of the content; however the publication of the said material must take place separately on account of the immense delay in preparing this material for publication.

The author began with the writing of a text when he had "everything ready in his mind", he only had to just "copy it from his mind"; from his verbal indications and enthusiastic accounts it becomes clear that he had detailed ideas also for volumes 2 and 3. How extensively these ideas can be inferred from the written preliminary notes, what scope they have, could not be ascertained until now. He wanted published, in any case, by 1999 the first volume of the social ontology, which would have included as a whole what had hitherto been created by him in a great overview; he had not set a schedule for the subsequent volumes, since he had again, through his wide-ranging studies, come upon issues which took him beyond the concept of what was originally imagined for his social ontology, nevertheless an important part of the specific research was apparently already concluded, so that he could finish the remaining two volumes within a one or two-year interval between each other.

The present text was changed vis-à-vis the manuscript from the point of view of better intelligibility where this would have met with Panagiotis

Kondylis's approval, who did not manage to do the correction. Thanks for their tireless assistance in regard to the undertaking of necessary work is owed to Dr. Markus Käfer, Jochen Benkö and the publisher Dr. Gerd Giesler.

Falk Horst

I. Social theory and mass-democratic ideology

1. General remark

The mass-democratic revolution, under whose influence the 20th century finds itself at the planetary level, is now concluded. Its victory not only swept away the traditional patriarchalisms in the extra-European space, but it also broke up European oligarchic liberalism and the new-times European culture which had grown together with it, although deep-rooted thought (or intellectual) habits still obstruct insight into the scope and radicality of this turn. Local conditions and the necessities of worldwide economic or political competition will of course effect the formation of several types of mass democracies; nevertheless, on the other hand it is to be stressed that mass democracy constitutes the first literally global social formation since the coming into being of high cultures (i.e. developed civilisations), and that the questions which interrelate with its functioning either way – from the question of the limits of consumption and of growth in their interweaving with ecological and demographic development, to the question of the reshaping of political units (unities or entities) in view of simultaneous atomisation (i.e. breaking up or fragmentation of society into individuals) and globalisation –, will dominate the horizon of the coming century [i.e. the 21st century]. This however does not at all entitle us to talk of the end of history, not even in the very general or minimal sense that mass democracy will be the final political-economic form of the social living together (i.e. co-existence) of humans. Circumstances are conceivable under which completely different

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hierarchies and ideologies other than the mass-democratic ones would develop and prevail[1].

It would be odd if a revolution of such a scale had not found its *ideological* expression in social theory – and it would be even odder if the social theory, especially in its most popular tendencies, proved to be immune against ideology. Western mass democracy is certainly in the habit of boasting of the end of ideologies allegedly brought about by it, yet this is only one aspect of its own ideological self-understanding. Its way of functioning requires or actually produces pluralism or even relativism in the ideational field, however that does not in the least mean that the constituent elements of the pluralism, seeming in the overall picture unideological, are not themselves of an ideological character. Talk of the end of ideologies can therefore actually mean only the discontinuance of monolithic and totally dominant (or ruling) ideology (if such an ideology was supposed to have ever existed in historical reality); however, not even this has been completely encountered [i.e. the existence of a monolithic and totally dominant or ruling ideology]. Because where pluralism and relativism threaten to break open the framework of that which is defined or felt as mass-democratic normality, there supreme and unassailable principles are summoned, which for their part are derived from anthropological axioms or from "Reason", in any case they are reduced to universal axioms. Universalism and relativism consequently constitute both complementary aspects of mass-democratic ideology. Put differently: the different world-theoretical and practical stances are tolerated subject to the exclusive validity of the principle of tolerance, which again is founded on the aforementioned incontestable

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[1] In regard to the content of this paragraph see Kondylis, *Niedergang* and *Planetarische Politik*.

principles[2]. From that point of view, one is quite justified in making the banal, but rich in consequences ascertainment, that the mass-democratic social formation could just as little as every other modern or past social formation do without a ruling ideology.

The orientation of social-theoretical thought towards factual questions and practical (or situational) constraints (or necessities), which for their part are subordinate to the great practical (or situational) constraint (or necessity) which is comprehensible as a system of society (or social system), seems to offer a way out from the turbid realm of ideology. Now, which are the "genuine" or "relevant" factual questions and practical (or situational) constraints (or necessities) is decided beyond these same factual questions and practical constraints (or necessities), and the theoretical decision to comprehend society as a system-like practical constraint (or necessity), which determines its individual functions, is again founded on supra-empirical and intuitive pre-decisions. Here, however, another source of ideological notions interests us. To the extent that the origin and guarantee of ideology-free thought is seen in, in itself, neutral technology (technique) and in the dependent on this technology (technique) highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced) complex society, which in contrast to earlier societies has to deal with factual questions and practical (or situational) constraints (or necessities), a cybernetic or technomorphic social-theoretical thought style is formed which lives based on the claim that it is supposed to be in a theoretical respect just as compelling and ideology-free as the aforementioned factual questions and practical constraints (or necessities). The character of a model is here ascribed to a certain field of the (contemporary) social, the thinking in terms of a model is simultaneously declared a model of

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[2] Kondylis, „Universalismus", passim, und „Jurisprudenz", esp. p. 343ff..

thought in general, and upon these epistemologically dubious bases a technomorphic construction of the social (in general) is then undertaken. However, to construct the whole on the basis of a model of the part, and to give to the thus constructed whole absolute priority over every part (even over the originally model-like part), constituted since time immemorial a typical trick of traditional metaphysics, which after all built its world image not only on the basis of biomorphic and sociomorphic, but already on the basis of technomorphic patterns[3]. The overall picture of society now takes the place of the all-embracing world image, but the thought figure, which serves as the law of construction of the theory remains untouched by that replacement, and the decisive ideological component hides exactly in that thought figure.

In the same example, a further typical feature of ideological thought becomes visible, which characterises mass-democratic social theory in all its variations. We mean the precedence of mass-democratic social theory's underlying general thought pattern vis-à-vis concrete historical, political, economic etc. analyses of a situation. It makes no essential difference that this thought pattern is no longer called e.g. a "world theory (i.e. world view)" but for instance a "model" and is "methodologically (methodically)" constructed; it remains subject to ruling world-theoretical points of view, and the etymological relationship of "model" and "fashion (or mode)" („Modell" und „Mode") reminds us, besides, in an ironic manner, of the fateful entanglements of today's thinking in terms of a model, with thinking in terms of a fashion (or mode)[4]. The proneness to ideology, in fact the ideological programme of the thinking in terms of a model in social theory came to light early on in the various constructions

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[3] Topitsch, *Vom Ursprung*; Lloyd, *Polarity*, ch. IV; already before them, Gomperz, "Problems".
[4] Kaplan, *Conduct*, p. 258.

of a social contract, and this proneness to ideology did not in the meantime become slighter because the art of model formation in many cases copied the so-called exact sciences and is practised with the help of seemingly irresistible mathematical formalisations. With that, something is not meant to be said against the heuristic fertility, in fact hermeneutic and cognitive inevitability, of models and types. But this fertility and this inevitability can only be ascertained by means of the constant contrasting of social-theoretical thought models with concrete analyses of a situation, whose absence frequently leads to that state of affairs in which the products of contemporary model constructors (designers or makers of models) and methodologists hardly differ from the intellectual accomplishments of the ontologists of the 17th century. Certainly, reference to social facts and historical developments, as vague as it may be, cannot be by-passed in social-theoretical constructs, nevertheless, the tendency to let realia (i.e. realities) be absorbed into a thought framework, which constitutes the product of a certain thought style and at the same time the condensation of normative preferences or of polemical positionings, is much stronger. Gains in knowledge are not in the course of this definitely excluded, but the primum movens of the effort at thought does not lie in the gains in knowledge. The specifically mass-democratic quality of such constructions now becomes noticeable in that the realia (i.e. realities), in relation to which such constructions are principally invoked, are those with which today's (Western) mass democracy connects its ideal self-understanding, and that the systematic framework, inside of which these realia (i.e. realities) are either way joined together, corresponds with a thought style which displays parallels with the way of functioning of this same mass democracy. As a whole, it is here a matter of a thought figure which can be outlined as follows: on a sole level and homogenous surface, which knows no curvatures, that is,

no substantial and hence unabolishable hierarchisations, the ultimate and irreducible elements of a functional whole are spread, which can in principle change their places and enter into all conceivable combinations with one another; mobility, interchangeability and combinability of atoms vouch for the full imposition of functional points of view against every substantialistically understood magnitude[5]. Transferred to social theory, this thought figure points to the partly real, partly ideal self-understanding of a society whose way of functioning in principle requires, and at the same time effects, the unhindered mobility and putting aside (or elimination) of all the known hierarchies or substances from the historical past. And indeed: today's predominant mass-democratic social theories or mass-democratic social models postulate a limine the existence of originally independent, equal and equivalent individuals, whose interactions constitute society – irrespective of whether these individuals are defined as "utility maximizers" (as in the economistic social theories), as rational partners in communication (as in the theory of communicative action) or as the functional units of a system (as in the cybernetically inspired systems theory)[6]. If the social theory of societas civilis starts from the oikos [household] as the fundamental (or basic) unit (or unity) of society, and bourgeois social theory tied the individual, as such a unit (or unity), to supra-individual normatively understood authorities and hypostases (Man, Nature, History), then the individual in the mass-democratic context appears detached from every substantial or supra-individual bond, in order thereby to be suitable for constituting the ultimate (or last) constitutive unit (or unity) of unlimitedly mobile

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[5] Further details about this thought figure in Kondylis, *Niedergang*, esp. pp. 16ff., 49ff..

[6] Cybernetic systems theory of course starts from the notion of the system as an entirety, however the pursued complete reduction of the system to functions would for its part be impossible without the consistent atomisation of its constituent elements; because only this atomisation removes every substantial character from the constituent elements.

society; even in the case in which the individual's own rationality still appears indispensable for the continued existence or at any rate the thriving of society, he must derive this unit (or unity) from himself. Either way, it lies in the logic of the "social model" to theoretically eliminate all the factors which stand in the way of the atomisation of the ultimate (or last) constituent elements of society, since only consistent atomisation allows an extreme functional flexibility. In the course of this, it is irrelevant whether the atomisation takes place under the influence of liberal-economistic, cybernetic-functional or ethical-normative (autonomy, self-realisation) preferences. And likewise it is irrelevant whether the confession of faith in ethical universalism, consideration for the extensive and planetary character of the modern economy or for instance the systematic idea of the in principle unlimited ability at the absorption of functional networks, drive towards putting next to the atomising tendency, the globalising tendency, as the second basic feature of social-theoretical constructions. Atomisation and globalisation logically, and as regards content, belong together, since the desubstantialisation, which accompanies atomisation, makes global interchangeability and combinability possible. No less do atomisation and globalisation belong together sociologically and historically inside of mass democracy, which could become the first genuinely planetary social formation exactly because of the fact that mass democracy atomised individual societies and fostered the economic, political and ethical stances accompanying atomisation. The globalising tendency is of course not merely contained in mass-democratic social-theoretical constructions as the ascertainment of facts, but as the constitutive element of theory itself or as the point of view from which the realia (i.e. realities) are supposed to be looked at and classified. Both in atomisation as well as

globalisation, the idealised mode of functioning of mass democracy makes itself the mode of construction of theory.

The ideological consists, nevertheless, not only in the structural adaptation of the social-theoretical construction to a thought figure, which constitutes the ideational counterpart of the mode of functioning of a certain social formation. Over and above that, the ideological comes on the scene where the guarantees of ponderability for the behaviour of individuals or of systems are sought and offered. Ideologies would have a much smaller social influence if they were not able to fulfil, next to their narrower legitimation tasks, more general tasks of the relieving of the tension of existence too. Angst (or fear) comes into being from the imponderability and unforeseeability (or unpredictability) of human behaviour or of social processes, and that is why the reduction of behaviour and processes to the ponderable and the foreseeable (or predictable) is supposed to ultimately exorcise angst (or fear) – as well as the other way around: angst (or fear) vis-à-vis angst (or fear) pushes towards such reductions which in advance may be certain of massive sympathy. In mass-democratic social theory the specifically mass-democratic matters of concern (or demands) are therefore fused with an age-old and fixed matter of concern (or demand) of every normativistic theory and every world theory (i.e. world view), in order namely to gain intellectual(-spiritual) and psychical relieving of the tension of existence through the offer (or supply) of the most far-reaching possible guarantees of ponderability and of foreseeability. After the collapse of theological or rationalistic metaphysics and of the bourgeois anthropologies of Reason or teleological philosophies of history, such relieving of the tension of existence may of course be promised only with reservations and restrictions, yet on the other hand, one cannot help taking up traditionally

tried and tested means for this purpose like for instance a comprehensive concept of rationality. The debate over rationality did not by chance dominate the social-theoretical scene of recent decades: "rationality" became the great buzzword exactly in the search for new universal guarantees of ponderability in the tricky circumstances of mass-democratic relativistic pluralism. Against this background, it appears as unimportant whether rationality is understood primarily economistically ("rational choice") or ethically-"communicatively" or as supra-personal "system rationality". Also unimportant is whether the anthropological factor is reduced to the dimension of rationality or is dissolved in system-determined functions. The intention remains common to avoid the anthropological factor's imponderabilities at least in theory, and consequently to increase the ponderability of social behaviour or of social processes. Nonetheless, a consistent detachment from anthropological question formulations, despite all the paraphrases and disguises of the same anthropological question formulations, can hardly succeed[7].

First of all, though, the guarantees of ponderability and the prospects of the relieving of the tension of existence are offered only inside of social-theoretical models and constructs. The guarantees of ponderability and the prospects of the relieving of the tension of existence would possess a real basis only if the social theories concerned had not merely made sure of their own logical coherence, but also of the real social and historical preconditions of their own validity claim. Their ideological character is seen not least of all in the fact that such questions do not come up. The said social theories are undoubtedly clear that they refer to differentiated and atomised societies, and they develop their conceptuality with regard to differentiated and atomised societies, so that, as we said, their

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[7] See section 5 in this chapter.

underlying thought figure corresponds with the (ideal) mode of functioning of mass democracy. Differentiation, complexity and atomisation are however registered as facts which sprang from an irreversible evolution, and not primarily as contingent realities which must be reproduced every day on the basis of certain material preconditions, and in themselves are not at all immune from social changes. Accordingly, it is not reflected upon how social theory would look after the possible discontinuation of these preconditions – which on the other hand implies that social theory remains connected for better or worse with the continued existence of a prosperous mass democracy. Between the social-historical particular, to which mass-democratic social theory actually refers, and mass-democratic social theory's claim to generality, yawns a gulf, which is by no means smaller than the corresponding gulf in the social theories of the more recent or more distant past. The conceptual spectrum is incapable of grasping the varying social-historical situations and widely diverging from one another social-historical possibilities in themselves, because the said conceptual spectrum is exactly not constituted out of consideration for this theoretical aim, but in accordance with the commands of the mass-democratic thought figure outlined above.

With regard to our own theoretical program on this point, the following can be anticipated. If the ideological component of social theory consists, not least of all, in the privileged treatment of, or structural generalisation of, a certain social-historical situation, as well as in the being oriented (i.e. orientation) of the conceptuality used towards the (idealised) specific character of this situation, then conversely a scientific way of looking at things must a limine broaden the conceptual spectrum in such a way that a contingent, real particular, in an abstract format, can no longer occupy

the place of the, for every theory, indispensable general. The social-theoretical overcoming of the standing still at (i.e. adherence to) a certain situation through the creation of the conceptual presuppositions for the intellectual coping with every situation implies the acceptance of the fact that every situation is in principle two-dimensional, i.e. it contains next to its specific features, factors which either way are activated in every state of affairs (situation) of the human social situation. Social theory, whose conceptual axes are based on (idealised) specific given facts of today's mass-democratic societies, must elevate a differentia specifica to a genus, instead of understanding that differentia specifica against the background of this genus. Obviously, the apprehension of the genus requires a social-ontological deepening of social theory, while the concrete description of the differentia specifica should lead to the social-historical broadening of social theory. On both fronts, at any rate, that thinking in terms of a model, which is committed to the mass-democratic thought figure, proves to be scantly helpful.

2. The becoming and forming of contemporary mass-democratic social theory

Contemporary and mass-democratic social theory are not identical. No society has hitherto reached such a social-political homogeneity that in it next to the decisive phenomena or components there are no elements which already existed in earlier or other societies – or even took root in archaic, immemorial or simply animal ways of behaviour and of thinking. Correspondingly, no society until today was characterised by such an ideological coherence that each and every respective predominant world theory (i.e. world view) or thought figure did not have to compete with

one or more other world theories (i.e. world views) or thought figures openly or latently (i.e. on the path of the struggle over their "genuine" interpretation). The ascertainment of the social-ontologically and social-historically necessary multi-dimensionality of *every* social formation of course in no way implies the impossibility of every social formation's typification (i.e. rendering into types), especially through the working out of the differences in comparison with other social formations. The different (What is different) does not nevertheless extend to all strata and corners of those social formations which are compared or contrasted with one another on each and every respective occasion, but refers first and foremost to their specific differences and to their concomitants, as these emerge against the background of greater or smaller similarities, which are partly anthropologically, partly social-ontologically and culturally, partly social-historically determined. The driving force of the social formation lies in the specific difference, regardless of whether the social phenomena under the said specific difference's influence quantitatively predominate or not[8]. Social models and ideal types may only be constructed with an eye on this overall picture and one should declare whether one means the overall picture or merely its specific difference. If one transfers the model or the type of the specific difference to the whole, then social theory becomes ideological in the sense explicated above.

The specific features (or characteristics) and the, interwoven with these specific features, fields of mass democracy do not in the least therefore make up our society in toto, and mass-democratic social theory by no means coincides with overall contemporary social theory. In the main forms in which mass-democratic social theory emerged, especially since the 1960s, the specific phenomena –, which in the same period

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[8] Cf. Kondylis, *Niedergang*, esp. pp. 18ff., 287, as well as „Marxismus", p. 17ff.

constituted the locomotive of social development in the West, and through the extensive putting aside of the until then strong remnants of the bourgeois age, brought about the maturation and consolidation of the mass-democratic social structure, – are condensed and idealised around the axes of the general thought figure outlined above. A breathtaking technological upturn, the overcoming of the shortage of goods as an extremely consequential historical novum, and a downright cultural revolution, which caught or shook all aspects of the lifeworld, accompanied that [mass-democratic social structure, associated thought figure etc.], and considerably reinforced the atomisation of the ultimate (or last) constituent elements of the system, its mobility and interchangeability and consequently the primacy of the functional point of view – that is, all that which constitutes and supports the analytical-combinatory mass-democratic thought figure. The notion of a fluid whole without hierarchical hardening(s), whose elements alternately or complementarily fulfil self-perpetuating or modifying functions, i.e. the notion of a constant social movement inside of a historical motionlessness found expression in the differently varied theory, that mass democracy inaugurates the "posthistoire" or the end of history; that society therefore cannot from now on undergo radical changes and breaks in the linearity of time, but only the functionally determined recurrence of the same [thing(s)] in the circularity of space. Not for the first time in the history of ideas did a social formation here elevate its own mode of functioning or its own picture of that mode of functioning to the key for the solution of the enigma of the future. Because the announced abolition of the future also constitutes a statement about the future.

We begin our analysis with a look at systems theory, whose internal development has, in respect of central points, a paradigmatic character,

not least because of the increasing and open orientation of the theory towards cybernetic-technomorphic thought models. Sociological systems theory interrelates originally and organically with the sociological way of looking at things and sociological discipline as such, in so far as the latter was shaped through a delimitation against the philosophy of history and historical science, that is, it broke away from the notion of a constant flow of events in time in order to emphasise constants, which were then ordered systematically inside of a functionally coherent and spatially conceived whole. Systems theory appeared in this general sense already in the tight interweaving with the older theory (or teaching) of the state (or political science) (e.g. in Montesquieu) or with the philosophy of history in respect of progress (e.g. in Marx); however only the epistemological autonomisation of sociology could help the notion specifically pertaining to systems theory in achieving a breakthrough. First of all, the question had to, in the course of this, be posed as to what is the specific weight of the individual factors or constants inside of the system, and how they should be hierarchised, in order to best comprehend the functioning and changes of the system. Because the existence of a certain hierarchy was assumed from the outset, all the more as this hierarchy's each and every respective constitution reflected the ethical-normative preferences as well as the polemical considerations of sociologists. The renunciation of liberal economism and the conviction that a society completely left to the free play of economic forces would have to revert to the law of the jungle, led Durkheim eventually to the sharp contradistinction between "services économiques" and "influence morale" and therefore to the perception that a stable social equilibrium can only be restored on the basis of moral factors and their institutional

safeguarding[9]. In this way, a schema of the balanced social system (structurally anticipated by Comte's religion of humanity) emerged in which the ethical-normative factors stood at the top of the sociological hierarchy, i.e. the said ethical-normative factors seemed to guarantee the continued existence of society.

When Parsons, for his part, emphasised the primacy of the ethical-normative factors inside of the social system, he followed up on Durkheim's critique of economism, which however was subsumed by Parsons under the broader and at the same time conceptually vague rubric of "utilitarism (i.e. utilitarianism)"[10]. This time, however, this critique took place with one eye on a new and perhaps even worse foe, namely the base-superstructure teaching of historical materialism, to whose reversal the social-systemic precedence of "values" and "norms" amounted. Parsons thought that Weber's treatise on Protestantism must be read in this sense, and over and above that he made an effort at achieving an overall interpretation of Weber and Pareto for the underpinning of his basic theses. Nevertheless, with regard to his own matters of concern, only his invocation of Durkheim was on the whole legitimate. Pareto's sociology, in terms of content, constitutes something other than his political economy, i.e. equilibria do not have in Pareto's sociology any privileged status, and neither the lions nor the foxes can be tamed by normative bonds; and the decision to read Weber in the light of Durkheim, but at the same time to adopt from Weber the definition of sociology as the science of social action, gave rise to an irreparable contradiction in Parson's undertaking[11]. For Weber it was self-evident

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[9] See the, for Durkheim's thought (or intellectual) development, illuminating Introduction to the 2nd edition of *La Division*, esp. pp. v, vii, xi, xii.

[10] *Structure*, esp. pp. 51ff, 161ff.; as regards Parson's vague concept of utilitarism see Barry, *Sociologists*, p. 76ff..

[11] See Ch. II, Sec. 2A in this volume.

that the category of social action and of social interaction equally and equivalently encompass[12] consensus and struggle, and that is why values and norms can constitute both a basis of mutual understanding as well as a battlefield. In view of the one-sided system-preserving functions (or tasks), with regard to which Parsons provided the values and the norms, Parsons had to accordingly narrow down the category of social interaction, that is, set up values and norms as dams in order to call a halt to the conflict-bearing aspect of interaction. The form-related (i.e. formal) framework of interaction is filled correspondingly selectively with those contents which serve the integration and the preservation of the system; that is why that which Parsons calls the "voluntaristic" (that is, subjective) element of his theory hardly goes beyond the psychological mechanisms of the internalisation of the established collective values and norms. The ultimate guarantee of the social equilibrium consequently lies in nothing other than the manner of the theory formation itself. Parson's undertaking to think of the normatively safeguarded system and social interaction together failed – not because the system does not consist in interaction, but because the concept of interaction, if it is taken to its full extent, does not necessarily bring forth a system in Parsons's sense. If one wants to judge somewhat strictly and yet not unjustly, then one might say that Parsons has not considerably enriched our knowledge of the system-preserving role of ideological constructs over and above that which, for instance, the Marxist teaching of ideology (including its further developments as regards the sociology of knowledge) had already accomplished; but instead of that, Parsons ended up with a substantial theoretical difficulty, as by the narrowing of the concept of interaction in

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[12] In relation to that, Ch. III, Sec. 4 in this volume.

relation to its dimension of struggle, he blocked a limine a thorough explanation of the "dysfunctionalities" of the social system.

The individual weaknesses of Parsons's concept of the system were criticised a long time ago and often[13], and need not concern us any further. For us it is important that the further shaping of systems theory in the 1950s and 1960s, as it took place under the dual and heterogeneous influence of the technological upturn and the advancing technomorphic thought models, and, the [Western mass-democratic] cultural revolution, absorbed in themselves important topoi of the critique of Parsons, and eventually turned against what for very many made up both pillars (or mainstays) of Parsons's social system: the idea of the internal equilibrium of a distinctly outlined whole and the conviction of the role, having effective priority, of values and norms in the maintenance of this equilibrium. If sociology and the, with sociology's approach, interwoven idea of the social system, were thereby bound from the beginning to the mass-democratic thought figure in that sociology and the idea of the social system put in the place of historical time, functional space as the fundamental (or basic) category of social perception, so now a second step in this same direction is taken: inside of this space, in which the, as it were, timeless system extended, the hierarchies and the boundaries were abolished, so that the openness of the system towards all sides made the system's support by values and norms superfluous, in fact impossible. Through this expansionistic theoretical strategy, the old reproach against systems theory had to be weakened, that it is of essence a theory of social statics, which cannot account for change and conflict; the concept of equilibrium was accordingly reinterpreted (i.e. meta-interpreted) and

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[13] See i.a. Dahrendorf, „Struktur und Funktion"; Lockwood, "Some Remarks"; C. W. Mills, *Kritik*; Gouldner, *Coming Crisis*; Barry, *Sociologists*, p. 83 ff; J. Hall "The Problem". Cf. Ch. II, footnotes 56-59.

functionalised, and the new mobility of the system finally led to its inclusion in an evolutionary overall perspective, whose basic concepts were called "differentiation", "reintegration" and "adaptation"[14]. The sociological belittlement of norms and values helped for its part the rejuvenated systems theory, in addition, to get rid of the reputation of the old-fashioned custodian of manners (or customs) which stuck to Parsons and which in that cultural-revolutionary decade was no longer well regarded.

The demand for the opening and dynamicisation of the system through the reinforced inclusion of the functional point of view was made early on by sociologists, such as e.g. by Merton, who summed up his matter of concern in that he wanted against Parsons's "monism" to think of structure and change or conflict together and thus reconcile Durkheim and Marx with one another[15]. Younger sociologists, who wanted to see in the proceeding structural differentiation of the system, or in the functional autonomy of its parts, not so much a danger for the system's (continued) existence, but rather a flexible adaptation mechanism and hence a guarantee of the system's existence, referred to Merton as the initiator of a functionalistically watered down systems theory; without that autonomy the system would have to entirely go to pieces during the occurrence of dysfunctionalities or be reorganised from the ground up[16]. In regard to the character of the development which we are studying here, nevertheless, the fact remains instructive that, despite these and similar sociological approaches, the decisive step for the reshaping of systems theory took

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[14] A.D. Smith, from whom the expression "expansionist strategy" comes, vividly describes the American intellectual(-spiritual) climate of the 1950s and early 1960s, which led to this change in systems theory, see *Concept*, esp. pp. 8ff, 14ff.. Cf. Blalock-Blalock, "Clarification", esp. pp. 88-91. Parsons's efforts to take into account the new development and to accordingly make his own system (more) flexible, does not interest us here, cf. footnote 34 below.

[15] "Structural Analysis", esp. pp. 40-42, 35ff., 32.

[16] See e.g. Gouldner, "Reciprocity and Autonomy in Functional Theory" (1959) = *For Sociology*, esp. pp. 215-217.

place through the wholesale adoption of a thought model which came into being outside of the sociological discipline. The "open system" had been the construct of a cybernetics which saw itself as the method par excellence for the analysis of highly complex systems[17]. The contingency and interchangeability of the constituent elements of the system as prerequisites of the system's own purely functional character were ensured by the fact that cybernetics in principle has in mind a totality of possibilities or potentialities, not topicalities (actualities). Cybernetics's basic concepts, which for their part cannot be separated from the concept of information, are called difference (between two things or two states in respect of the same thing) and variety of form. In this, first of all, confusing ensemble of possibilities and differences, the compulsion towards the reduction in complexity causes order or "system"; a selection constantly takes place, which is based on the reducibility of the world, and seen in this way, information theory amounts to a selection theory (or theory of selection)[18]. The system, which is constituted through such a selection, is then an open system, when it is not isolated from its environment, when it constantly changes its behaviour in the sense of adaption and self-organisation, and when it interacts with its observer; this observer is consequently situated inside of, rather than outside of, the said system[19].

This thought model took over the realm of the sciences humaines (social sciences) with remarkable quickness[20]. It nurtured the old partly alluring, partly foolhardy dream of the unification of all the fields of knowledge, so that now physical, biological and social interaction could be brought to

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[17] Ashby, *Introduction*, p. 5ff..

[18] Loc. cit., pp. 3, 9, 131, 140, 261ff.; Rapoport, "Promise and Pifalls".

[19] Mesarovič, "Foundations", p. 9. See already Hall-Fagen, "Definition", esp. p. 23, and Bertalanffy, "General System Theory", esp. p. 3ff..

[20] See in general David, *La cybernétique*; Geyer-Zouwen (eds.), *Sociocybernetics*. On selection and combination as fundamental operations in linguistics see Jacobson-Halle, *Fundamentals*, p. 60ff..

a common denominator, and it promised, through its consistent functionalism, to completely put aside the conventional (or traditional) concept of causality and every substantialism interrelated with it. Under these preconditions, systems theoreticians were prepared to dispense with, at one blow, both the traditional or psychoanalytical anthropology of drives (urges), as well as with Parsons's binding of a still substantialistically understood individual to values and norms; now there was talk of "personal systems", which are forever put together anew on the basis of a selection from all levels of the personality, and as flexibly functional constructs are absorbed, as it were, by a likewise functionalistically meant open system, that is, an open system constantly shifting its centres of gravity and needs[21]. So the aforesaid thought model seemed to be in a position to cope with even the trickiest and most subtle question, namely the question of individual subjectivity in its relation with the social whole. Though a look at the relevant literature shows that this thought model's greatest advantage in the eyes of political scientists and of sociologists lay in its supposed ability to take into account, at least to some extent, the facts of change and of conflict. These facts were put forward against Parsons even in the 1950s, when the subsequent neo-Marxism of the [Western mass-democratic] cultural revolution or more moderate related schools of thought were already on the rise; however, soon it came to light that a by no means revolutionary interpretation and reinterpretation (i.e. meta-interpretation) or interpretive way in respect of these same facts was possible, which was able to be reconciled with the acceptance that the Western, that is, mobile and continually capable of renewal mass democracy, could best be regarded as an open system, which not only endures internal conflicts, but is even able to use them as

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[21] See, in lieu of many other texts, Swanson, "On explanations"; McCall-Simmons, *Identities* ch. 3; Inkeles-Levinson, "The Personal System", esp. p. 220; Watzlawick, *Kommunikation*, pp. 24ff., 114ff..

a vital adaptation mechanism[22]. When Easton e.g. distanced himself from his own earlier concept of the system, which was based on the notion of equilibrium, and instead of this declared himself in favour of the open system, he criticised in regard to the former [concept of the system] above all its closed character, i.e. its inability to set aims other than its own preservation; but of decisive importance would be the adaptive ability or the suitability to appropriately react to pressure[23]. Cybernetically inspired sociologists, who made the concept of the open system their own, a long time ago connected with that open system the conviction that change, innovation and self-transformation are the best means for self-preservation[24].

From this dynamicised point of view of things, it was objected against Parsons that change rather than the rigid firmness of values and norms contributes to the cohesion of the social system[25], or, more generally, social integration does not at all need normative consensus, but can be brought off through the interplay of several factors like for instance economic interdependence, political coercion etc.; a functionalistic integration model, which wanted to take into account the fact of normative conflicts, would have to, of course, understand integration as a constant adaptive reaction, and to think about integration together with the process of growing complexity and differentiation during adaptation to extra-systemic changes[26]. Symptomatic of a not unimportant aspect of the situation in the history of ideas, in which the concept of the open system found dissemination, was the attempt of this author [van den Berghe] to point to fundamental commonalities between functionalism

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[22] See in relation to that Chap. III, Sec. 4 in this volume.
[23] Cf. *The Political System* (1953), esp. ch. XI, with *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (1965), esp. p. 17ff..
[24] See e.g. Gadwallader, "The Cybernetic Analysis" (1959).
[25] Cf. Turk, "Social Cohesion".
[26] Van den Berghe, "Dialectic", esp. pp. 697, 698, 703.

and Hegelian-Marxist dialectics. In this respect a better known author, Blau, quickly followed him[27], whose theoretical outline nevertheless above all deserves attention for another reason, and indeed regardless of the later distancing of its author from it. Here it became clear that the renunciation of the Parsonian primacy of value orientation and norm orientation in favour of the turn towards exchange relations[28], (in relation to which power relations are also taken into account,) enabled a tying on of functionalism to individualistic – behaviouristic and economistic – approaches; these in fact were formed outside of Parson's systems theory or in direct contrast to it (Homans), but nevertheless they could be inspired by the concept of an open system and its functionalism or belatedly had some influence on this concept, in order to carry on reinforcing, through the programmatic atomisation of the ultimate (or last) constituent elements of the system, its functional, that is, open character. Blau wants to build the open complex social system from below while basing it on microsociologically understood interaction amongst individuals and while following the development of social networks on the basis of mechanisms of exchange as the foundation of social life. It is an open question whether the theoretical construction of a system can succeed based on the premises of methodological individualism[29] or rather whether one must start from the system as a whole; in any case, even the option of the latter solution did not stop systems theory from portraying interaction as the individualistic theories had already done it. The logical and content-related heterogeneity, which arose from that, will still have to occupy us: it likewise characterises, albeit in another sense, Blau's earlier social theory, which paid for its

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[27] *Exchange*, ch. XII: "Dialectical Forces".
[28] Loc. cit., p. 13.
[29] See in relation to that Ch. II, Sec. 2Ce in this volume.

scope with the abandonment of logical coherence[30] and exactly through that encouraged the nonchalant eclecticism of the newer systems theory.

This eclecticism could in practice draw from all schools of thought, which in the time of the formation of the cybernetic thought model of the open system turned, for their own reasons and based on their own forces, against Parsons's construction. To these schools of thought belonged, apart from the aforementioned behaviouristic and economistic individualisms, microsociological analyses of interaction, which rested on the basic schemata of symbolic interactionism or else continued phenomenological ideas. In this way, Schütz's phenomenology of everyday life led to Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, which likewise cannot accept Parsons's solution for the problem of social order. Neither the internalisation nor the ethical status of norms curbs the anarchy of interests, but a normification (i.e. normative standardisation) of a completely different type, i.e. the perceived normality of acts as the basis of the ponderability of future acts, takes care of that curbing of the anarchy of interests; the ascertainment of those acting reflexively, that the normification (i.e. normative standardisation) or the normality and hence ponderability of one's own and another's behaviour in the end serves the interests of all sides as a result of the thereby achieved (mutual) trust (or confidence building), produces norms which are primarily pragmatically and not for instance ethically meant, which do not come from without (the outside), but make up the constitutive features of situations perceived to be "normal"[31]. The logically precarious (see below), express or tacit, wholesale or selective inclusion of individualistic and interactionistic positions in the sociological theory of the open system cannot

[30] Cf. Mulkay, *Functionalism*, esp. pp. 180, 211ff..
[31] Garfinkel, "Trust", p. 198; cf. Heritage, *Garfinkel*, p. 117.

nevertheless deceive us about its origin and character. Incidentally, already for chronological reasons, this inclusion could only occur in retrospect, since the process of the formation of the newer systems theory, at least as regards its conceptual framework and its content-related baselines, lasted for a little while and already in the mid 1960s was on the whole completed.

Buckley's book [*Sociology and Modern Systems Theory*] testifies to that, which sums up this process and at the same time crowns the said process. Buckley's book leaves no doubt as to the cybernetic inspiration of the thought model, and at the same time, as to the fact that a theoretical and ideological main concern, in the course of this, was the collecting of then recent conflict theories in a conceptual framework, which it could approve of in principle and yet neutralise – a framework moreover which corresponds with the ideal notion of an extremely dynamic and nonetheless not revolutionary society, that is, with the self-understanding of Western mass democracy. The pointing out of the commonalities between cybernetics and dialectics, wherein Buckley follows the example of van den Berghe and of Blau[32], as well as the particular nuancing of the critique of Parsons, belong to the strategy of the collecting of originally anti-systemic approaches. So against this, the first thing put forward is the argument of conflict theoreticians that the said anti-systemic approaches cannot theoretically come to terms with either the phenomenon of deviating behaviour or with the phenomeon of change. Accordingly, the most important feature of the system is seen as being its tendency to change its own structure; whereas systems with a fixed structure approach entropy as soon as they change beyond certain limits, the open system combats entropy through the creation of new structures. The equilibrium

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[32] *Sociology*, p. 18.

system model is thus replaced with a complex and adaptive systems model, which is no longer based on fixed norms, but constantly brings about alternatives, between which one or more must be selected always anew. Tension inside of the system is a normal and fertile state of affairs, i.e. it is a necessary concomitant of a variety of form (multiformity) which arises from the normative ambivalence and the existence of alternatives, as well as from deviating behaviour, innovation and differentiation; it becomes perceived through selective processes, whose vehicles are communicative networks and information flows. According to that, the communication process constitutes the main feature of a system which becomes more and more fluid, since the interrelations between its constituent elements are no longer ensured through the transference of energy, as was the case in the spatiotemporally conceived equilibrium model, but through the uninterrupted flow of information; to the extent that energy is substituted by information, the autonomy of the system's constituent elements grows and consequently the significance of their relations with one another also grows compared to their substantial constitution (composition or texture). Typically enough, Buckley is willing, under these preconditions, to accept to a large degree the contingency of the system. He even accepts Homans's exaggerated formulation that the existence of a social system is already in itself a "miracle", without of course noticing that this formulation can only be meaningful from the perspective of consistent methodological individualism; like other systems theoreticians too, he makes the individualistic standpoint his own in so far as stable social structures can be based in the end on exchange processes, which are then consolidated

through symmetrical orientations of social subjects and through the distribution of power[33].

The trend towards the model of the open system was so strong in the 1960s, at least amongst the representatives of systems theories, that Parsons himself could not resist it. Here, however, we can disregard his later personal evolution because he did not bring any new conceptual-structural point of view to light[34]. Instead, we shall make some remarks about the thought figure outlined above and start, at the same time, with its ideational root, that is, its cybernetic origin. If cybernetics is indeed the theory of the functional possibilities of informational systems in abstraction from their physical, physiological or psychological peculiarities[35], then from that, with regard to the construction of a cybernetic social theory, two (different) things can be concluded: either one may, in the course of this, leave out of consideration all peculiarities, and holding on to what is most general, freely exchange the description of geological and zoological systems with that of a social system, or else one must import into the extensively accepted general thought model those particularities which can make out of it a recognisable geological, zoological or sociological theory. Yet the specific features, which enable the specifying of the thought model, are in no event to be taken from the thought model itself, otherwise this thought model would have to refer from the beginning to the corresponding particular content(s) and

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[33] Loc. cit., esp. pp. 29ff., 51, 159ff., 47ff., 39.

[34] See in relation to that above all "Some Problems" (1970) and cf. in relation to that A. D. Smith, *Concept*, p. 31ff.. Also, Luhmann's works have contributed very little to the enrichment of the theory of the open system, whose formation was in essence completed when Luhmann came to public attention. The consistent functionalisation of systems theory directed against Parsons was therefore not at all Luhmann's work, as scholars believe in Germany. This functionalisation of systems theory's leading ideas and its conceptual instruments are, all of them, taken from the American literature of the late 1950s and early 1960s, whose arguments and contents were summed up or varied, explicated or recombined in Luhmann's inflated production. Precisely because of that, the writings of the German possess a symptomatic value, and on account of this value of theirs they will be cited hereinafter.

[35] Frank (ed.), *Kybernetik*, p. 14.

consequently the thought model would be restricted, that is, it would have to give up its own claim to universality; the said specific features must, therefore, be brought into the thought model from the outside, after they are defined according to criteria which likewise cannot come from the same thought model. More concretely: in order that the cybernetic thought model results in a useful social theory, it must previously be enriched by exactly the specific features which make up a *society* of *humans* – and the cybernetic thought model can possibly be applied to these features in retrospect; logically, however, the said specific features may not be derived from this thought model. Cybernetically inspired sociologists confuse the (supposed) applicability of the model with its conceptual and content-related fertility, in which they, as we shall see later, make their logically unjustified (tacit) loans from other disciplines and methods out to be their own discoveries and proof of the productiveness of their own approach.

In view of the by definition inability of the cybernetic thought model to climb down to the specific features of the individual ontological strata of reality[i], if it wants to remain universal, one can say with good reason that its disadvantage consists not so much in its non-applicability, but rather in its suitability to be applicable everywhere and as one likes[36]. The relationship to reality, particularly in social theory, is simply feigned through the selective use of illustrative examples, which for their part are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the underlying thought model and its conceptuality; that is why no advances in knowledge are to be expected, unless through the smuggling in of additional assumptions which do not arise from the thought model itself[37]. That concept [i.e. the

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[36] A. D. Smith, *Concept*, p. 76.
[37] Schütte, „Über die Chancen", esp. p. 114ff.; Opp, *Kybernetik*, esp. p. 24ff.

cybernetic thought model] attains, therefore, quasi the status which terms (concepts) possessed in medieval realism. The conventionalistically meant, and at any time revisable, use of the means of thought retreats from the nonchalant uniform covering over of the phenomenal variety of form by the constructs of the thought laboratory. The unification of the cognitive space is achieved through the transformation of phenomena into symptomatic cases or illustrations of ideational constructs, which can be put in order in the cognitive space's formal-logical continuum. The social-theoretical questions, which are then posed, do not arise from any real analyses (i.e. analyses of reality), but from the logical self-development of the thought model; the said thought model's development turns, on the quiet, into the development of society, whose questions are identical with those of the thought model, and that is why the questions or problems of society's development are dealt with in the same breath with the thought model's inner aporias (i.e. doubts, contradictions or paradoxes). Which aspect or concept of the same thought model corresponds with which aspect or phenomenon of society, remains in the process open, and this vagueness begins already during the fixing of the system's boundaries vis-à-vis its environment. One calls to mind the arbitrary interchangeability of thesis and antithesis in "dialectical" constructions; at least in this sense the cyberneticists, who prided themselves on their proximity to Hegel, were not so wrong.

Mutatis mutandis, cybernetic functionalism must in social theory end up in the same formalistic void as a linguistics, which would like to deduce semantics exclusively from phonology (the analogy incidentally is not accidental since both approaches are based on the same analytical-combinatory thought figure). And since this void cannot be filled by the thought model's own resources, loans take place in retrospect from fields

and traditions which are alien or even opposed to the systemic approach. Here sociology pertaining to systems theory as well as economistic sociology had it relatively easy and good. As latecomers, they could draw from the content-related wealth of earlier social theory and social psychology, which had named the basic social-theoretical questions and had described the basic social relations. While their overall concepts were rejected, many of their most important partial conclusions slipped into systems-theoretical (and economistic) sociology, so that the mere translation of the same partial conclusions into systems theory sociology's and economistic sociology's vocabulary gave rise to the impression that they would constitute empirical findings or logical conclusions of systems-theoretical (or economistic) approaches in social theory. Yet things were the other way around: what in these approaches was not especially trivial or tautological, did not come from these approaches' premises, but from actual or theoretical assumptions of varying origins which were incorporated after a fashion in the thought framework defined by the said premises. On that, there will be discussion in greater detail and more concretely when we deal with the hushed up, disguised or half-hearted anthropology of the aforementioned approaches. A few cues (key words or notes) should suffice here in order to clarify what is meant, or to indicate that cybernetic theory's basic concepts can be extracted just as well or even better from a descriptive analysis of action and interaction of concrete human existences, from which incidentally cybernetic theory's basic concepts originally came.

In order to begin with a central point: the thesis that the reduction in complexity constitutes the basic operation for the constitution of systems and at the same time the basic achievement of the same systems, will not be felt as a pioneering innovation by anyone who for instance is familiar

with Nietzsche's theory of knowledge or with the Marxist teaching of ideology, and hence knows through what large-scale simplifications world images and collective or personal identities are formed in order to serve the goal of practical orientation; recent ethology has confirmed these insights with regard to animal and man[38]. From this general standpoint, it is only self-evident that various kinds of information, or meaning and communication about meaning, must have a character of selection, since they as a result of the need for simplification and orientation through demarcation from something, come into being and exist, and are dependent on a constant interpretive activity which must cope with a never stopping stream of expected and unexpected occurrences. From that again it follows that the refutation of the older functionalism (Malinowski, Parsons) does not in the least require the acceptance of the newer functionalism, accordingly function does not actually mean any fixed (or stable) achievement (or performance) or any fixed satisfaction of fixed needs, but alternatives and selection[39]; because theoretically it suffices to keep in mind that that which is "truly" a social achievement (or performance) always constitutes an interpretive problem, in relation to which interpretive problems (exactly in their quality as problems of meaning and of communication, that is of selection) are questions of power, which interrelate with the splitting of perspectives, the splitting of interested subjects and the formation of alternatives. In a similar sense one can recall that the phenomena of mutuality (or reciprocity) and of exchange, as the basis of the formation of "normal" expectations and institutional "normalities", were researched already in the 1920s by important ethnologists (Thurnwald, Malinowski, Mauss), or

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[38] Uexküll-Kriszat, *Streifzüge*; Lorenz, *Rückseite*, esp. ch. VII. Cf. footnote 131 below and the text following.

[39] Thus, e.g. Luhmann, *Soziol. Aufklärung*, I, p. 22.

that the mechanisms of interaction or interpenetration, likewise even before the Second World War, both in phenomenological anthropology as well as in the school of symbolic interactionism, were at the centre of theoretical attention. And just as little does the social theoretician need a systems theory or a cybernetic vocabulary in order to, for instance, comprehend the meaning of the setting of an aim vis-à-vis the outside world for the coherence of a political collective, or to properly assess the relevance of the reception of information and the reaction to that for the shaping of this setting of an aim[40]. All this does not belong only to social-theoretical common sense, but also to the thought of old and new politics or history – from Thucydides's description of the rise and fall of alliances and hegemonies to Toynbee's challenge-response schema. Finally, in order to come to a German debate[41], it is not at all necessary to summon institutionally safeguarded system rationality in order to show the weak points of the communication utopia and the impossibility of the founding of social life on discourse; a decisionistic teaching of institutions could e.g. – as one of several social-theoretical alternatives – come to the same sobering conclusions, as such conclusions also indeed had been drawn even before systems theory.

The use of concepts and ideas of an origin not pertaining to systems theory in the systems-theoretical framework could epistemologically be legitimised only through proof that these concepts and ideas obtain their full social-theoretical relevance and meaning only in the context of the *system*. However such a proof for its part would presuppose a strict *social-theoretical* (that is, not merely the general cybernetic) notion of the system or a well-founded explanation of it, because the context of

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[40] Thus, e.g. K. Deutsch, *Politische Kybernetik*, esp. ch. 11.
[41] Habermas-Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft*.

phenomena to which those concepts and ideas refer must not be called for instance simply "society", but exactly and specifically "system". The burden of proof grows to the extent that systems theory positively took up individualistic (behaviouristic, economistic or interactionistic) intellectual approaches, which had appeared programmatically with the claim of disputing the *system* character of society. And the problem is nowhere near dealt with when the systems theoretician (incidentally rightly, as I think) asserts that, on the basis of individualistic premises, the fact of the social whole cannot be reconstructed; because the question is not yet clarified as to why this whole should be called "system" – this question is therefore a different matter than the position which one takes in the dispute between methodological individualism and holism[42]. Now, systems theoreticians precisely have not given until now the answer to that question[43], and their transition to the concept of the open system increased their (unacknowledged) difficulties in this respect rather than the concept of the open system reducing such difficulties. This concept was in fact developed, as we know, first and foremost in order to do justice to the phenomena of change and of conflict, yet exactly through conflict and change beyond a certain intensity or limit "systems" go to pieces. Should the concept be meaningful and useful, then the concept must not merely mean openness in itself and in general, but the openness of a *system*, which cannot anymore without limits achieve what is above all expected of it: the reduction in complexity and the endowment (or provision) of meaning, which, with the full openness and fluidity of the system, must simply dissolve in the system. The openness of the system

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[42] See Ch. II, Sec. 2C in this volume.

[43] As such an answer, the statement cannot be valid that what the theory describes with the concept "system", is set eo ipso as part of reality, that is, the notion of the system describes something which really is a system (Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, pp. 19, 30). Apart from the fact that this argument structurally calls to mind the ontological proof of God, it can be cited arbitrarily in favour of the faithfulness to reality of *every* theory.

was supposed to enable the substitution of the concept of structure with the concept of function; since, however, openness must remain the openness of a *system*, the undertaken overcoming of the old dogged functionalism by a flexible new functionalism runs into the old aporias (i.e. doubts, contradictions or paradoxes), and indeed exactly into these: do all observable functions serve the system or have all observable functional elements of social life a systemic function or not? The theory of the open system could answer this question just as little as the earlier view of the system as functional equilibrium, and it did not even attempt it; actually the theory of the open system served to immunise systems theory against criticism in that exactly that which was expressed against it was now accepted without any further ado in the unlimitedly open system.

In light of these ascertainments, the same may be said about the "system" as what Boudon wrote about "structure": it is really a magical way of thinking to think that the consideration of an object as system would suffice in order to eo ipso be able to trigger off a scientific mutation; either the term is used conventionally or for the sake of simplicity – and then it is replaceable – or else it serves as the definition of an object – and then it is reminiscent of a realistic metaphysics; it wants itself to be proof and method in one, without wanting to contemplate that method and constitution (composition or texture) of the object are two different things[44]. Systems theory's magical way of thinking was fed by the ideological intention to impose the ideal self-understanding of a certain society, as it appears at least from the perspective of a wing of its ideologues, on this same society as an interpretive schema. Looked at in this way, systems theory is a symptom, not an interpretation of society

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[44] *A. quoi sert la notion*, esp. ch. II-III.

inside of which systems theory was constructed. And if systems theory is not capable of explaining why society in general, and today's society in particular, must be understood as a system in the specific and strict sense, then one may reverse the question and formulate it as follows: how is that society constituted (or composed), which would, at least in some of its theoretical products, like to be understood as a system?

With regard to the social-theoretically unspecific character of talk of the "system", two additional remarks are appropriate. First, the round-the-clock functionalisation of systems theory cannot state more precisely the notion of the system, already because function and system conceptually and as regards the history of ideas do not at all belong together. The founders of formal sociology had already thought through to its ultimate logical conclusion the notion of function, because they knew about the notion of function's constitutive significance for the discipline of formal sociology which they wanted to set up[45]. Ethnological functionalism, which afterwards via Durkheim (and not only via him) passed over to Parsons's concept of the system, however, related function with social need and this social need's satisfaction, which let the notion of equilibrium come to the fore; and when the champions of the open system directed, against this notion of equilibrium, the anti-substantialistic point of the notion of function, they then unconsciously returned to the concept of function of formal sociology, which of course could not and did not want to know anything about any "system". – Secondly, the in principle connection of the notion of the system with the achievement of (or performance in) complexity reduction gives rise to, already at the base of cybernetic social theory, a fatal ambiguity. It is a matter of the mixing of the perspective of the subjects acting in the real "system" with the

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[45] See Ch. III, Sec. 1A in this volume.

perspective of the theoretician, who constructs the "system" as theory and hence deals with those subjects as the objects of theory. Does systems theory describe the way in which the subjects inside of society reduce complexity in order to be able to act socially – individually and collectively –, or does it reflect the reduction in the complexity of social processes (or series of events), as the systems theoretician has to undertake it, in order to erect a construction at the level of the abstract-general? Both reductions obviously move at distinct levels, but over and above that, they also differ in their constitution (or composition). Because he who is acting (as object of systems theory) is by no means obliged to give to his reduction the form of a "system" in the systems-theoretical sense of the word, otherwise, in view of the indispensability of reduction for action, only the adherents of systems theory would be capable of acting. Only the systems theoretician (he who is acting as the originator (or creator) of a certain theory) must call his own reduction "system". The reductions taking place in society are not therefore absorbed in the "system" as theory unchanged and unshortened (i.e. unabridged or uncurtailed), but systems theory is constructed on the basis of its own reflections on the way in which those reductions belong together in order to constitute the overall reduction which should be called "system". Put differently: reductions are inevitable and indispensable at all levels (that of the observer and that of the observed), there are several useful reductions simultaneously, and that reduction of the systems theoretician constitutes one of them. That is why "system" in the systems-theoretical sense, and reduction in complexity, do not at all coincide, since the latter can be achieved also by e.g. a theology or by any other ideology. Neither can systems theory monopolise the reduction in complexity for itself, nor does the criterion of this reduction suffice for the acceptance of systems theory. The acceptance of systems theory would be possible only if the

systems theoretician's standpoint were socially decisive, that is, if all social subjects would carry out their reductions in the form of a systems theory. If systems theory looks at itself already as the correct description of society because in society reduction in complexity takes place, then every description of society should make the same claim to correctness, since every description is achieved on the basis of reductions. Seen in this way, one could put forward the paradoxical assertion that the apt (or well-aimed) description of a society is that description in society's ruling ideology, and systems theory describes contemporary society aptly (or in a well-aimed manner) exactly to the extent it constitutes contemporary society's ideology, or it fixes (sets or establishes) the reductions inside of which action must move.

Systems theory in fact wants to avowedly be contemporary society's self-description, not however in this paradoxical sense, but literally and as scientific theory. Here the assumption is implied that the way of functioning of this same society itself commands that the self-understanding of this same society must be scientific, that is to say, in terms of cybernetic theory and systems theory, and not ideological in accordance with the conventional manner; therefore, the self-understanding or self-description of society, and the correct scientific theory, would coincide with each another. This claim is consequently based on not much more than the banality of the end of ideologies. And even apart from the fact that in this claim that which is to be proved is presupposed, (because every theory can invoke its practicability as proof of its scientific truth, but practicability can very well come in the above-mentioned paradoxical way, that is, the truth of a theory must be proved *differently*), it remains rather questionable whether the description of a society should, may or must be undertaken on the basis of those concepts

which it uses for its self-description[46]. If functionalistic systems theory is scientifically recommendable because our society is understood as a functional system, then e.g. only substantialistic metaphysics would be the appropriate means of thought for the apprehension of the Christian Middle Ages. (The latter example incidentally clearly shows that the identification of the self-description with the theoretical apprehension of a society must be of an ideological character). Still further: it can be hard to imagine what the expression "self-description of society" could mean anyway. There is no society as author which describes itself, as is known; the description of society is tackled in reality simultaneously by several sides, of which every one lays claim to the monopoly on truth for itself and hence must assert that its description is actually so genuine that it could provide society's self-description (cf. the self-assessment of the Hegelian system as self-description of History). Precisely because there are a number of "system descriptions", that is, a number of reductions in complexity at the level of individual actors, the complexity at the level of the "system" increases. If society is looked at as a whole, in which various reductions in complexity on the part of various individual actors are contained complementarily, then here it is a matter of the reduction of a third party, i.e. of a theoretician. However, we know that systems theory mixes *a limine* both types and both levels of reduction with one another.

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[46] If one uses, for the description of a society, society's own concepts (and indeed not merely as indications of its real situation, but as theoretical instruments), then one must conclude or presuppose that concepts and ideas are mere reflections of social processes (or series of events). Luhmann falls into this naive theory of knowledge when he confuses the level of the self-description of human behaviour with the level of social reality or human behaviour in general. Thus, he summons *descriptions* of action, or the self-understanding of those acting, from the 18th century, in order to prove that action and the system in the modern era relate *really* differently to each other than in pre-modern times (*Soziol. Aufklärung*, III, p. 59ff.). In the course of this, Luhmann proceeds highly selectively, so that the multitude of positions and counterpositions *in every epoch* is overlooked; above all, the symbolic and polemical relevance of (self-) description is hardly perceived, and he talks as if the latter ((self-) descriptions) were ideational copies of real action and not statements of humans, who in their concrete situation wanted or had to *thus* describe or rationalise (i.e. explain or justify) their action. In the 3rd volume of this work we shall argue that, and why, real action changes much less from person to person and from era to era than its justification or description. Cf. footnote 85 below.

The theoretician's reduction would then be a self-description of society if all actors inside of the "system" identified with the theoretician's reduction. If we leave aside the theoretician standing outside of the "system" and if we stay in the "system", then its complexity is reduced due to the fact that one of the proposed, by the several actors (be they now theoreticians or not), reductions or self-descriptions of society asserts itself against the other reductions or self-descriptions, that is, it becomes the predominant ideology and mode of acting. But in this case we come back to our previous paradoxical thesis: systems theory constitutes the self-description of today's society only to the extent and in the sense that it is the predominant ideology in this society.

Whether the description of a certain society wants to pass itself off as its self-description or not, it must in any case declare the specific features (or characteristics) of this same society, which must stand out against the corresponding features (or characteristics) of other historical societies, as well as against those of society as superordinate generic concept. Now systems theory indeed describes phenomena which are characteristic of Western mass democracy (e.g. "formal organisations"), yet this is not in the least its exclusive privilege. Rather what is decisive is that systems theory, into the bargain, uses concepts which can be drawn on in the description of every society or of society in general. Reduction in complexity, meaning and communication as selection processes etc., etc. are found in all historically known societies, no matter how they come into play on each and every respective occasion. As a result of this, there remains finally, as the sole statement of the real specific features of modern society, the pointing out of its enormous complexity. If, however, this complexity can be apprehended with the help of the same (conceptual) instruments like the way of functioning of less complex

societies too, then complexity constitutes a merely quantitative magnitude, something which simply grows, without its growth ever attaining that qualitative character which would have to find expression in an essentially new conceptuality. Certainly, one could object that complexity has now assumed such an extent that a transition to a functionalistic way of looking at things appears to be compelling. Yet apart from the fact that functionalism and systems theory, as already observed, by no means have to go hand in hand, that objection is based on the confusing of method and object, or of the theoretical understanding of acting (i.e. action) and the self-understanding of actors, with one another. If, e.g., the theory of the open system associates the programmatic functionalisation of theoretical analysis with the rejection of the thesis of the primary significance of norms and values for the social order, then it is assumed that an actual prevalence of the functional way of thinking amongst those acting in a society constantly being differentiated (or differentiating itself) corresponds with that open system's said association. It is nevertheless inconceivable why a society in which norms and values, like substances, are believed in, cannot be described functionalistically – unless one takes the self-understanding of the actors at face value. This naturally implies that one does not have to accept the functionalistic self-understanding of a society, even if one has nothing against the functionalistic way of looking at things: because functionalistic self-understanding is not socially functionalised without fail in the sense of the functionalistic way of looking at things.

The supposed "self-description" of the system proves in the end therefore to be an ideological construct and product of wishful thinking, because it is oriented towards an ideal perception of the system, (already the concept "system" contains an intensely idealising component), which is supposed

to be brought about (or made to happen) through its declaration as a real given fact. A close colleague of Parsons praised Parsons's theory, because it, while describing the consensual foundations of societies, constitutes an aspect of that process through which societies would become "even more consensual"[47]. It is no different with the newer systems theory and the "self-description" of the system, although consensus is no longer at the centre of attention. The "system" is thereby helped to come to predominance in society so that its idealised version is called the self-description of society. Since in the scientific fiction, which is called "self-description of society", order must prevail, then from the (logical) order of the fiction, the real order in society is deduced, or this real order identifies with that logical order of the fiction. And since the logical order makes up a totality, the order in the system is not regarded as the effect of one or another of its constituent elements (e.g. of norms and of values), but is equated with the totality. Above all, order is not allowed to depend on the action of concrete actors. Both the concept of the end (goal) as well as the concept of rationality are transferred from the theory of acting (i.e. action) to systems theory; there are indeed no absolute criteria for the rationality of action of "psychical" or "social" (part-)systems, yet their controllability and ponderability with regard to the question of order is irrelevant, since order will be guaranteed through "system rationality", which possesses the capacity to turn even coincidences and mistakes into something positive[48]. This hint points to

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[47] Shils, "The Calling of Sociology", esp. pp. 1420ff., 1429ff., 1432, 1440ff..

[48] See e.g. Luhmann, *Politische Plannung*, p. 74; *Soziale Systeme*, pp. 157, 165. Luhmann here repeats Buckley's repetition of Homans's dictum that in view of the contingency of individual action, social order ("custom") is in itself unlikely, a true "miracle" (*Human Group*, p. 282; cf. Devereux, "Parsons' Sociological Theory", p. 33ff.. Parsons's concern about social equilibrium was founded on the conviction "that society represents a veritable powder keg of conflicting forces ... That any sort of equilibrium is achieved at all ... represents for Parsons something both of a miracle and challenge"; we should recall that Gehlen too described culture as "unlikely", *Urmensch*, p. 105). We have already said that someone is entitled to such an assumption who, like Homans, would like to construct society and social order based on the premises of methodological individualism. Since the systems theoretician for his part started from the fact of the system and its rationality, he can accept order as an equally original

an important source in the history of ideas in respect of the overall concept. We mean the old liberal-economistic mythology of the invisible hand, which is able to transform "private vices" into "public benefits". Here, as in systems theory, however, the effect of the heterogony of ends is unilaterally fixed in regard to the happy end of order, and it is deliberately overlooked that in several historical situations not only can the heterogony of ends go beyond the bounds of the existing order in favour of another, unintended and unforeseen, order, but it also can, for shorter or longer periods of time, transform the bearable disorder into an unbearable disorder[49]. In addition, the possibility is not taken into consideration that precisely system-conforming behaviour on all sides could bring forth extremely harmful consequences for the "system" as a whole (this would be the reversal of the channeling of private vices into public benefits), and also the interrelation between the complexity of societies and the imponderability of the "system" is hardly reflected upon. Actually, there is a lot to be said for the supposition that utopias of cybernetic steering (i.e. management or directing) would be unrealisable precisely through this complexity, especially as the growing resources and options, which more and more individuals have at their disposal, can increase the probability of unforeseeable effects of collective action[50].

In a darker premonition of such imponderabilities, systems theory incorporated certain guarantees of ponderability, which go beyond the usual total silence in respect of the state of emergency. Systems theory does not dare to think through the thesis of the independence of system order from the ponderability and controllability of its constituent

fact and disorder only within the bounds of order; the contingent or free mixture (mixing), or the mutual changing (alternation), of order and disorder, nevertheless makes talk of a "system" meaningless. In relation to our social-ontological solution to the problem of order and disorder see Ch. II, Sec. 3B in this volume.

[49] See in relation to that Ch. II, Sec. 2Cb in this volume.

[50] Boudon, *Unintended Consequences*, p. 8.

elements, and accordingly systems theory does not let system rationality prevail for instance over blind passions, with which the Hegelian cunning of Reason could cope without any difficulty, however the human raw material, which systems theory hands over to system rationality for processing, is already tamed and refined: the "personal systems" are indeed supposed to be something other than the conformist homo sociologicus, yet they function as well via exchange mechanisms, which fulfil expectations, build trust and consolidate lasting normalities. At any rate, behaviouristic and economistic assumptions, which systems theory in actual fact shares with other contemporary main schools of thought in social theory, are behind this concept, although systems theory does not want to accept their individualistic premises. As a result, systems theory becomes connected to important aspects of the Zeitgeist (i.e. spirit or general outlook of the time) shaped by economistic rationality, without, in the process, totally letting down its individualistic tendencies through the primacy of the system. The levelling of hierarchies between the subsystems (or part systems), and the putting aside of normative authorities in the "open system", revalue the "personal system" in the sense of mass-democratic individualism, they [the said levelling and putting aside] open up for the "personal system" a greater variety of possible relations and offer its selectivity broader spaces – and all this in fact as the presupposition of the functioning of the system, in whose framework the personal system's own selectivities become compatible[51]. An abundant choice without normative-ethical pressure – this is not very far from the ideal of mass-democratic individualistic hedonism. The mitigating feeling that one's own wrong decisions or small sins are compensated by system rationality is added, so that in the end evil serves

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[51] See e.g. Luhmann, „Interpenetration".

good. This is what the theodicy of the atheistic or pantheistic age looks like.

Our content-related confrontation with (or examination of) the theory of communicative action and economistic social theory is found in other parts of this volume[52]. Here we want to briefly point out those structural aspects of both the theory of communicative action and economistic social theory, which make clear their common affiliation with the mass-democratic thought figure. Communication theory, as it was outlined by Habermas, apportions to the ethical-normative element a pre-eminent place, and as far as that is concerned, it seems to separate itself from its opponents by means of an unbridgeable gulf. The rehabilitation of the ethical-normative incidentally necessitated communication theory's delimitation from the theory of the open system and its (partial) return to those sociologists, against which exactly cybernetic systems theory had turned, namely Parsons and Durkheim[53]. Undoubtedly, communication theory also adopted central mottoes of the [Western mass-democratic] cultural revolution, while it coupled autonomy with "self-realisation"; on the other hand, it however curtailed the hedonistic and anarchical overgrowths of the said autonomy and "self-realisation" through their inclusion in the overarching ideal of a universal ethics. As in Parsons, so too here the ethical-normative was supposed to take care of or even guarantee cohesion, that is, ultimately to take care of or even guarantee the ponderability of the social. We now know that also cybernetic systems theory, despite all its opening to conflict and change, was no less concerned about ponderability. However, whereas communication theory wanted to drive away the spectre of the imponderable or of the chaotic

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[52] Ch. IV, Sec. 1E, 2Db.
[53] *Theorie des komm. Handelns*, I, pp. 69ff., 297.

through the universal bindedness of the ethical and through the quasi pre-established harmony of the spirits(-intellects), as this had to result from the structure of "true" communication itself, renewed systems theory summoned against exactly this spectre, "system rationality", which for its part had to dissolve both the ethical-normative, as well as the "personal systems" bearing the ethical-normative, into functions, and hence contemplate the ethical-normative and the "personal systems" instrumentally, while at the same time the content-related retreated all along the line from the formal(form-related)-procedural. Precisely here however do the very important, for our question formulation, structural commonalities between functionalistic systems theory and communication theory, begin. Because the latter wanted just as little as the former to be captive of traditional substantialism (in ontology or in anthropology), that is why it ruled out a content-related deduction of the ethical-normative from substantially pre-given magnitudes. For the deduction of content(s), after the putting aside of substances, only processes remain left over; the observance of a certain process advanced, in other words, to a yardstick, against which the plausibility of the content(s) had to be measured. Genuine consensus is achieved where the rules of genuine communication are applied, but between so understood genuine consensus and true content(s) no logically compelling relation can be restored[54]; during the full observance of the planned communicative process, a community of humans or the human genus (i.e. race) can e.g. opt for collective suicide, unless some consensual content is prohibited from the outset and forever. But by whom and on the basis of which criteria? Systems theory too is by no means free from similar aporias (i.e. doubts, contradictions or paradoxes) concerning the content-

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[54] In relation to that: Bernsen, "Elementary Konwledge"; Ferrara, "A Critique".

related outcome of formally-functionalistically understood system rationality, and systems theory eludes such aporias only in that aforementioned way, that is it, as we have said, adopts the airs and graces of a theodicy. While it does that, in order to put a stop to unforeseeable and imponderable catastrophes, systems theory meets communication theory at a second and deeper level; that of wishes and intentions. Systems theory seems to imply that also in a higher ethical respect it does not finally have much to learn from communication theory, because precisely the putting aside of ethical-normative factors in favour of system rationality (freely, according to Hegel: of morality in favour of the quality or system of manners, morals and customs), in the end benefits what, beyond moralistic rhetoric, matters ethically – the cohesion of society and "normality" in social life. If there were not this deeper ethical-normative common ground between the two positions, then these two positions of system theory and communication theory would not be distinguished by one and the same structural gap. Because neither does systems theory explain how and why a system goes to pieces, nor does communication theory know how to account for war and enmity. It seems both sides are not disturbed that, in the course of this said lack of explanation, elementary epistemological rules (laws, commands or requirements) are violated. Because the first thing that a theory, which wants to be scientific, must offer, is an explanation exactly of those phenomena which prima facie contradict it.

The initial contrast between communication theory and systems theory as to the assessment of the ethical-normative factor is toned down particularly through their common renunciation of the philosophy of consciousness. As a result of this renunciation, communication theory puts itself in the precarious position of defending the ethical-normative

ideals of rationality, which originally came from the philosophy of consciousness, while it simultaneously does not want to accept the ideals of rationality's classical context of founding (and justification); communication theory comes to the defence of the Enlightenment modern era against the relativistic postmodern era, and simultaneously declares its support for the same paradigm shift, which marked the transition from the former to the latter. In his zeal to not miss the boat as regards the currently prevailing trends, Habermas is not even taken aback by the telling fact that the bidding farewell to the philosophy of consciousness and anthropology constituted the intellectual starting point of exactly those lines (and schools) of thought which most resolutely turned their back on the ethical-normative ideals of the bourgeois Enlightenment. One is here reminded virtually automatically of the leading versions of structuralism, but still more instructive is perhaps a pointing out of the origin of the "linguistic turn" from the efforts of neo-positivism to dispel the seductive influence of language, and in general the imponderabilities of "subjective" or "human" factors, through the creation of a lucid and communicatively binding linguistic organ. It may sound paradoxical and yet it is true: if the theory of communicative action evades the philosophy of consciousness and anthropology in order to bring together and to think about the bindedness of the ethical-normative, and the bindedness of linguistic-communicative, rules, then it attempts in the field of social theory the same thing that neo-positivism undertook in vain in the field of the theory of knowledge and epistemology, namely to derive acts from correct linguistic usage (or use of language).

The devaluation of the concept of "action" in favour of the concept of "communication" at the level of social theory corresponds with the driving out of the philosophy of consciousness by the philosophy of

language at the level of philosophical question formulations; the expression "communicative action" signals the new priorities within this correlation. The unreflected following by communication theory of intellectual approaches, of which it otherwise does not want to know much, comes to light anew in relation to this crucial point. Because the programmatic definition of society by communication and no longer by action is the work of cybernetics[55], which weakened the concept of acting (i.e. action) and thereby detached the concept of acting from subjectively meant meaning, while it accepted ends (goals or purposes) free of every intention or motivation[56]; the connection of the cybernetic approach in biology with the consideration, having effective priority, of man as *animal symbolicum*[57] put the theoretical primacy of communication on an even broader basis. And since the interrelation between communication and selection had been worked out likewise already within the cybernetic thought model[58], the theory of open social systems could effortlessly follow this conceptuality, that is, perceive the social system as communication system and its "subsystems (or part systems)" as communication media. That is why the theory of open social systems' concept of communication was of necessity all-embracing, i.e. it equally contained ethically-normatively praiseworthy and reprehensible acts, acts of consensus and of conflict. The consequences of that for the cohesion of the system were of course hardly thematised (i.e. made a subject of discussion), that is, it was hardly explained what it means for the concept of the system as such, when e.g. civil wars are held to be communication acts. The theory of communicative action went a step further in the

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[55] Wiener, *Human Use*. See more in relation to that in Ch. IV, Sec. 1Ea.
[56] Rosenblueth-Wiener, "Purposeful and Not-Purposeful Behavior".
[57] Cf. Bertalanffy, *...aber vom Menschen*.
[58] Ashby, *Introduction*, pp. 123ff., 260. Fundamental for that: Shannon-Weaver, *The mathematical theory*.

direction of ponderability by contrasting "genuine" communication to strategic "action", and at the same time giving the same "genuine" communication priority as an act for the realisation of the ethical-normative ideals it had in mind. Whatever theoretical difficulties this narrowing of the concept of communication must entail will be examined in another place[59]. Here of interest are the common perception of the social as communication network as well as the social conditions under which this perception is evident to many.

One would supposedly not go wrong with the assumption that the factor "communication" (in the broader sense) would then gain the upper hand in the social perception vis-à-vis the factor "action" (in the narrower sense) if industry and agriculture were so productive that they only had to make use of the labour of a minority of the population, while the majority would carry out its labour (work) mainly via the exchange of signs and symbols (to say nothing of the increasing penetration of the production process itself by the communicative-informative factor). "Communication" becomes autonomous, in other words, ideationally vis-à-vis "acting (i.e. action)" in the same sense and to the same degree as fewer and fewer people produce what they consume, and as a result the production of goods for the most part is covered up or is even absorbed by symbolic exchange (exchange of information and money, but also of services, which can be perceived as symbolic interaction). Consequently the impression comes into being that production or acting (i.e. action) mean very little and exchange or communication very much. However, it is here a matter of an optical illusion. Because the surplus of communication or exchange is reduced to a completely particular constitution (composition or texture) of action or of production, and

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[59] Ch. IV, Sec. 1C of this volume.

under given circumstances the said surplus of communication or exchange must be produced so that action or production can be developed: e.g. without mass consumption, there is no mass production. As the exchange network of modern technicised societies would have to become much more wide-meshed should the production of goods suffer serious setbacks, so too the hard core of acting (i.e. action) – if one may say so – would put its narrower communicative aspect in the shade, if communication ground to a halt. That should mean that the communication process (or communicative event) as a whole unfolds against the background and under the influence of that hard core, just as without the near or far presence of tangible goods, exchange values eventually become fictive and uninteresting. Communication theoreticians of an ethical-normative or cybernetic mould, however, place no particular value on such considerations. They internalise mass democracy's criteria of perception and at the same time contribute their own criteria of perception for the theoretical underpinning of mass democracy's notions of harmony, while they reduce the real conflicts of action to obstacles to communication.

The prevalence (i.e. popularity) of the concept of communication, which has found expression in the popularity of corresponding social theories, however also takes root in a still more conscious way in the mass-democratic perception of the social. Irrespective of how this concept of communication is founded in each and every respective theoretical context, it has an effect on the broader reading public as a magnetising magic word because it directly or indirectly is mixed with "intersubjective exchange", the "I-you-relation" and the ideologies of self-realisation connected with them. The mass-democratic blurring (or effacement) of the bourgeois dividing line between the private and the

public resulted, in many cases within social theories, in the form of a revaluation of microsociological investigations and points of view, which for their part could be tied to phenomenological and existentialistic analyses of "intersubjectivity" and the intersubjective "lifeworld". From the perspective of the main actors in the history of ideas, this displacement was understood as a paradigm shift, during which the precedence of the relation between I and object was superseded by the precedence of the relation between I and you. Whereas the former paradigm neglected the qualitative distinction between the world (or society) of one's contemporaries and the environment, and contrasted both to objects as well as to the (rest of the) subjects a more or less stable (or fixed) I, the world (or society) of one's contemporaries is at the centre of attention of the latter paradigm (i.e. the precedence of the relation between I and you), and an in itself fluid I gains its contours (on each and every respective occasion) in an increasingly open intersubjective communication process. This process was now, as was to be expected against the background of the mass-democratic turn towards the private-subjective and towards hedonism, loaded with all sorts of content(s), from the hurriedly modernised Christian love of one's neighbour (i.e. charity) to Oriental group ecstasies and practices (or exercises) for the widening of the "boundaries of the I". The especial connection of the concept of communication with ethical-normative matters of concern (or demands) was only one of the concept of communication's possible uses – at any rate, not that which has helped it to gain popularity; here, rather, the reverse has happened.

A last important and indicative commonality between the theory of communicative action and approaches pertaining to systems theory, but also to economism, lies in their assumptions as regards the philosophy of

history or evolutionism, which will occupy us, in terms of content, in the next section. The core of these assumptions – namely, the perception regarding the definitive overcoming of the pre-modern age through the increasing differentiation and complexity of society – amounts to a not merely historical, but really ethically meant legitimation of the "system", which communication theory as well as systems theory describes from the perspective of exactly these assumptions. The system's refined structure is supposed, namely, to make "power politics" in the "pre-modern" sense largely obsolete and impossible, while technical compulsions (or constraints) as well as growing juridification (or legalisation) encourage pragmatic-sober cognitive stances and thus are meant to set "potential for rationality (i.e. possibilities of rationality)" free. It seems, therefore, to be certain that the objective historical preconditions have never been so favourable for the cause of the ethicist. Facing that of course is the ascertainment, fed by strong reminiscences in respect of cultural critique and visions of the [Western mass-democratic] cultural revolution [of the 1960s and 1970s], of, or fear of, the one-sided imposition of the "instrumental" rationality of the system. The "lifeworld" now appears as the refuge of the ethical, enriched by wishes of self-realisation; this "lifeworld" should shake off the "colonisation" by the "system" and contribute what it has towards the realisation of an unshortened (i.e. uncurtailed) rationality. The logically and sociologically extremely unclear relation between system and lifeworld in the framework of communication theory can here remain an open question[60]. In view of our considerations regarding the social character and origin of contemporary social theory the following is of interest. The Habermasian lifeworld does not rebel against the existing "system" in order that the

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[60] In relation to that: Alexander, "Review Essay", esp. p. 412ff.; Baxter, "System and Life-World"; Gregg, "Modernity", esp. p. 148ff., Giddens, "Labour and Interaction".

"system" be replaced with such a system which would not be exposed to similar dangers, that is, it would fully obey the logic of an intact lifeworld beyond every system constraint. Both, lifeworld and system, should exist next to each other in an ideal image (picture or form), mutually complement each other, but also not stand irreconcilably in the way of each other. It seems obvious to me whose dreams are realised by this construction: the realm of communication and of self-realisation belongs to partly ethical, partly inspired by the cultural revolution, all in all moderate or adapted (or conformist) intellectuals, who, despite all the critique of culture, would after all rather preserve the "system" as the basis of material affluence and of the free space(s) [for individual action] connected to that material affluence. If we take pure types as a basis, we can safely say that communication theory and systems theory differ on the whole from one another like those intellectuals differ from administrative officials. The latter can in our society obviously feel luckier or at least more confident than the former.

A third highly representative social type of Western mass democracy, namely the entrepreneur or economic (or business) manager, comes to mind when we turn to economistically inspired social theory; it was incidentally principally designed or defended by (national) economists, who have a positive attitude towards today's mode of functioning of the "free" economy as the central pillar (or mainstay) of the overall system. It is in itself not surprising that the image of society in general is developed as the image (or likeness) of one, or of the decisive, aspect of present-day existing society. The precisely predominant field in every society develops its own form of discourse, which strives after ideological predominance, and as a rule attains it too. If in earlier centuries the economic was apprehended by the vocabulary of the theological or

ethical ("just price"), then under the conditions of the "society of the economy", things must be the other way around; but the mechanism remains, in spite of the "rationalisation" of the world theory (i.e. world view), the same in both cases, and this is here decisive. Already under the influence of the incipient Industrial Revolution, so to speak as ideological by-product of economic liberalism, elementary economistic sociologies came into being, in which an in principle connection between the form of the economy and the structure of society (i.e. social structure) was restored[61], and Marxism, if one wants to look at Marxism exclusively from this perspective, merely constituted liberal economism thought through to its ultimate historical conclusion. The unprecedented development of technology (technique) and industry after the Second World War, which moved the processes (or series of events) of mass production and mass consumption to centre stage and thus brought the mass-democratic revolution to completion, had to give fresh impetus, but even partially new shape (or form), to economistic sociology. As Max Weber remarked, one of the sources of scientific (national) economics lies in the attentiveness in respect of the phenomenon that the "orientation towards one's own and other (or foreign) naked interests" brings forth social effects, which are quite comparable to those of normification (i.e. normative standardisation) or settled manners[62]. The interest(s)-oriented and calculating *homo oeconomicus* was certainly a construct of bourgeois-liberal origin, however this construct did not encompass the entire spectrum of bourgeois-liberal thought, but it existed and had an effect next to heterogeneous or even opposing ethical and anthropological motives. The synthetic-harmonising overall character of the bourgeois-liberal thought figure is explained exactly by the very rich in tension co-

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[61] In relation to that: Skinner, "A. Smith", esp. p. 156ff..
[62] *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 15.

existence of different elements, which the bourgeois-liberal thought figure had to simultaneously appropriate out of concrete polemical considerations[63]. It would never have occurred to the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to make churchgoing or suicide understandable on the basis of "maximizing behavior" like today's representatives of the "economic approach" attempt to do it[64]. The pure and all-embracing in its claim economism made its presence felt only after the decline of the bourgeois thought figure inside of the mass-democratic "society of the economy".

It is not by chance, therefore, that economistic social theory, like the cybernetic theory of the open system too, was shaped on the basis of an in principle renunciation of the Parsonian assessment of the social viability of the ethical-normative factor. Norms and values, however, are not entirely or not always simply eliminated in the economistic context; rather, they are subjected to the logic of the economic, while marginal utility (or benefit) analysis is applied to non-economic exchange events (or processes) and differentiation processes, without, though, it being clearly said in every case whether it is, in the course of this, a matter of economic motivation and calculation in the narrower sense of marginal utility (or benefit), or a matter of a translation of motivation in general into the language of economic motivation and calculation[65]. If cybernetic systems theory broke up the compact presence of norms and values through the openness of the system, economistic social theory expanded the concept and the range of the economic so much that economistic social theory's contradistinction with the sphere of the ethical-normative

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[63] In relation to that: Kondylis, *Niedergang*, p. 23ff.

[64] Typical and instructive is Becker, *The Economic Approach*.

[65] Pioneering in this school of thought was Homans's marriage of behaviourism and economism, see *Social Behavior*; likewise Blau, *Exchange*. In this early pragmatistic article, Coleman explained his intention to apply Homans's "general strategy" to macroscopic social structures ("Collective Decisions", p. 166, n. 3).

was redundant; this sphere simply came undone in the inflated and expanded economic. And as the open system placed individuals before continual tasks of adaptation and of selection, thus the sphere of the ethical-normative did not apply in the new openness of the economic of *homo sociologicus*, who acted in agreement with internalised norms and as a result resembled an automaton[66], in order to make room for a human who was "wholly free", that is "unsocialized, entirely self-interested, not constrained by norms of a system, but only rationally calculating to further his own self-interest"[67]. Socialisation does not coincide with the internalisation of norms, but with the process in which one learns to foresee the long-term consequences of one's acts and to calculate them more rationally, to accept in the long term useful rules or to desert the game. The starting point of the theory is accordingly the notion of a sum total of self-interested and rational actors, whose acts intersect and constitute collective action. The problem of order in regard to this action, i.e. the problem of social order or, as Parsons called it, Hobbes's problem, is supposed to have been solved by A. Smith[68]. Durkheim's polemic against Spencer or against this kind of solution – a polemic which inspired Parsons's anti-utilitarian approach – does not seem to be worth a refutation anymore.

Economistic social theory, just like the theory of the open system, reproached Parsons that, he, on the basis of his normativism, can hardly come to grips with phenomena like conflict[69]. And just like the theory of the open system, economistic social theory simultaneously went to a lot of trouble to keep the concept of conflict inside those boundaries which guarantee the preservation of economistically set up (established or

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[66] Coleman, *Foundations*, p. 31; "Collective Decisions", p. 167.
[67] "Collective Decisions", p. 167.
[68] Loc. cit., pp. 180, 169, 167ff..
[69] Loc. cit., p. 167.

arranged) social order – and the preservation of the economistic sociological concept. A war of all against all indeed constantly takes place, since everyone tries to expand his power over those acts in relation to which he has an interest; but the said war is waged with the means of rational calculus (i.e. calculation) and out of consideration for the "*pay off*", something which according to economistic logic precludes bloody degeneracy. Because rational man regulates, by means of "a special kind of economic transaction", the exchange mechanism of power such that the aforementioned boundaries of conflict are not overstepped[70]. Precisely in its intrinsic connection with the self-interest of individuals, rationality means heightened calculability, and this heightened calculability again forges links between individual and society, so that the individualistic starting point of the theory (theoretically) does not have to endanger social cohesion. Society as whole should even become ponderable because the rationally calculating individuals constituting it appear to be ponderable. That both economistic and cybernetic social theory narrow the concept of conflict through the assumption of self-interested, and *because of that* rationally acting individuals, is therefore added to the already noted parallels between economistic and cybernetic social theory. We remind ourselves in fact that the theory of the open system did not go so far as to believe in "system rationality" that it would have wanted and could entirely do without the calculating rationality of the self-interested individual.

The parallels between economistic and cybernetic social theory can be explained at least partly through the ascertainment that "*Economic Man*" is the brother of "*Administrative Man*", while economistic social theory on the whole shares with this cybernetic social theory the perception of

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[70] Loc. cit., pp. 169, 170.

rationality[71]. The paths of both part (or separate) where the economistic approach stands up for the principle of methodological individualism and does not comprehend society as a pre-given system, but only wants to construct it on the basis of individual actions. This is not of course a theoretical novum or novum in the history of ideas. The in principle coupling of economism and individualism already distinguished early liberalism and ended up, for its part, in reconstructions, in terms of contract theory, of the fact of society. Accordingly, the age-old commonplaces of contractualism and of consensualism constitute the keystone of contemporary economistic social theory. Here, though, of interest is not contemporary economistic social theory's theoretical, but its symptomatic value. Through the stressing of the constitutive meaning of rational consensus for the institutional construction of society and for the founding of individual rights[72], economistic social theory comes close to the perceptions and concepts, from which i.a. also the theory of communicative action in the broader sense draws, which in itself indicates how freely combinable and able to be founded (i.e. establishable) such perceptions are in the mass-democratic social-political context. Rational consensus is indeed now based on utilitarian calculus (i.e. calculation) and not for instance on moral stances (e.g. "truthfulness"), however, economistic social theoreticians do not, because of that, have a bad moral conscience. Because even though the motivation of rational calculus (i.e. calculation) is not, or is not necessarily, moral, its result, i.e. consensus and the settlement of conflicts, nevertheless is sufficient for current social-ethical requirements (or demands). Without ethics in the beginning, it seems that exactly in the end, what every ethics

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[71] Thus, Simon, *Models*, p. 7.
[72] Coleman, *Foundations*, pp. 949, 520ff., 334.

strives for, better succeeds. We ascertain similar implications in cybernetic systems theory.

All in all, the theoretical yield of economistic social theory remained quite meagre, and the same applies for economistic social theory as for systems theory: what is remarkable in economistic social theory comes from different approaches, in relation to which their translation into economistic language is supposed to give the impression their translation constitutes the logical result or even the exclusive find (i.e. discovery) of economistic social theory. Both economistic social theory's axes, i.e. the concept of rationality and the legitimacy of the general social-theoretical usage of economic concepts, will be discussed elsewhere[73]. Two remarks must nonetheless be made in advance. Economistic social theory does not take its concepts and criteria from the economic in itself and in general (whatever this could be), but from a certain perception of the essence of the economic, which, as it were, accepts the economic's chemical purity and at the same time its social-ontological priority; the economic is not therefore apprehended in the context of historical, social-political and institutional factors in order thereby for its concept to be qualitatively enriched and broadened, but the extension of its range merely has a quantitative character, i.e. it takes place through the simple subordination of the rest of the "subsystems (or part systems)" of society to its independent and supposedly absolutely peremptory logic. The economistic self-understanding of the mass-democratic "society of the economy" is elevated to a fundamental theoretical premise, and there are no reflections on the historical relativity of economistic laws or at least on the dependence of their effect on time, place and circumstances[74]. On the

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[73] Ch. IV, Sec. 2D in this volume.
[74] Such question formulations nevertheless perfectly belong to the problem area of classical (national) economics. See Cairnes's, still always worth reading, *Character*, esp. pp. 100ff., 118ff.; cf. Marshall,

other hand, economistic social theory – tacitly but unmistakably – basically takes a view pertaining to the philosophy of history, while it deduces from calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by interests, the possibility of a comprehensive consensus. Also on this point, of course, there is no gain in knowledge, but a rectilinear return to the thoughts world (or ideological universe) of early liberalism. Because the world-historical perspective of a permanent replacement of war with trade was founded already in the 18th century through the assumption that only calculus (i.e. calculation) directed by interests, whose prototype lies in economic activity, has the capacity to discipline the "passions", which exactly leave (or have nothing to do with) the concept of (self-)interest, and consequently has the capacity to rationalise (i.e. organise or systematise) social behaviour in its entirety[75]. We know what has happened since the 18th century.

Hopefully the brief analysis has shown that the main forms of contemporary mass-democratic social theory, despite all divergences or conflicts between one another, share common ground, and also apart from that, make statements on the same question formulations. On the whole, the said main forms of mass-democratic social theory constitute an ensemble which came into being from the variation and the different treatment of certain basic motifs (i.e. themes). The variations and differences are reduced, for their part, to real dilemmas and contradictions in Western mass democracy. The colliding opinions about the possibility or necessity of an underpinning of a social consensus or the smooth functional development of the "system" through ethical norms and motivations, can be cited as an example of those said variations and

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Principles, p. 30ff. ("every change in social conditions is likely to require a new development of economic doctrines"); already in Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 25ff..

[75] See Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*.

differences reduced to real dilemmas and contradictions in Western mass democracy. The pluralism of values and of the ways of life, which are very compatible with the hedonistic orientation of the, on a mass scale, unceasingly and variedly, consuming mass democracy, had to shake (i.e. destabilise or unsettle), in the decades of growing affluence and of the [Western mass-democratic] cultural revolution, the older sociological assessment of norms and values (as well as of ideologies in general: "end of ideologies"); calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by interests, or "system rationality", filled the theoretical void. However at the same time, the reasons which call for the ideological adherence of Western mass democracy to universalistic ethical and anthropological principles, continued to have an undiminished effect[76]. In this catch-22 situation (or tug of war), in which the "system" is objectively found, social theories, like that of communicative action and the economistic social theory, exactly in their (at any rate, not total) opposition to one another, fulfil complementary ideological functions; they differ in terms of content with one another and, all the same, belong together like the heads and the tails of a coin. The situation is similar in regard to the opposition between individualistic (no matter whether economistically or ethically oriented) and cybernetic social theory. Mass democracy distinguishes itself through the parallel and in itself contradictory development of individualism (in the dimensions of the "dignity of man", of "self-realisation" or of social mobility and of possibilities of advancement), and of administrative apparatuses. What is released (or set free) in individualistic energies must then more or less be channeled and regulated by these apparatuses, which give rise to the impression that they would work on the basis of their own logic vis-à-vis every individual independent (or autonomous) logic.

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[76] See footnote 2 above.

"System rationality" appears therefore as a real magnitude, which cannot be deduced from the mere summation of autonomous and at the same time coordinated individual wills, but in its coherence (or unity) corresponds with the coherence (or unity) of a model, and may only be apprehended on the basis of a model not referring to people. Cybernetic thinking in terms of a model (tellingly, the said cybernetic thinking in terms of a model was applied early on and with particular preference during the investigation of so-called "formal organisations"[77]) stands, in social theory, opposite to thought pertaining to contract theory and consensualistic thought, or to the approach of methodological individualism, in exactly the sense as the individual (as ethicist, consumer or entrepreneur), and administration or bureaucratic organisation of every kind, stand opposite to one another in the reality of mass democracy. The relation (or relationship) remains of course ambivalent, since both the individual cannot develop entirely outside of "administered (or managed) life" and also administration must take effect inside of a society, which is demarcated against the authoritarian state and admits to (i.e. acknowledges) individualism. In the language of theory this means: the system remains indeed a system, but in its openness it absorbs in itself elements which in themselves come from individualistic tendencies. Theory formation proceeds on such intersecting paths and detours. In the self-understanding of every individual theory, the contrasts (or conflicts) in respect of other theories naturally occupy a more important place than the internal, positive or negative interrelations with regard to every individual theory. But the self-understanding of theories gives (sound and dependable) information about (or insight into) their character just as little as the self-understanding of a collective, or of an individual, who

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[77] Instead of many others: Thompson, *Organizations in Action*.

[supposedly] provides the most reliable guide for the individual's assessment by third parties.

3. Differentiation, complexity and evolution: the relapse into the philosophy of history

Although the ideologists of mass democracy have repeatedly bid their farewell to every metaphysics and have announced the end of all ideologies, they make, as we have observed, not only ample use of the early liberal ideologies of the social contract and of the invisible hand, but over and above that, they appropriate the core theses of the eschatologically moulded philosophy of history in respect of progress. The relapse into the philosophy of history can hardly be by-passed when the social-theoretical analysis of present-day society takes place against the background of a comparison with past societies from an evolutionistic perspective, and on the basis of the assumption that today's society is superior to the rest of societies in accordance with certain criteria. In the course of this, it is of secondary importance whether these criteria have an ethical-normative character (e.g. the Hegelian "freedom of all") or whether they can in a certain respect be measured ("complexity"); it is sufficient that the said criteria concern the constitution of the social itself in an aspect held to be central. This aspect is however defined in agreement with that which is looked upon as particularly noticeable and social-historically pioneering in today's society, so that the, prepared (or made ready) from a certain point of view, social present, can be declared as the universal-historical yardstick (or yardstick pertaining to world history) and simultaneously as the highest tier of universally-historically ascendant movement [i.e. movement pertaining to world history]. Thus,

"differentiation" and "complexity" were passed off, without more detailed justification, not merely as important, but perhaps deduced, however really as the deciding and self-sown, features (or characteristics) of the present, and moreover as the criteria on the basis of which past social formations would have to be classified sociologically. In itself the matter is old and banal: societies (like individuals too) tend to emphasise their own uniqueness and in this way are existentially legitimised, they lump the earlier societies or the other societies together, and contrast to them all their own specific and new type of qualities (i.e. characteristics). They believe that these qualities (i.e. characteristics) put existing commonalities more or less in the shade, and feel downright offended when a third party ascribes to certain commonalities a much higher status. The task, nevertheless, at least from a social-ontological perspective, consists exactly in apprehending each and every respective new kind of thing and [that which] in the given historical point in time is forward-driving (i.e. drives or forces things into the future), against the background of the great constants. These great constants can be got rid of through the changing of the social-theoretical conceptuality just as little as humans can be declared to be non-existent through the putting aside of anthropology.

Looking at things more specifically, the turn towards consistent functionalism, as it happened in the delimitation against the remnants of traditional and bourgeois substantialisms, made out of the social-theoretical putting first of "differentiation" and "complexity", a virtually methodical (i.e. methodological) necessity. Because extreme differentiation can only take place inside of a whole, which is fully atomised, i.e. it is broken down into ultimate interchangeable constituent elements – and only inside of such a desubstantialised whole do

functions, on the other hand, constitute the only possible kind of communication, and as a result, the only possible kind of creation of complex systems. "Differentiation" and "complexity" are, in other words, only from a functionalistic standpoint, the decisive and irreducible social-theoretical magnitudes, while evolutionism, which is supposed to describe the becoming of these magnitudes, constitutes a retrospective projection of the functionalistic point of view onto the past, or an interpretation of history from the functionalistic point of view, whose victory in the present is regarded as irrevocable precisely because of the effected extreme differentiation. Method, interpretation of history and of the present therefore prove themselves to one another in a most beautiful tautological harmony. Still further: namely, "differentiation" and "complexity" are not simply ascertainable facts but already postulates of the way of looking at things, so they appear to be self-sown and self-reproducing, as definitive achievements and at the same time motors (i.e. engines or driving forces) of historical movement, explanans (i.e. explaining) and not explanandum (i.e. to be explained). In this way, "differentiation's" and "complexity's" material preconditions are hardly reflected upon, nor the realities of the division of labour as the basis of social multiformity, and neither the consequences of the overcoming of the shortage of goods for the variety (or multifomity) in the field of values and of world theories (i.e. world views). But with regard to these concrete questions, historical, sociological and economic analysis completely suffices, therefore every teleology of differentiation and of complexity is superfluous[78]. The rejection of evolutionistic teleology does not of course have to entail a questioning of evolution in the general historical sense. Yet the fact of historical evolution does not offer any

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[78] Cf. the good observations of A. D. Smith, *Concept*, p. 76ff..

confirmation of evolutionism as a law, which has to determine the course of history forever. This lesson is to be drawn from the concrete consideration of the material preconditions of the evolution of modern, that is, differentiated and complex societies.

In relation to the assessment of the newer evolutionism, which is based on the theorem of growing differentiation and complexity, remembering that the said newer evolutionism's principles were formulated approximately one hundred and fifty years ago by Herbert Spencer, is not superfluous. This happened typically in an organicistic context, i.e. evolution was understood as differentiation *because* society was compared to an organism. Differentiation, according to Spencer, is adaptation, that is, a relation with an environment; society constantly progresses from homogeneity to heterogeneity (simple, compound, doubly compound, trebly compound types of societies) and the increase in heterogeneity, in which exactly progress exists, lies in the fact that every cause brings forth more than one effect[79]. The organicistic origin of this type of evolutionism becomes noticeable already in the central concept of differentiation. Because this type of evolutionism signifies a process, in which functions, which were originally concentrated in one and the same bearer, are separated from one another and connected with independent bearers; although the emerging of functions, which beforehand were latent or did not exist at all, is not in the least precluded, nevertheless the linearity of the process remains decisive, and also the perception that the provisionally final and most fine organisation of a plant or of an animal eventually, via innumerable mediations, sprang from one and the same semen. The process itself is essentially understood

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[79] *Essays*, I, pp. 265-307 ("The Social Organism", 1860); pp. 8-62, esp. pp. 19-38 ("Progress: Its Law and Cause", 1857).

as quantitative, even though it is assumed that through this process new qualities come into being. That is why it is very questionable whether the evolutionistic thought schema can find satisfactory application to the course of history as a whole. Here, namely, the question of differentiation in every historical age is posed on a new basis; the overall character of a social formation decides, in other words, on each and every respective occasion, in which *direction* differentiation goes, *what* will be differentiated and *what* at the same time will be dedifferentiated[80]. Hence, the linear evolutionism of differentiation cannot explain the great turning points (or changes) in which the criterion of differentiation itself is defined. In linear evolutionism of differentiation's exceedingly smoothed way of looking at the past, the lack of readiness to take into consideration the possibility and consequences of analogous turning points (or changes) in the future certainly makes its presence felt, which again interrelates with the above-mentioned deficiency in serious reflection on the material and social-historical preconditions of the processes of differentiation in present-day mass democracy.

In explanation of the above, a shorter looking back to the much-conjured up transition from the "pre-modern age" to the "modern era", or a synoptic comparison between principally agrarian-feudal society and principally industrial society, will be attempted. Differentiation or differentiality (i.e. a differentiated property (quality or nature)) meant for the former a scarcely assessable and centuries-long self-reproducing variety of local ways of life and manners (or customs), as well as a variety of economic, legal and political regulations. This variety was real, and it was also felt by very many, even perhaps by most people, as a

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[80] Regarding the necessary interrelation between differentiation and dedifferentiation, evolution and devolution cf. Tilly, "Clio", esp. p. 455ff.; on the inability of the concept of differentiation to adequately explain historical "crystallisations" see Eisenstadt, "Social Change".

reality worth preserving. Modern industrial society, in its increasingly closer interplay with the new-times centralistic state, did not come on the scene as the continuation and deepening of such differentiation, but modern industrial society could, on the contrary, only set in motion its own, i.e. determined by means of its own general character, processes of differentiation, when it swept away the specific variety of societas civilis, while it imposed, very often violently, legislative, administrative, judicial and political unification. What here was looked upon as the creation of unfolding space for "genuine", that is, individualistically comprehended differentiation on the one hand, was called dedifferentiation ("uniformity", "leveling") on the other hand, and with exactly these key words long and hard social-political struggles were conducted, since it was clear to those in question which kind of differentiation corresponded with which social model. The undifferentiated use of the concept of differentiation or of complexity attests, on the contrary, to how much, in the meantime, the sense of such concrete questions has been lost. Just as systems theory, in particular with the help of its specific, conceptual instruments, cannot say anything definite (particular or determined) or essential about today's society, so too evolutionism in general is not in a position, with the help of the mere and unadulterated criterion of differentiation, to apprehend the qualitative aspects of the processes of differentiation. The historical transition to high cultures (i.e. developed civilisations) had to have been accompanied by just as numerous and just as intensive differentiations as the transition from the "pre-modern age" to the "modern era" too – and, all the same, the social and historical quality of both transitions differ greatly from each other.

In his dual capacity as evolutionist and as social cyberneticist, Buckley thought that, during the transition from a simpler to a more complex

social formation, the same thing takes place in a qualitative respect as during the transition from atomic (nuclear) physics to chemistry and to physiology[81]. The analogy – of course for Buckley it is no mere analogy, but a real correspondence – raises more questions than it solves. On the one hand, it implies that at the highest level of complexity the laws of the lowest level continue to fully have an effect, that therefore complex societies can just as little neutralise those basic anthropological and social factors, which prevail in the simple forms of social living together (i.e. co-existence), as the phenomenon of the organic abolishes the laws of atomic (nuclear) physics – on the contrary, every higher level is here dependent for its existence not least on the unreduced effect of the elementary law bindedness of the lowest level, but not the other way around. Linear evolutionism can consequently be very well interpreted against the intention of its representatives to prove the ontological superiority of the differentiated and of the more complex. On the other hand, from the perspective of the aforementioned analogy, a very inadequate distinction is made, if at all, between the qualitative and the quantitative aspect of differentiation. A higher level of differentiation can as a whole show new qualitative features vis-à-vis a lower level, this must however by no means mean that the specific new quality consists in a greater qualitative wealth, that is, in the greater quantity of qualities. Evolution can make qualitative leaps, without the new level, at which evolution is supposed to henceforth move, having to produce from its constitution more numerous qualities than the previous level. That even applies when the specific new quality is nothing other than a greater need, or capacity, for differentiation. Because differentiation, which occurs after the qualitative transition to a new level, can in essence mean an

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[81] *Sociology*, p. 111.

identical or at any rate a structural repetition of the same level. Systems and other theoreticians, who, whatever the normative ulterior motives, conclude (or infer) highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) mass society's higher status within evolution from the degree of highly technicised mass society's differentiation, confuse in very many cases differentiation and atomisation (i.e. the breaking up or fragmentation of society into individuals) with each other. The constant creation of new atoms indeed makes the whole, on the outside, more complex, inside of which [whole] these atoms co-exist, but the growing complexity in the sense of the multiplying of the atoms does not amount to any qualitative *structural* enrichment. Atoms or units (or unities), which have the structure suitable for the said complex whole, are in fact absorbed (or included) in the complex whole, and this structure again may not essentially diverge from that which is typical of the whole or the "system". It therefore in general does not happen that the separation of subsystems (or part systems) from one another, and their (relative) functional autonomisation, leads to *structural* differentiation. On the contrary: their internal structures become like one another more and more, in spite of the increase in their functional independence, and a common thought style and work style is developed. The experiences and the tendencies of highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) mass society confirm this. Through the mathematisation and computerisation of the lifeworld and work world, the general organisational methods in the most different areas (or sectors) of production and of services structurally approach one another so much as never before. One must therefore have completely lost sight of the qualitative aspect of the processes of differentiation in order for instance to be able to think that the world becomes more differentiated because not

1,000 more or less same skyscrapers, but 100,000 are built, and not only in New York, but also in Hong Kong or Nairobi.

Just as sobering, with regard to the evolutionistic derivation of the higher historical status of mass democracy from its supposedly higher differentiality (i.e. differentiated property (quality or nature)) or capacity for (or ability at) differentiation, should the pointing out seem that the development and even the survival of many atoms and units (or unities), which arise from the process of differentiation (Differenzierungsvorgang), depend on the existence and on the performance of relatively few functional centres. Highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) mass society can attain such, or its, complexity because it can create centres or hubs which directly or indirectly maintain the products of the processes of differentiation by means of energy, [various kinds of] information, money etc. etc.. The impression of the autonomy and of the self-sufficiency of these latter [i.e. energy, various kinds of information, money etc. etc.] comes into being in the euphoric times of general affluence and fades during every shock to the aforementioned centres. All this indicates a particularly high vulnerability of modern societies in comparison to past (agrarian or early-industrial) societies, in which precisely the lesser differentiation of the division of labour demanded from the social units (unities or entities) material independence. Seen in this way, the polycentrism of modern societies stands on much more unstable bases than for instance feudal society, and what applies here to the economy, applies also to mentality and ideology: relativistic pluralism constitutes only the other side of universalistic principles. Just as feudal society compensated for its internal dismemberment through a universalistic religion and morality (i.e. ethics), so within Western mass democracy,

differentiations, which emerge from world-theoretical polytheism and encourage centrifugal forces, and dedifferentiating or undifferentiated ethical and anthropological universalisms, balance one another.

Processes of differentiation and complexities stand, in a word, under the sword of Damocles of continued existence and of the unrestrained reproduction of the material and social-political preconditions of the "system", which also determine the quality and extent of the former [processes of differentiation and complexities]. In themselves, the said processes of differentiation and complexities bring about neither greater stability nor greater instability of social organisation, although instability can be more detrimental where differentiations and complexities create interdependencies. The conceptual distinction between social organisation and its differentiation or complexity should not, in any event, mean that this differentiation or complexity is added, as it were, to that social organisation in retrospect. The said conceptual distinction implies, however, that both conceptual magnitudes must behave more or less symmetrically, and that differentiation or complexity, considered in themselves and without the help of other factors, cannot develop a system-revolutionising (or system-altering) own dynamics; they accompany the "system" up to that limit (or boundary) at which exactly the character and direction of differentiation and complexity are defined anew. And also regardless of how one may judge the social-historical effect of differentiation and complexity in light of the historical experiences in the industrial modern era, their social-ontological effect must be held to matter nought. There is no indication that differentiation and complexity, as they unfolded in the course of the last 200 years and in particular in the course of the increasingly mass-democratic 20th century, influenced the fundamental social-ontological given facts, e.g.

that they have changed in this or that sense the spectrum and mechanism of the social relation[82]. The optimistic implication (and intention), in terms of the philosophy of history, of the evolutionism of differentiation comes to light in the assertion that in a highly differentiated and complex society, the side of conflict in the spectrum of the social relation has to gradually throw off its acutest and most destructive components[83]. It is not, in the process, explained how in the 20th century, of all centuries, conflicts of the greatest intensity and breadth, and indeed between and within highly differentiated societies, have been possible, and as well, how processes of differentiation were set in motion or driven forward in part through exactly such kinds of conflicts. That does not of course prove that differentiation has to bring forth such kinds of conflict, but no doubt that both differentiation and such kinds of conflict do not exclude each other, and they do not behave neutrally towards each other.

The claims to social-ontological refounding made by the evolutionism of differentiation do not, however, only concern the spectrum, but also the mechanism of the social relation, as this is shaped through the pre-given disposition and the mental potential (i.e. possibilities) of subjects. Without serious knowledge of historical sources, and also without consideration of newer ethnological findings, subjective qualities (i.e. characteristics) or modes of behaviour, which in reality constitute fixed (steady or stable) social-ontological magnitudes, in fact anthropological constants, are attributed, in the course of this, to the effect of modern processes of differentiation. A gross caricature of "pre-modern" man serves as the backdrop against which these supposedly new qualities (i.e.

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[82] See Ch. III and IV in this volume.
[83] We can here for example refer to attempts at transferring the evolutionism of differentiation and the functionalistic way of looking at things to the analysis of international relations, in order to back up the future blueprint of a demilitarised world society against the background of economistic universalism. Pioneering in this sense is E. Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State*; Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*. Cf. footnote 193 below.

characteristics) and modes of behaviour are described. Lane thinks like this, that pre-modern man had – in contrast to the characteristic reflexivity of modern man – behaved unreflectedly vis-à-vis himself[84], while Coleman assures us that the distinction between person and role was a "social invention" of the New Times[85]. This specific reflexivity of modern man vis-à-vis himself and others is supposed to have the consequence that he frees himself from pre-modern intolerance, impulsivity and (unquestioning) faith in authority, and that he orientates his social activity increasingly according to objective and transparent yardsticks (criteria or standards)[86]. Over and above that – and in this respect the tendency, pertaining to the philosophy of history, of evolutionism of differentiation becomes noticeable anew – this individual behaviour is supposed to constitute partly the expression, partly the basis of a society and of a culture which has left behind traditional political-ideological primitivisms and has arrived at the solution to nascent questions with the help of scientific knowledge, which consists in one of the most important means of production; the "knowledgeable society" is therefore within reach[87].

This construction contains serious historical mistakes and mistakes in the diagnosis of the periods of time, which must be briefly mentioned. First

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[84] "Decline", p. 654ff..

[85] "Social Inventions". Luhmann adopts these theses and even goes so far as to claim that the social-psychological mechanism of "taking the role of the other" constitutes an aspect of the increased reflexivity, which characterises the end of societas civilis and the beginning of modern complexity ("Evolutionary Differentiation", p. 121). Mead, however, traced the roots of this mechanism all the way back to the animal kingdom! Cf. footnote 46 above.

[86] Thus, Lane, "Decline", p.654ff.. Luhmann follows him, see e.g. *Politische Planung*, p. 61: the human of complex society must be "civilised", be able to control his affects (i.e. emotions) and act impersonally, and this again means a "very far-reaching psychical conversion (transformation, re-equipping or adaptation) of personalities" vis-à-vis "all pre-new-times societies".

[87] R. Lane, "Decline", pp. 650-652, 660. Following such diagnoses, Luhmann also holds out the prospect of the predominance of the cognitive element against the political-ideological element, see for instance *Soziol. Aufklärung*, II, p. 55ff.. Traces of technocratic megalomania are not lacking here, thus e.g. when the possibility is considered of society being "modelled" according to cybernetic patterns (loc. cit., III, p. 292).

of all, the process of normification (i.e. normative standardisation) and of the reflexive becoming of behaviour was grasped just as undifferentiatedly and rectilinearly as the process of differentiation itself: as increasing social differentiality (i.e. differentiated property (quality or nature)) and complexity arises from the undifferentiated social, so too modern normified (i.e. normatively standardised) and reflected behaviour should emerge from an originally not normified (i.e. not normatively standardised) and not reflected behaviour. But even if one wants to completely disregard the ethological-zoological aspect of the normification (i.e. normative standardisation) and ritualisation of behaviour, one must ascertain that there has not hitherto been human living together (i.e. co-existence) without specifically social normifications and ritualisations. These are again connected automatically with both the reflexivity of behaviour – since already the existence of generally known norms motivates humans towards constant (tacit) comparison of one's own behaviour with the normative commands of society –, and also with the distinction between role and person, since the enforcement of the norm coincides with the taking of a social role, no matter what the person, in the course of this, wishes or thinks. When Brutus had his own sons put to death, he had long known, before the onset of "modern reflexivity", about the difference between role and person, even though he did not associate this difference with other content(s) like a present-day bureaucrat. This example leads us to a further, no less important ascertainment. There is namely no unambiguous or necessary interrelation between extent or intensity of normification (i.e. normative standardisation), and, degree of differentiation or of complexity of society; differentiation does not determine normification (i.e. normative standardisation), but the character of normification is defined, just as the character of differentiation, by the

general social-historical character of each and every respective social formation. Very rigorous normifications (i.e. normative standardisations) and tough forms of disciplining (or tough disciplinary measures), whose social necessity or at least rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) can be thoroughly understood (or fathomed) on the part of those in question, appear already in pre-modern or even archaic and "primitive" societies; specific free space(s) [for individual action] correspond with these pre-modern or even archaic and "primitive" societies, on each and every respective occasion, so that every normification (i.e. normative standardisation) has two sides. And since in one society, exactly that which in another society falls under normification (as well as conversely) belongs to free space [for individual action], since, that is, the normifications of various societies are not concerned with the same aspects of social life in the same way, thus, no ascending line of normifications can be constructed which is supposed to culminate in the norms system (i.e. system of norms) and the normified (i.e. normatively standardised) behaviour of modern complex society. These normifications are not the product of an evolution, but of a concrete social-historical constellation (or correlation (of forces)).

This becomes more understandable in light of our ascertainment that every normification (i.e. normative standardisation) has its two sides, i.e. its constraints, and, its free space(s) [for individual action] or room to move. The image of "civilised" and rational-objective man above all "primitivisms", who in accordance with the view of the evolutionists of differentiation is supposed to formulate and carry out the normifications of highly complex "knowledgeable society", formally (i.e. in terms of form) corresponds with the ideal type of highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) and highly rationalised (i.e.

highly organised or systematised) processes in industry and administration. Such processes however make up only one side of social life in Western mass democracy. The other side, that of mass consumption, is connected with psychological and ethically very different stances and modes of behaviour – although, both aforementioned sides are equally indispensable for mass democracy's continued existence, and they must compete and co-exist simultaneously with each other inside of society as well as inside of the individual psyche. If industrial mass production and administration require the activation of an impersonal instrumental rationality, then mass consumption favours, on the contrary, the individualistic-hedonistic ethic(s) of immediate (or direct) pleasure (or enjoyment) and generally of "self-realisation". On the basis of the mass consumption of material and intellectual(-spiritual) goods, and against the background of world-theoretical and ethical pantheism, all sorts of irrationalisms, which spellbind all the more people, the more increased productivity decreases the number of those directly participating in technical-rational processes, come into being and thrive. The asymmetry between the "rationality" of technology (technique) and production, and ideological-world-theoretical "irrationality", does not of course constitute a specific feature (or characteristic) of mass-producing and mass-consuming mass democracy, even if the said mass democracy has been connected here with absolutely contrary content(s): whereas in societies in which the shortage of goods held sway, the "irrational" as a rule legitimised ascetic virtues and social hierarchies, the "irrational" in a society, which for the first time in history has basically overcome the shortage of goods, promotes hedonistic and individualistic or egalitarian notions and stances. Nevertheless, from the point of view of our question formulation, not this specific contrast, but the structural commonality is more important. Pre-modern societies also handled technology

(technique) and production on the basis of the instrumental rationality of means and end(s) (the procession (or litany) and the prayer for rain did not mean that one had not otherwise done all that appeared expedient for a good yield (or harvest) through the application of existing empirical findings). But instrumental rationality at this level did not in the least constitute the method of thought which shaped the general world theory (i.e. world view). There are no grounds for the assumption that this will now be fundamentally different. Against the background of the same industry and technology (technique), a number of "rationalisms" and "irrationalisms" are today, as in the past, possible; and the social-ontological or anthropological framework is expected, as a result of new technical (and or technological) developments, to change just as little as through the invention of typography and of ballistics at the threshold of the New Times[88].

The rational-objective new man the evolutionists of differentiation have in mind (that is, the ideal economic (or business) manager or administrative official), is not, besides, merely hindered by the inner logic of the sphere of consumption as regards his full social predominance, but is apparently also endangered on his own terrain. The real development of today's advanced mass democracies offers very strong indications of the fact that the programmatically striven for formalisation of rules and of behaviour in the economy, administration and politics, increasingly becomes the facade behind which nepotism, corruption and also criminality blossom and thrive. One may express the conjecture that the gradual blurring (or effacement) of the boundaries between state and economy, public and private, by mass democracy, entailed a refeudalisation on a highly technicised (i.e. high-technology) and highly

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[88] Cf. Kondylis, „Was heißt schon westlich?".

mobile basis, in relation to which temporary and varying regulations, which left considerable room to move for personal relationships and dark manipulations, take the place of steady and general norms. As a result, however, the impression should not be given that structural changes in themselves effect moral upheavals, but the impression given should be the pointing out of the concrete circumstances, with which certain modes of behaviour are today connected, regardless of how old the said certain modes of behaviour are in their substance and how much they had to be modified in their form. It should not at all, in other words, be asserted that "humans" and "society" in comparison with the past have morally got worse – such diagnoses are always inspired in terms of cultural critique and polemics and ought not be taken to heart –, but that even under the circumstances of highly complex mass democracy, living and operating supposedly under the influence of "practical (objective or situational) constraints (or necessities)", old, familiar modes of behaviour by no means die out. It is really naive to describe such old, familiar modes of behaviour as "archaisms" which have to soon be overcome, and indeed i.a. also with the help of the social sciences[89]. Sober and experienced observers, who, by the way, are not necessarily averse to the "system", arrive at completely different ascertainments and prognoses when they for instance look into the effects of corruption etc. in the realm (or sector) of the economy[90].

The view (or perception) that the higher stages of evolution find expression in a new type of man, who would be up to the higher stages of evolution's heightened demands of rationality, belongs, as is known, to the old hoard (backlog or treasure) of the philosophy of history; we shall

[89] Thus, Luhmann, *Politische Plannung*, p. 41.
[90] See e.g. Etzioni, *Captial Corruption*.

restrict ourselves here to the pointing out that Spencer, despite other differences of opinion with Comte, shared Comte's conviction that the upbringing (education or training) of the individual agrees in its manner and sequence with the historical upbringing of the human genus (i.e. race)[91]. In addition to the said view of the higher stages of evolution's just mentioned version, this view made its presence felt in the form of an application of the Piagetian schema of the gradual intellectual development of man in the course of history as a whole. In the process, really grotesque and ethnologically long ago refuted positions had to be heated up (i.e. rehashed) and served anew[92]. This has, nonetheless, not been able to keep evolutionists inspired normatively and in terms of the philosophy of history from appropriating such constructs[93]. In order to call such constructs into question, it does not suffice, against Piaget, to deny the coming into being of essentially new mental principles in the course of development, or to consider the, on each and every respective occasion, new principle as the mere extension or more concrete application of an already existing principle. Because Piaget's constructivism is based not only on the acceptance of the stages of development with qualitatively new features (or characteristics), but also on the conviction of the coherence and uniformity (or evenness) of the mental [sphere] on the whole. Because of that, he must assert, apart from the novelty of all the respective higher mental principles, their ability at detaching themselves from the context of their coming into being and at, dominatingly, spreading to the rest of the mental contexts or areas; otherwise, in fact, the mental [sphere] would, exactly through its upward

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[91] *Essays*, II, p. 133. This thought figure in the philosophy of history can be, though, traced back to Lessing or Hegel.

[92] Thus, e.g. when Hallpike, *Foundations*, places "primitive" thought at the same stage of development with the thought of European children in the ages of 3-7 years. Cf. Jahoda's critique, *Psychology*, p. 224ff..

[93] Thus, e.g. Habermas, *Theorie des komm. Handelns*, I, p. 104ff..

movement, lose its coherence. This coherence of the mental [sphere], nevertheless, remains an unproven postulate. Rather, every one of the mental [sphere]'s contexts or areas brings forth its own principles or constructs independently, and "progress" in one context or area does not automatically bring about "progress" in the other context or area. The mental [sphere] is not therefore necessarily unified in accordance with the benchmarks (or standards) of the highest stage of development, or, put another way, cognitive development does not culminate in a few stages in which the lower stages come undone (or are absorbed). Both at the historical as well as at the individual level, all mental elements are found in, on each and every respective occasion, different and also changeable dosages at every stage of development[94]. Empirically, this is confirmed by the very noticeable and widespread effect of really magical ways of thinking in the everyday life and everyday behaviour of humans in highly complex and highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) societies[95]. False conclusions in regard to this question can hardly be by-passed if one confuses the culturally right now prevalent (or predominant) belief in "rationality" with the real thought processes in concrete humans, which in one situation can be guided by magical, religious, "irrational" etc. ways of thinking, in another situation by scientific concepts, and in a third situation simply by so-called common sense[96].

The expectation of the predominance of the "cognitive" element inside of highly differentiated society is founded, moreover, through the pointing

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[94] Thus, Harris-Heelas's excellent analysis, "Cognitive Processes", esp. pp. 218-221, 232ff.. In relation to the non-uniformity (or unevenness) of mental development cf. Flavell, *Cognitive Development*, esp. p. 248.

[95] Schweder, "Likeness and likelihood". In relation to Piaget's overestimation (or overrating) of the "rational" components in the behaviour of adults in modern Western societies see Sinnott, "Everyday thinking" as well as Labouvie-Vief, "Adult cognitive development".

[96] Jahoda, *Psychology*, p. 182.

out of the growing and increasingly quicker flow of information in this highly differentiated society, which incidentally seems to substantiate the already known to us thesis that communication constitutes the essence of the social. The conviction, that whoever is in possession of more [pieces of] information thinks and acts more rationally too, underlies the said thesis, whereas "archaic" modes of behaviour preferably flourish in the intellectual(-spiritual) (i.e. mental) derangement of the lack of information. The first moment of silliness (or fatuity) in this syllogistic reasoning is obvious: not the mere use of information, but only the kind and the quality of the use, make information the cognitive basis of rational action; the rationality of him acting must, that is, be presupposed as aptitude (or predisposition) and as independent magnitude. The second mistake is a pragmatic one. The establishment of a connection between greater quantity of information and higher cognitive-rational potential implies the assumption that one actually makes use of that quantity, one does not, that is, make a practical decision before one goes through all available [pieces of] information. But the use of information takes place in concrete situations, i.e. under the pressure of time and pressure of the decision, which increases to the extent that the "information society" is a society "of the economy" and of competition. The quicker the transfer of information, the more the temporal pressure of the decision. Accordingly, the main concern of him acting is not always and not necessarily the quantity of the available [pieces of] information, but the available period of time for the perusal, the sifting and the evaluation of the information. In view of the limited time, the abundance of the theoretically available information offers only chance (or accidental) advantages of selection. That is why the supply of information stored in a computer benefits him acting just as much or just as little as the knowledge hoarded in libraries and archives in those times had supported him then acting. That equally

applies to the politician as well as to the stockbroker. In the ever higher lashing waves of information, one can drown. And against the said lashing waves of information, only the conscious or unconscious effect of the anthropologically determined, stable and stabilising mechanisms of the relieving of the tension of existence helps, regardless of at which level of complexity the said mechanisms of the relieving of the tension of existence unfold.

The quantity of the available [pieces of] information and the quickness of their transfer do not therefore guarantee in themselves the predominance of the cognitive element in modern social life as a whole. A further consideration shows that this element inside of a highly complex society could even weaken in a certain, yet perhaps decisive respect. We mean here knowledge of the long-term overall outcome of the right now unfolding short-term and medium-term part processes, i.e. not so much knowledge of the – also sometimes opaque – present, but above all knowledge of the future. The general direction of the overall becoming (or of all events) can, and must possibly all the more, be lost from sight as knowledge of the individual interrelations deepens, something which considerable content-related differentiation, or the merely occasional crossing of perspectives, engenders. In other words: the complexity of the social makes the unintended and unexpected overall consequences of collective action more likely; the said complexity of the social intensifies the effect of the heterogony of ends[97]. This effect was traditionally considered from the point of view of the invisible hand, whereby (even) individual irrationalisms bring about, through their interweaving, a rational collective outcome. The reverse of that, however, can likewise happen, i.e. the sum of the partial rationalities can bring forth an irrational

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[97] Cf. footnote 50 above.

overall result. The "knowledgeable society" can only be constantly reproduced when the subjective expectations on the whole are satisfied, not only as to the mode of behaviour of each and every respective partner in interaction, but also as to the "system's" overall performance. If there is a situation in which indeed mutual expectations are fulfilled, but the expected overall result of collective action fails to materialise, this means for a highly complex society, the state of affairs of absolute bafflement (or helplessness). Because the Archimedean point at which one could be in a position to reverse the trend is buried sometime (or other) somewhere (or other) in the thicket of complexity. Either, that is, highly complex society must forever secure for itself the material and other preconditions of its reproduction, or it must end in a historically unprecedented catastrophe.

The thorny implications of the heterogony of ends were hardly noted by the evolutionists of differentiation because their optimism in respect of the philosophy of history has found expression in the belief in the immanent rationality of the highly differentiated social system as such. This belief was indeed articulated at its loudest by our contemporary systems theoreticians, who thereby wanted to compensate for the putting aside of the normative in the function of the system-preserving factor; the said belief interrelates with the evolutionisitic concept in the broader sense, and hence we already come across it in older social theoreticians, who assessed the ethical-normative differently. One may comprehend Durkheim's theoretical dilemma indeed as the results of his attempt to connect the beneficial social effect of the ethical-normative with an objective social rationality, which was supposed to correspond with the growing differentiation of society as a result of an unstoppable evolution. Like other evolutionists before and after him, Durkheim wishes for an

agreement of his social preferences with the course of history and therefore is at pains to prove that a higher solidarity will go hand in hand with advances in the social division of labour. Simultaneously, he rejects the utilitarian-economistic notion of the attainment of this solidarity through the interweaving of material interests alone, and summons a solidarity-based social ethics as a force for intergration. Nowhere does he show, however, in detail (or in individual cases) how this level of social integration is interwoven with the level of the, in its own way, also integrative social division of labour; on the contrary, the former [level] is brought from the outside into the ripe (i.e. fully developed) model, i.e. it is constructed in accordance with an ethnologically conceived notion of religion, whereas the tendencies in his early work in relation to an individualistically-personalistically oriented social religion are tacitly given up[98]. The same aporia (i.e. doubt, contradiction or paradox) or antinomy is at the centre of attention of the theory of communicative action, since it adopts Durkheim's thought schema in both its aspects and seeks to correlate in a positive sense the fact of growing differentiation (rationalisation, juridification (or legalisation) etc.) in the modern era with ethically-normatively conceived possibilities of social integration. Durkheim's constradistinction between an individualistic economic basis and an integralistically-collectivistic ideology finds its pendant (i.e. counterpart) in the contrasting between system and lifeworld, in which, however, what is in principle insurmountable is not supposed to be inherent. The contrasting is indeed vehemently lamented by the theory of communicative action, but how reconciliation between system and

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[98] See Pizzorno's good overview, "Lecture", esp. pp. 8-14, 18. Cf. footnote 10 above.

lifeworld is to be brought off conceptually and socially remains just as unclear as in Durkheim[99].

The indirect, nonetheless drastic reverting to tried and trusted constructs regarding the philosophy of history, and in fact eschatological constructs, helps here in getting out of difficulty. Because, logically seen, nothing other than the end of time can be meant, when – simultaneously with the announced, by systems theoreticians and economistic theoreticians, predominance of the cognitive element, and a good one and a half centuries after Hegel's death – it is solemnly declared that the present-day historical moment offers a "privileged admittance" to the grasping and solving of utimate social-theoretical questions[100]. This again is meant to be the case because the course of history, in particular since the rise of the European modern era, releases (or sets free) potential for rationality (i.e. possiblities of rationality), while at the same time the history of ideas did not proceed differently than the history of the social: the history of ideas differentiated the previously undifferentiated and therefore dissolved mythical thought. The rationalisation accompanying differentiation of course turned out "imbalanced" and caused conflicts between the cognitive (truth), practical (success), aesthetical and ethical (justice) spheres[101], nevertheless the diagnosis remained that under modern circumstances rationality was so far advanced that it itself can recognise and abolish its own deficiencies and imbalances; anyway, there is no other path after the collapse of traditional metaphysics[102]. This construction is obviously far removed from an extensive first-hand knowledge of development in the history of ideas; the said construction makes use of gross stereotypes or contrastings, and accordingly it suffers

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[99] See footnote 60 above.
[100] Thus, Habermas, *Theorie des komm. Handelns*, II, p. 593.
[101] Loc. cit., I, p. 259.
[102] Loc. cit., II, p. 65.

from the same defect as the evolutionistic approach in general, i.e. from the undifferentiated use of the concept of differentiation. Differentiation does not happen rectilinearly and uniformly in the history of ideas too, but it develops, on each and every respective occasion, differently according to the concrete constellation (i.e. conjuncture or correlation of forces) and the, on each and every respective occasion, underlying world-theoretical paradigm. The contrast between traditional or theological metaphysics and new-times rationalism raised questions other than the dismemberment of this new-times rationalism into a number of contending positions. Mythical constructs or hypostases, the most important of which were called: "Nature", "Man", "History", were set against that metaphysics – always in the name of a "Reason", which constituted the polemically meant and used epitome of the anti-theological stance (or positioning). These mythical constructs or hypostases called "Nature", "Man", "History" were indeed in respect of content opposed to the theological world theory (i.e. world view), however they structurally agreed with the theological world theory (i.e. world view) in the decisive respect that they likewise were based on the direct or indirect interweaving of Is and Ought, that is, they wanted to safeguard the victory of the ethical notions they had in mind through reference to the constitution (composition or texture) of an ontological or anthropological original foundation (or first cause). In the womb of new-times rationalism, the process of differentiation took a different course. The polemical necessity [for new-times rationalists] of comprehending man as part of law-bound Nature and at the same time as lord (i.e. ruler or master) over this same Nature, led to a logically irreconcilable conflict between the causal and the normative or between Is and Ought, which, consistently thought through, had to flow into an ethical nihilism – this

product of the modern era par excellence[103]. The mythical constructs of new-times rationalism mentioned above turned, henceforth, not only against theological metaphysics, but also against every radical eradication of Ought from Is, which ended in the complete dissolution of Ought and, in parallel with that, in the abrupt separation of instrumental and ethical rationality from one another. If one keeps in mind this development, then one may not define modern rationality as the possibility of the separation of validity claims and references to the world (in contrast to the interweaving of Is and Ought in primitive thought)[104], and at the same moment exactly by invoking *this* rationality, demand the harmonisation of instrumental and ethical rationality or the harmonisation of the technical and cultural aspect of the modern era[105]. The decisive differentiation between Is and Ought logically means the definitive renunciation of the unification (or standardisation) of rationality – and the other way around: the attempts at unification (or standardisation) must revoke precisely this differentiation and return to the mythical fusion of validity claims and references to the world, no matter with which sign (i.e. symbolism). In fact the theory of communicative action, in its concept of communication, does exactly this while it connects a social-ontological magnitude and a normative claim with each other, and furthermore lets normative correctness and truth to flow into one another in the content of communication.

The theory of communicative action does of course the same too when it looks for indications of the possibility of the realisation of ethical-normative hopes in the development of history itself, and consequently

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[103] This most highly contradictory development is described in Kondylis, *Aufklärung*. Habermas (loc. cit., II, p. 486) though cites the book as a further confirmation of the topos of the "utopia of Reason in the Age of Enlightenment", i.e. without having perceived what in Kondylis's book is after all talked about.
[104] Habermas, loc. cit., I, p. 80.
[105] Loc. cit., I, p. 485; cf. *Phil. Diskurs*, p. 11ff..

pursues anew the very often and always in vain trodden paths of the philosophy of history. The Zeitgeist (i.e. spirit or general outlook of the time), which is characterised by the mass-democratic-functionalistic dissolution of the bourgeois substances of "Man" and "History", forbids, into the bargain, open and programmatic recourse to eschatology in respect of the philosophy of history, as it demands, by the way, the distancing of "every metaphysics". Thus, it is actually affirmed that in history there is no teleology, but only "unfinished, broken, misguided processes of education"[106], but it is not explained in greater detail from where the benchmarks come, on the basis of which such processes of education are allowed to be described as broken and misguided. Only he who has a clear representation (view or notion) of the successful conclusion of historical processes may a contrario dare to make such descriptions, but this representation (view or notion) must ultimately be founded on premises regarding the philosophy of history. The in principle ambivalence is here unavoidable, and it manifests itself not least of all in an equivocal evaluation of the modern era. Where the eschatological impulse pertaining to the philosophy of history predominates, there the new-times course of History is reconstructed with virtually Hegelian confidence (or optimism); the reminiscences or backdrops, as regards cultural critique, of the theory of communicative action find expression, on the contrary, in reserved statements; correspondingly, Weber's interpretation vacillates between an instrumentalistic and an ethically-culturally loaded (or charged) version of the concept of rationalisation[107]. These approaches exist of course side by side without mediation and diffusely; neither is it explained in which sense and to what extent the modern era's good side or progressive (or advancing) differentiation was

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[106] See e.g. *Phil. Diskurs*, p. 69, footnote 4.
[107] Breuer, „Depotenzierung" esp. p. 140ff.; Alexander, "Review Essay".

of benefit to normatively understood communication, nor is the question dealt with as to what extent the hitherto "misguided" developments could endanger the overall course (or order of events), and then what would be expected. For a consistent renunciation of the philosophy of history the will is lacking, for an open acknowledgement of (or commitment to) the philosophy of history, strength is lacking. But good intentions are apparently a consolation for a lack of will and a lack of strength.

4. Community and society: a legend rich in consequences

The evolutionism of differentiation cannot only be inspired by the philosophy of history of the 18th and the 19th century. By adopting a qualitative turn within the historical process of differentiation, and by connecting the hastening or widening of the same historical process of differentiation with the transition from the agrarian "pre-modern age" to the industrial "modern era", the evolutionism of differentiation draws from a construction or fiction which has influenced the sociological thought of the last hundred years in very different respects and forms. We mean the, as it were, legendary antithetical pair of concepts of community and society. Its suggestive force arises not least of all from the possibility of transferring a plastic and easy-to-remember basic dichotomy to several fields, while at the same time the disarming vividness (or clarity) seems like a captivating interpretation. Thus, the contrast between community and society can be grasped in various categories: in economic (agriculture vs. industry), political (domination vs. contract or consensus), sociostructural (the simple vs. the complex or differentiated), historical-theoretical (i.e. as regards the theory of history) (the stationary vs. the dynamic), psychical-mental (the affectual vs. the rational) and even

ethical (self-realisation vs. self-alienation)[108]. These ample existing possibilities of transference and of polarisation permit again the establishment of a connection between this or that version of the pair of concepts with the most different social-political preferences pertaining to the philosophy of culture. The "community" as source of inspiration for utopian blueprints (or drafts) of social solidarity lives on in our time[109], and it feeds both the "left" as well as "right" critique of culture, which turns against modern society's confusing, human initiatives of paralysing complexity. In the process, it is wrongly assumed that greater comprehensibility (or manageability) and a smaller scale would mean in themselves greater possibilities of shaping for the individual or the group – as if the "primitive person" or the Greek could, as they liked, shape and reshape his own society, or even only the course of his own life, more than a member of today's mass democracy is capable of doing; if a particular and particularly strongly felt need, in accordance with such possibilities of shaping, comes into being at all, the reason for that does not lie in a longing for formerly existing and in the meantime lost free space(s) [for individual action], but in the fact that modern belief in progress and modern individualism suggest the idea that something must constantly change *and* change is ultimately reduced to individual initiative. The evolutionists of differentiation take, on the contrary, "society's" side, while they hold the "community" to be an essentially historical, that is, "pre-modern" and hence conclusively overcome stage of development; the admission that the "community" could embody constitutive and permanent components of every social life would obviously shake central assumptions of evolutionism, e.g. the

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[108] Cf. the detailed table in Berreman, "Scale", pp. 46-48; here though the contrast of "small scale" and "large scale societies" is spoken about.
[109] Busino, «Critique», p. 247ff..

interrelation between advances in differentiation and the predominance of the "cognitive" element. Finally, there are attempts at keeping the best of both "community" and "society", e.g. a "lifeworld" conceived in accordance with community-related notions left to exist next to the system of a highly differentiated "society". Behind such precarious combinations, however, the pure types in their opposition always emerge.

In fact, the contradistinction between community and society had – under whatever name – been connected from the beginning both with sceptical, as well as with optimistic, assessements of the new industrially-differentiated society. Tönnies could be admittedly influenced by Maine's fundamental distinction between *status* and *contract*, but amongst his sources one must without fail also mention an evolutionist like Spencer, who saw in the replacement of "military" (homogenous) with "industrial" (differentiated) societies a pleasant turn in world history[110]. Such confidence (or optimism) remains, as is known, foreign to the critic of capitalism Tönnies, who first of all turned his attention to the epochal event of the rupture in culture taking place, that is, he comprehended the contrast between community and society as a "theorem of the philosophy of culture" and only later did he want to convert the said contrasting into the conceptual or ideal-typical basis of pure (formal) sociology[111]. The tensions between both stances and the ambiguities could not nevertheless be rectified any longer: sometimes the concept of community was placed not only in terms of history before the concept of society, but it was also superordinated systematically and socially-ethically, i.e. with anti-capitalistic intent; at times, it was here a matter of successive historical concepts of structure, at other times, of two possibilities of human living

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[110] König, „Begriffe", pp. 381, 385ff..
[111] Loc. cit., pp. 351-353.

together (i.e. co-existence) which prehistorically can occur in mixed form; occasionally the definitive fall (or decline) of the community was diagnosed, and then again the community's preservation was asserted, and indeed from two completely different points of view: as historical remnant or else as indispensable component of the social in general; and finally the concept of community functioned from time to time as a model for the construction of a new, solidarity-based-anti-capitalistic future[112].

Tönnies's ambivalences are of lasting systematic interest. They emanated from the fact that the formal-sociological approach was connected a limine with a pair of concepts, whose perception as regards the philosophy of history and of culture, had to interfere with the actual matter of concern (or purpose) of a formal sociology. If this matter of concern (or purpose) consisted of the object (or matter) in it [i.e. if it did what it was supposed to do], to establish a conceptuality, which would encompass at one blow the distinctions or classifications of the philosophy of history of the 18th and 19th century and consequently would sociologically neutralise them or even put them aside, then Tönnies, conversely, connected the formal-sociological exactly to the handing down (i.e. tradition) pertaining to the philosophy of history; concepts of structure were formalised (i.e. rendered into forms), which within the earlier philosophy of history held the position of the stages of development, and could furthermore be taken as the basis of a periodisation of history. But the great common denominator was still missing, that is, a uniform conceptuality bearing "community" and "society" simultaneously and equally was missing. Since the contrasting of both ideal types dominated the question formulation, analogous types of the social relation and of social action were carved out or simply

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[112] Loc. cit., pp. 382ff., 387ff., 399ff..

suggested, but *the* social relation and *social action* as such were not thematised (i.e. made a subject of discussion), to say nothing of anthropological questions (because these too were only touched upon from the point of view of the aforementioned contrasting, for instance in the form of the contradistinction between will in respect of essence (or essential will) and will as regards [free] choice (or selective will)). And even when soon thereafter, it was recognised that the thorough overcoming of the philosophy of history or of eschatology had to necessarily take a step beyond Tönnies's typologies and categories, the conceptual means of this overcoming remained more or less captive of the Tönniesian thoughts world (or ideological universe). This can be seen in Weber's classification of the types of acting (i.e. action) in connection with the examination of the problem of rationality[113], as well as in the manner in which Simmel thinks of "society" and "money" or "function" jointly – however Simmel also presents the formal-sociological approach in general, in terms of function. The reduction of Tönnies's social theory to the contrasting of "community vs. society" favoured, at any rate, its being absorbed into an evolutionistic perspective, which for its part principally saw to the proof of the increasing differentiation in history, that is, to the contrast "pre-modern age-modern era". This evolutionism of differentiation was integrated into social theories of varied (cybernetic, economistic, ethical) inspiration; that is why its theorems were made out to be the confirmation or the result of more general premises. Nonetheless, things were in reality the other way around: the theoretical premises were conceived and formulated on the whole from the standpoint of differentiation and of "society", while at the same time, as already remarked, anthropological constants were attributed to the

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[113] See Chap. IV, Sec. 2A; Chap. V, Sec. 1C.

processes of differentiation in the modern era or modern specific features (or characteristics) were elevated to social-ontological constants. Because of that, the contrasting of "community vs. society" was adopted, despite all dutiful rhetorical repudiations of the philosophy of history, and the normative force of the actual (or factual element) became apparent in the happy or grudging partisanship in favour of "society".

The critique of the historically hypostatised contrasting of "community" and "society", or "pre-modern age" and "modern era", touches therefore upon fundamental social-theoretical questions. The said critique can appear then only as obsolete pedantry if one unreflectedly passes by the disguises and the aftereffects of this thought schema without suspecting the reasons why the dissenting voices raised against the said thought schema could not reverse this thought schema's trend. Geiger had in fact already described in an early work Tönnies's essential mistake as follows: Tönnies looked at community and society as the designations of genus of real constructs, with connotations pertaining to the philosophy of culture and the history of development, instead of looking at them as principles of shaping of the only genus of social shapings, i.e. in respect of making up the group[114]. Gurvitch rejected both the separation of the various forms of sociability from one another, as well as their hierarchisation either in accordance with criteria pertaining to the history of development (Tönnies, Durkheim), or in accordance with ultimately ethical criteria (Sorokin's preference for the solidarity-based over the antagonistic forms of sociability). Gurvitch stressed that these various forms of sociability co-existed and were interwoven with one another, they would by no means develop rectilinearly or unilaterally in history[115]. Obviously, these

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[114] *Gestalten*, esp. p. 22ff..
[115] *Vocation*, I, p.116ff..

theses, thought through to their ultimate logical conclusion, ruin the concept of the evolutionism of differentiation. Because they exclude that total predominance of unadulterated "society", with which this concept of the evolutionism of differentiation lets history end. As the recurrence and the dissemination of the idea of the contract in contemporary social theory indicates, the aforementioned predominance of "society" should be total because its principles determine, apart from the ongoing way of functioning, also the way of the constitution (i.e. composition or make-up), of the collective. A collective, which functions as "society" is therefore constituted as "society". Here a mistake was made of which Tönnies and Durkheim were already rightly accused: the kind (way or nature) of coming into being of the group is confused with its social character, that is, the possibility of the emerging of a "community" from original relations of coercion and of contract, as well as the possibility of the emerging of a "society" from an originally normative motivation (but also out of coercion), is overlooked; just as every kind of social relation can be formed differently, so too can the same origin lead to different kinds of relations[116].

Regarding the genetic question, it is of course one thing whether individuals found the collective by means of a contract or consensus, inside of which they intend to live, and one entirely different thing, whether the collective, inside of which they must live anyway is organised "socially", that is, the relations between its members principally or for the most part are able to be regulated through contracts or consensus; the fundamental difference becomes noticeable in the (theoretical) possibility that the pactus societatis could provide for (or have in mind) a "community-based" organisation of the collective. But

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[116] Sorokin, *Society*, p. 114ff..

the question according to the kind (or way) and intensity of the interweaving of the "social" and the "community-related" [or "community-based"] is not posed merely at the genetic level. In addition, it is posed, first of all, with regard to the cohesion of the collective, and not least with regard to the ideologies contributing to that cohesion, irrespective of whether these ideologies are understood in the narrower sense of norms and values, or in the broader world-theoretical sense; it should be noted in passing that the belief that contracts constitute society and vouch for its cohesion can be exactly one such ideology. The question is posed, secondly, at the level of social organisations, and indeed in a different respect on each and every respective occasion: in an army or in a school, which is organised "socially", i.e. according to an impersonal bureaucratic pattern (or model) and exists before the (unwanted (or unintented)) entry of individuals into it; at the same time however, the said social organisations absolutely need "community-related" elements for the fulfilment of their ends (goals), the "social" and the "community-related" are mixed differently with each other than for instance in a political party, which is founded by the free deed (i.e. act or action) of individuals, in whose motivation already the calculus (i.e. calculation) of interests, and a sense of togetherness directed against third parties, interlace, and for its development uses both rational-organisational as well as charismatic and emotional means. And thirdly, the aforementioned question is posed in the field of the non-institutionalised interaction, or the concrete exercising, of social influence. As an example, the formation of narrower milieus may be mentioned here, which in the womb of societies enable a continuation of the "community-based" modes of behaviour, e.g. modes of behaviour

stemming from village life[117]; incidentally, the magnitude of the collective, or the transition from a small to a large collective, does not in the least interfere with the possibilities of efficacy of (relatively) closed social circles, which attain their aims principally through the personal exertion of influence[118].

The existence of "community-related" elements inside of "society" does not necessarily constitute, and not always does it constitute, a remnant of past social structures still living on (i.e. surviving) only psychologically. Such elements are constantly generated on a new interactional and symbolic basis inside of society itself (we remind ourselves e.g. of the different logics of mass production and of mass consumption) and can cause tensions in its structure (or make-up). But also the other way around, "social" elements inside of the "community" do not constitute a merely heterogeneous and propulsive (or aggravating) element (or factor), which work towards the forcing open of the boundaries of the "community", but rather constitute original and functionally indispendable constituent elements of the same community[119]. This ascertainment refutes, first of all, the evolutionism of differentiation's theses, or rather hypotheses, regarding the lack of a reflected individuality in the "pre-modern age" in general, and in "primitive" or "archaic" societies in particular. Geiger had already seen this interrelation between the sociological and anthropological question formulation, and in his aforementioned critique of Tönnies stressed that no "community" abolishes individuality, that the manner of participation in the collective varies from individual to individual, and that the objective sociological meaning of the group does not have to coincide with the subjective

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[117] In relation to that: Schwartz, "Size", p. 245.
[118] Jacobson, "Scale", esp. p. 192ff..
[119] Cf. König, „Begriffe", p. 405ff.

meaning which the group has for every one of its members[120]. Newer studies (or investigations), which can look back at the, in the meanwhile, available results of ethnological research, clearly confirm the finding that personality comes into existence neither suddenly on the basis of the specialisation of status inside of complex societies, nor does the proliferation of existing individuals amount to a widening of the spectrum of the personality types; the differentiated I does not so much as even disintegrate inside of the seemingly absolute group solidarity of the religious cult (collective or group), which, on the contrary, offers an opportunity for the development of individual styles[121]. Individual rational calculus (i.e. calculation), as well as "free-rider" strategies, develop within traditionalistic "communities" no less and not otherwise than anywhere else; the same applies to the formal-sociological and psychological aspects of power relations and power games, whose since long ago attested refinement and intensity can hardly be reconciled with idyllic representations of the allegedly unanimous-peaceable "community"[122]. The thereby determined internal variety of form of the "community" makes its boundaries or differences vis-à-vis "society" just as fluid, as it creates boundaries and differences between the individual (or separate) "communities", so that a historically and sociologically meaningful use of the term appears to be impossible. The term "community" spans all "pre-modern" or pre-industrial collectives, so it is called on to conceptually and structually be of use for social formations which differ fundamentally from one another – from primitive tribes and ancient slave societies to West European feudalism and "oriental despotism"[123]. Amongst all these formations on the one hand, and

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[120] *Gestalten*, p. 24ff..
[121] Schwartz, "Size", pp. 251, 250.
[122] Badie, "Community", p. 102ff.; Busino, "Critique", p. 243.
[123] Badie, "Community", pp. 99-101.

"industrial society" on the other hand, a dividing line can be drawn, but this can only happen on the basis of a single criterion, which by no means concerns the core of the social, or the social in itself and in general, as the evolutionists of differentiation directly or indirectly (want to make us) believe. Accordingly, "community" and "society" are equally incapable of constituting an objective model for the social-theoretical structuring of human relations, or a steady yardstick of periodisation in respect of history.

In view of the renewed impact of Durkheimian thought on contemporary social theory, a pointing out does not appear to be superfluous that the Frenchman's basic sociological concept is through and through under the influence of Tönnies's dualism, despite the attempt at neutralising the ultimately economically determined tensions pertaining to the division of labour inside of "society" through the imposing of a "community-related" ethical-religious element. It remained the case nevertheless, in the course of this, that Durkheim essentially assessed "society" optimistically, and propped up this assessment with a contradistinction of the same society with a perfectly unhistorical image (or picture) of the "community". As is known, the contrasting of "community-society" appeared to him as the contrast between "mechanical" and "organic solidarity", in relation to which undifferentiality (i.e. an undifferentiated property (quality or nature)) ("similarity") or differentiality (i.e. a differentiated property (quality or nature)) ("dissimilarity") serves as a central distinctive (i.e. distinguishing) feature (or characteristic). The concept of differentiation is however also used here undifferentiatedly and polysemously (i.e. ambiguously). Because it is not explained whether "similarity" within mechanical solidarity means regular (proper or real) identity, whether it refers to man as a whole or merely to certain values and acts, whether it

comes about through external coercion or spontaneously. Likewise, with regard to organic solidarity, it is overlooked that for instance in the contractual relationship both similarity (the parties to the contract are in principle put on the same level), as well as dissimilarity (every party to the contract keeps in mind his own (self-)interest), must exist side by side. The existing side by side or existing inside of each other of similarity and dissimilarity can be ascertained in all social groups known to us, whereas the "horde", which according to Durkheim embodied mechanical solidarity in pure form, constitutes a pure abstraction; had Durkheim's notion of the "horde", by the way, been able to function as mechanically as Durkheim wanted to suggest, then it would have to have been classified within biological rather than social phenomena, whose collective consciousness cannot be imagined without individual consciousness[124]. Durkheim admitted in passing that the unisegmental horde eludes direct historical observation and only can be described structurally by means of the study of polysegmental social groups[125]. Yet Durkheim did not want to noticeably water down the fundamental contrast between both forms of solidarity, and the reason for that becomes apparent if we bring to mind his overall concept. The assumption that mechanical and organic solidarity were always interwoven with each other in the history of social groups until now would have taken the edge off an evolutionism which revolves around the idea of the transition from one to the other (i.e. from mechanical to organic solidarity). And this transition is again all the more ardently expected, the higher the ethical-normative expectations connected with organic solidarity, which on the quiet is transformed from a social fact to a moral demand for justice[126].

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[124] Gurvitch, *Vocation*, I, p. 215ff..
[125] *Règles*, p. 82ff..
[126] The logical leap was noticed early on, see e.g. G. Richards's objections cited by St. Lukes, *Durkheim*, p. 500.

Consequently, in Durkheim's example, the interrelation, having an effect until today, of the antithetical pair of concepts "community-society", with a perception pertaining to the philosophy of history, and at the same time with an ethical-normative matter of concern (or purpose), becomes particulary graphic.

5. Mass-democratic social theory and anthropology

The deeper reason for the often, also programmatically, declared farewell of mass-democratic social theory to the classical anthropological question formulations lies in the paradigm shift, which took place in essence around 1900, and brought about the replacement of the synthetic-harmonising thought figure with the analytical-combinatory thought figure[127]. In terms of content, this paradigm shift primarily meant the smashing of the substantially (i.e. as regards substances) comprehended hypostases of the bourgeois world theory (i.e. world view), namely of Nature, of History and of Man; hypostases, which since the Renaissance were set against the theological world image. To the extent that the bourgeois image of man and bourgeois anthropocentrism, together with their ethical-normative connotations, faded, interest in the, connected with that [bourgeois image of man etc.], anthropological examination of problems atrophied too, although this anthropological examination of problems did not in the least disappear from the scene, and even could be continued in a framework and sense which was no longer bourgeois; because the mass-democratic thought figure has, as we noted at the outset, been able to monopolise for itself the spectrum in the history of

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[127] Kondylis, *Niedergang*, regarding the anthropological question in this context see esp. pp. 30ff., 80ff., 135ff., 289ff..

ideas just as little as every other predominant ideology of the past. Moreover, the concept of anthropology was used in some cases indistinctly and in content-related contexts which stood right at the antipodes of the old contexts. Thus, so-called cultural anthropology, as it was popularised for instance by Ruth Benedict or Margaret Mead, aimed originally at breaking up everything which gave the impression of an anthropologically inherited constant, into cultural influences. In this way, many unilateralities (or one-sidednesses) or coarsenesses of the conventional (or traditional) anthropology of drives, of Reason and of races, were of course shown in their true light. Yet in the process, the mark was widely overshot, and that which was now called anthropology was hardly to be distinguished anymore from vulgar sociologism, which by the way is also a genuinely mass-democratic ideological phenomenon: just as the old notion of social hierarchy was frequently justified by means of anthropological fictions, so mass-democratic egalitarianism sought backing in respect of the assumption that humans constitute the resultants of their social conditions, that is, equality amongst humans could already be guaranteed through the equality of conditions.

A second, more specific reason for the suppression of classical anthropological question formulations in the mass-democratic context has already been hinted at[128]. In the endeavour to instal guarantees of ponderability and stability in social-theoretical constructs, which are supposed to describe, or legitimise in terms of the philosophy of history, modern complex societies, disturbances (disruptions or disorders), where possible, are excluded, which all along were blamed on man's dark and uncontrollable "drives (urges)" and "passions". And since one, on the other hand, cannot build on an unadulterated and all-embracing

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[128] See footnote 8 above and the corresponding passage in the text.

anthropology of Reason without completely turning one's back on the realities of this world, the solution is sought in the putting aside of anthropology as such and in general; where anthropological factors continue to be brought into theoretical play, it is a matter of economistic or behaviouristic narrowings (shortenings, curtailments or reductions) (see below). Now, as soon as the exclusion of anthropological question formulations at the level of the social-theoretical construct has seen to the dispelling of the imponderabilities of human behaviour, only a single step remains to be taken for the safeguarding of ponderability at the level of complex society: the (direct or expected) identification of the construct with social reality. Where humans behave for instance in the sense of "system rationality" or according to the communicative logic of language, as these are described in the social-theoretical construct, there a particular knowledge about man is actually unnecessary (or superfluous).

In relation to both these complementary reasons for the decline of anthropology in the framework of mass-democratic social theory, the following considerations seem appropriate. First of all, it is obvious that the aforementioned paradigm shift, which put an end to bourgeois anthropocentrism, is of an ideological character; it therefore may not serve as the starting point of a scientific argumentation. That means: an argumentation, which, with reference to the end of anthropocentrism, would demand the putting aside of anthropology, would a limine be false. Because anthropocentrism, anthropology and man as a historically-socially acting being constitute three different magnitudes; the elimination of the first does not have to mean the elimination of the second, and the elimination of the first two (at the level of ideology or of social theory) can in no case mean that man in actual fact ceases to exist. Formulated differently: the beginning and the end of anthropocentrism do

not coincide with the beginning and the end of anthropology, and the end of anthropology, i.e. talk of man, cannot be the end of man, just as man has not taken his beginning from anthropology. There were, and in fact are, always only humans, who pursue (or are involved in) or abolish anthropocentrism or anthropology – and a scientific theory, which wants to take into account this fundamental fact, must argue anthropolgically in a comprehensive (or broad) sense, that is, thematise man (i.e. make man a subject of discussion) in respect of his action and his motivation (also in his quality (i.e. characteristic) as author (or originator) of theories about the value (or merit) and anti-value (or demerit) of anthropocentrism and anthropology). The necessary social-ontological depth is therefore reached when the perceptions of humans on the value (and status) of man and his objective doing (i.e. acts) are distinguished very thoroughly and it is ascertained that the latter [objective doing (i.e. acts) of man] are more stable and more homogenous than those convictions are; the base (or terrain) of practical or theoretical doing (i.e. acts) accordingly constitutes the base (or terrain) of the scientifically indispensable talk of man, that is, the base (or terrain) of an anthropology which can also account for all the respective represented (supported or justified) anthropologies or negations of anthropology.

This position can, with regard to the great trends (or outlines) or phases of the European history of ideas, be concretised as follows. If in a society a theocentric ideology predominates, then this does not mean that God Himself reigns here, but that humans, who legitimise their deeds (or acts) by invoking God, prevail; anthropocentrism, for its part, does not take the place of theocentrism because humans now for the first time commandingly walk onto the stage of history (on that stage stand always only humans and nothing else), but because certain humans, by invoking

"man", drive out those who until then laid claim to God; and the decline of anthropocentrism does not mean that there are no humans (in the hitherto sense) anymore, but that the world-theoretical stance of those humans who act decisively in the ideological field, is no longer anthropocentric, that, therefore, the champions of anthropocentrism have lost the decisive battle. Scientific anthropology draws its legitimacy from the ascertainment that irrespective of the, on each and every respective occasion, dominant perceptions on man's position (standing or place) in the cosmos (or universe) and on anthropology's theoretical usefulness, the constitution (or nature) and the behaviour of the creators (authors or originators) and representatives of all these different perceptions exhibit certain uniformities, that, therefore, the forms of the said creators' thought and action diverge from one another far less than the content(s) and the concrete practical aims. That is why it does not constitute a paradox if one considers social theories, which want to little or not know of anthropological question formulations, to be symptomatic stances of humans in a concrete situation in the history of ideas, whose ideological character manifests itself in the performative contradiction of summoning, for the putting aside of anthropology, forms of (theoretical) action which in other situations are able to serve even opposing aims[ii].

Aversion to the insight that humans and their acts lie at a deeper level than their anthropological or anti-anthropological perceptions, is actually much more frequent and much more widespread than the postmodern uprising (or rebellion) against anthropocentrism and against anthropology as science. It takes root in the ideological-polemical need to anchor normative positions, which in the final analysis can have meaning only in relation to humans, in higher and more comprehensive authorities, whose objective constitution (or composition) sets as narrow as possible limits

on (or boundaries around) human imponderability, while the ponderability of the world and of society correspondingly rises. The polemical component consists in that these normative positions, and the "objective" authorities bearing these normative positions, come into being as counter concepts and often as downright conceptual reversals of earlier concepts. The age of theocentrism defined God as the authority before which the imponderability of concrete man had to stop – either through his conscious subjection to divine commandments or, by contrast, through the absolute prospectlessness (or futility) of an uprising (or rebellion). But also the epoch of bourgeois anthropocentrism typically avoided as far as possible leaving concrete man to his own uncontrollable preferences (or predilections); bourgeois anthropocentrism therefore demanded him to live in accordance with the commands of supra-human hypostases, namely Nature or History. Bidding farewell to anthropocentrism and at the same time to anthropology gave rise to new authorities inside of mass-democratic social theory. The said new authorities functioned, as it were, as stream (or river) beds that could channel human action all the more easily as this time they did not have to go into the reasons and depths of the same human action; "system rationality", frictionless communication laid out on the structure of language, reasonable (or prudent) economic calculus (i.e. calculation) or the behaviouristic symmetry of stimulus and response, were now supposed to ensure ponderability in the same sense as formerly god-willed or nature-conforming behaviour did.

Behind the facade of all these past and present constructions, however, concrete humans stir in their endless variety of form, in the imponderability (or incalculability) of their action and the uncertainty of their action's consequences. These irreducible facts of the matter can of

course be largely discarded through rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification), but every social theory some time or other has to stumble over these irreducible facts' effects, and then the question is directly or indirectly posed as to what then might these beings be, which have persistently disregarded the numerous representations of, and proposals for, harmony, in history until now. Anthropologising (or talking about man) remains inevitable, even if anthropology is forced into abdicating [its power and pre-eminence in (social-scientific) theory]. The age of anthropocentrism, when Pope opined, "the proper study of mankind is man"[129], understandably provided anthropology as a discipline certain opportunities. An anthropology, though, had already developed in the womb of ancient ontology (we remind ourselves for instance of the Platonic parallel between the strata of being (Is) and the strata of the soul), whereas the theology which came later had to likewise acquire an anthropology with the intention of making understandable what drives humans to the violation of the harmony of the Good. But mass-democratic social theory too does not in actual fact make do, despite its in principle repudiation of anthropology, without (tacit) anthropological premises and assumptions. Between the inevitability of these latter (tacit) anthropological premises and assumptions and the adhering to that repudiation of anthropology, an internal guerilla war takes place, which can never end in peace. One often believes in having already disposed of anthropology because one can, without major losses and complications, do without the old anthropology of drives (urges) and of Reason; already in regard to calculating or ethical rationality, however, things become

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[129] *Essay on Man*, II, vol. 2. In relation to the presuppositions of Enlightenment anthropology see Kondylis, *Aufklärung*, p. 421ff., cf. p. 119ff..

much more difficult, since this calculating or ethical rationality, without sufficient anthropological underpinning, hovers in the air.

Cybernetic systems theory already offers a good example regarding the use of positions of anthropological origin in relation to key theoretical points, despite the simultaneous rejection (or repudiation) of anthropological matters of concern in social theory. Contradiction of course characterises the cybernetic approach overall, because the striven for (or pursued) unification of the ontological and cognitive levels occurs here with the use of a conceptuality which came into being in relation to the human social world, and is stricto sensu suitable only for this world. Already in connection with "biological systems" (let alone in connection with physical systems) the use of concepts like "information", "communication" or "selection" gives rise to disconcertment, and of necessity gives the impression that overall reality will be apprehended anthropomorphically, although ontological pre-eminence (or paramountcy) was withdrawn from man. This may also be expressed as follows: anthropocentrism could be dispelled only with the help of a comprehensive anthropomorphism.

As we know, cybernetic systems theory persistently makes use of an argumentative artifice: it appropriates content(s), which originally arose from other intellectual approaches, in order to then translate the said other intellectual approaches into its own vocabulary, and it makes them out to be a gain in knowledge which is due to its own intellectual approach. That applies just as much to anthropological content(s) and not least of all to the central thesis that system is reduction in complexity. In Germany, the proximity of this thesis to Gehlen's anthropology and ideology of the relieving of (or relief from) the tension of existence (or (undirected)

instinctual drives) was noted[130], yet a German systems theoretician in the 1960s did not have to have recourse directly to Gehlen, since he could draw from the American versions of cybernetic systems theory. Nonetheless, the as far as possible structural similarity of both perceptions is not at all accidental. Because the founders of cybernetics themselves started from a question formulation which readily may be described as epistemological (or pertaining to the theory of knowledge) and anthropological – hence also the aforementioned anthropomorphic features of their constructions. In search of analogies between systems transmitting (or transferring) and processing information in (human) organisms, and, in machines, they formulated, on the basis of observations about the central nervous system, the principle called "the hypothesis of cybernetics". This principle has to do with the mechanism of "negative Feedback" as the capacity (or ability) to use "inputs" in such a way that "outputs" are delimited and regulated with regard to the attaining of certain aims[131]. Here original capacities (feats, achievements or performances) of selection and of orientation, of processes of information and of knowledge, are mentioned, and consequently the threads of an epistemological and anthropological tradition are taken up, which with regard to the here relevant period of time was founded by early neo-Kantianism (Lange) and thereafter by Nietzsche, in order to then, partly via pragmatism (meaning as plan of action in James) and Bergson, partly irrespective of them, lead into the anthropologies of Scheler, of Plessner and of Gehlen. This tradition developed in variations, at times complementary, at other times diverging from one another, the

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[130] Schelsky, „Rechtssoziologie", pp. 41, 57ff..

[131] See Ashby's pioneering articles, "Adaptiveness" (1940) and Rosenblueth-Wiener-Biegelow, "Behavior" (1943). At the same time Lorenz worked out, on the basis of partly Kantian, partly pragmatistic presuppositions, the ratiomorphic capacities (feats, achievements or performances) of selection and of orientation of the central nervous system, see „Die angeborenen Formen" (1943). Cf. footnote 38 above.

general theory that man must, as a non-instinct-bound and open-to-the-world being, convert the objectively chaotic variety of form (or multiformity) of the world into subjectively ordered and controllable complexity, in order to thereby gain that ability at orientation which he as an acting being needs and cannot take (or gather) from his biological equipment. The necessary process of selection and of endowment (or provision) of meaning is supposed to take place at several levels, from the primary sifting (or examination) of the perceptible (discernable or cognisable) (e.g. said in Kantian terms, through the forms of perception (or viewing) and the categories of understanding (the intellect or mind)), to organised world images, social institutions, ethics etc.. Cybernetic systems theory's core theses, whatever the mediations, take root here: systems are clippings (i.e. parts or sectors) of a complex world and as such are constructed for the purpose of the preservation of their own continued existence; meaning constitutes the strategy of selective behaviour (choice from the wealth (abundance or plethora) of the possible) offered for the construction of the system; experiencing (or going through life) and action merely represented the various kinds of meaning-like (meaning-bearing or purposeful) reduction in complexity.

The particular stressing of the psychical functions of stabilisation and of the relieving of (or relief from) the tension of existence (or (undirected) instinctual drives) in the German version of systems theory of course directly reminds one of Gehlen and his teaching (or theory) of institutions, when e.g. it is postulated that in the social system "for the normal case, an unquestioned, in fact almost motiveless accepting of binding decisions must be secured"[132]. However, the extent of the intellectual(-spiritual) loan does not interest us here, but a basic aporia

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[132] Luhmann, *Soziol. Aufklärung*, I, p.170.

(i.e. doubt, contradiction or paradox), which is inherent in both systems theory as well as Gehlen's teaching (or theory) of institutions, exactly because of their common background outlined above. Two forms and strata of stabilisation relieving the tension of existence (or (undirected) instinctual drives) are confused as between each other or not distinguished from each other through selection and the endowment (or provision) of meaning, namely the anthropological, and, the sociological or historical forms and strata. The reductions in complexity at the anthropological level concern e.g. the constitution of the mechanisms of sense perception, and indeed have very much to do with the fact that man lives in society since time immemorial, but depends little, if at all, on each and every respective form of society (or social form). The same applies to the interactional routine in everyday relations, whose substance, despite all historically determined (or dependent) modification of the outer form (e.g. forms of greeting and of sociability), remains more or less stable. Institutional, political, economic, world-theoretical etc. reductions in complexity and stabilisations relieving the tension of existence (or (undirected) instinctual drives) are, however, subject to comparatively much faster change, which is due to the incessant displacements (or shifts) in the spectrum of the social relation, and moreover such change knows radical changes (alterations or modifications) and even downright reversals. Mechanisms of sense perception and interactional routine cannot, in other words, suddenly change into their opposite, but exactly this was often the case at the last-mentioned level – the level of history in the broadest sense. In history there are therefore no anthropological guarantees of stability. The lack of distinguishing between these levels makes Gehlen's anthropological schema historically or sociologically largely unusable, and precisely for the same reason cybernetic systems theory too cannot advance to

illuminating historical-sociological specific features (or characteristics), but it uses the most general, ultimately anthropological categories, in order to describe a certain social system (the present-day Western social system), whose self-description it wants to be[133].

The unwanted (or unintended) proximity of systems theory to anthropological question formulations is not exhausted though in the central theme of the reduction in complexity and of the creation of mechanisms of the relieving of the tension of existence. Despite all wishes and all endeavours to be permanently prepared for (or geared to) the world of control (or steering) mechanisms giving information feedback, and to drive out the "subject", one cannot get around the indirect admission that concepts like e.g. "meaning" can be pithily used only in conjunction with the "peculiar-human capacity for (or ability at) negation", and more generally with those "anthropologica (i.e. anthropological features)" ("consciousness or Reason"), which are "common to psychical and social systems"[134]. Likewise, the anthropological question emerges in the background when for instance social order is put down (or reduced) to the following principle: I do not let myself be determined by you, if you do not let yourself be determined by me[135]. It remains in itself extremely doubtful that balanced mutuality (or reciprocity) (i.e. mutuality in a state of equilibrium) brings about and supports (or bears) the social order, as a theory which a limine postulates equal constituent elements of an open system, must assert. But apart from that, an explanation must be given as to *what* is the being (or entity) which elevates mutuality (or reciprocity) to a princple: if it is not

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[133] See above Sec. 2. Cf. Giddens's apt (or well-aimed) observation: "a theory of routine is not to be equated with a theory of social stability" (*Constitution*, p. 87). This important question will have to occupy us again, see our discussion of the teaching (or theory) of institutions in volume 3 of this work.
[134] Luhmann, in: Habermas-Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft*, pp. 35, 308, 29, 28.
[135] Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, p. 167.

unconditionally left to the other, then something for itself obviously has to be feared and expected, in relation to which, in the spectrum of its fears and expectations, the spectrum of its possibilities is found again in the being with (i.e. co-existence with) others. As reflected self-reference in the relation with others, the (demand for) mutuality (or reciprocity) is specifically human, that is, it is to be apprehended anthropologically. For good reason, therefore, the structure of self-reference was thematised (or made a subject of discussion) and explained first of all in the framework of the "philosophy of the subject". Systems theory of necessity follows in the tracks of the philosophy of the subject and of anthropology when it makes use of the concept of self-reference, it of course lapses into anthropomorphism when it relates the same concept with the social "system". If societies seem to have self-reference at their disposal, then this occurs only because concrete humans, with regard to other acting humans, connect their action with meaning and justify (or found) this action through meaning, which quite often takes the form of a description, a critique or a legitimation of "society". That is why society's self-reference never turns out uniformly (or in a unified manner) and clearly (or unambiguously). There are a number of self-references (i.e. kinds of self-reference) simultaneously, and the correlation (or constellation) of forces decides which of them will prevail (or assert itself), while at the same time, as already stressed, the prevailing may never be understood as an absolute ideological monopoly, not even under a "totalitarian dictatorship". If a social theoretician speaks of "the" self-reference of society, then he has picked one amongst several such self-references (i.e. kinds of self-reference), or he himself has devised one. Thus, the systems theoretician defines as self-reference of society that which fits in his thought schema regarding the evolutionism of differentiation.

Cybernetic systems theory can therefore imagine itself as assuming that it has left anthropology behind, because it has a simplistic notion of this anthropology. It namely reduces anthropology to long outdated substantialistic teachings of drives (urges) and of Reason, and then regards its own functionalistic stance (or positioning) as an automatic execution (processing, carrying out or dealing with) of anthropology – as if there were no theoretical alternatives and no precedents in respect of these alternatives in the history of ideas. Because, apart from the pioneering achievements, and from the implications, of the Humean philosophy of the subject, the programmatic eradication of the notion of substance from the anthropological realm took place by means of the paradigm shift around 1900, already mentioned several times; it suffices here to once more recall Nietzsche, and to refer to the psychology of Mach and of the Pragmatists. In an objective respect, it moreover is not proved, but merely asserted, that only a complete dissolution of subjects in the functions of intersubjective interaction can free one from the dilemma of having to choose between the primacy of the individual and the primacy of culture[136]. The announced theoretical reorientation was not borne out by any individual interpretations of concrete phenomena which would have gone beyond what also an undogmatic multi-dimensional way of looking at things could have produced (or yielded). And the suspicion that banalities are garnished here with pompous meaningless clichés is reinforced when e.g. the "substantialistic" perception of the subjects of action (or acting subjects) (its representatives are not named) is supposed to be refuted by the thesis that these subjects did not precede the system, but were formed only in the system[137]. Yet no-one has ever proposed the theory that humans are formed first in isolation as

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[136] Thus, Warriner, *Emergence*, p. 97ff.. Cf. Ch. II, Sec. 3c in this volume.
[137] Thus, Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, pp. 151, 155.

individuals and then take part in social interaction. Already the ancient topos of man as social being implied the anthropologically constitutive significance of intersubjectivity and of interaction. However, the ascertainment of this significance is not identical to the reduction of man to the sum of interactionally determined functions. Because one invariably comes across the biological constitution (composition, texture or nature) of man and across a (great) variety of psychical and other factors interrelating with man's said biological constitution, which must indeed develop through interaction, but *are* by no means functions of interaction. What lies beyond interaction can of course itself be interpreted "substantialistically" or "functionalistically"; that which lies beyond interaction, because of that, does not stop indicating the limits (or boundary) of the functional as interactive.

Cybernetic systems theory undertakes this anthropological narrowing (shortening, curtailment or reduction) in order to underpin the concept that the social system accordingly constitutes in general a functional network of interactions, and nothing more than that. A second narrowing (shortening, curtailment or reduction) is now necessary in order to ensure the smooth processing of the functions of this system. As we remarked[138], the theory of the "open" system had to again limit those free spaces which the putting aside of Parsonian normativism gave to the individual, through an increase in system rationality and through an individual rationality corresponding to such system rationality, in order to not let the openness of the system degenerate into imponderability. The theory and model of the system are therefore unified by the common assumption "that human behaviour must be explicated and understood in respect of the system's possibilities for rationality, and indeed also and precisely

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[138] See footnote 51 above and the preceding text.

when man does not consciously take hold of this possibility for his own orientation"[139]. Now "system rationality" does not absorb and use the whole of man, but that (rational) aspect of man which can bear a "social role". A unit of the system is not therefore the human individual, but the role as the "part" of the person which is active in an organisation or situation[140]. In more complicated terminology, this same thesis is then summarised as man does not belong to the system, but to the system's environment, i.e. he takes part in the system only partially[141]. This is actually the case if one exclusively keeps in mind the theoretical necessities of the construct "system". However, the question is posed as to the sociological and historical productiveness and soundness of this construct, if precisely that which does not take part in the system causes the system's internal tensions and determines its extent on each and every respective occasion. The aspect or part of the person, which may not appear in the sovereign territory (i.e. independent or autonomous field or sphere) of the role is indeed outside of the system as construct, however the said aspect or part of the person continues to participate in the shaping of social reality, be it while exerting pressure on the role from the outside, be it while changing the function of the role from the inside, and making the said role the representative (or delegate) of non-system-conforming needs and goals (ends). This in fact happens very often, since the component of the person situated outside of the role is no less social or socially related than the roll-determined component; identifying the role and the social with each other, in order to then supposedly contrast them to the purely individual, is sociologically and psychologically absolutely wrong. If one accepts this fact of the matter, talk of the "system" loses

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[139] Thus, Luhmann, *Soziol. Aufklärung*, I, p. 45.
[140] Boulding, "General Systems Theory", p. 205..
[141] Thus, Luhmann, in: Habermas-Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft*, p. 385; *Polit. Planung*, p. 36.

every succinct (or real) meaning. Certainly, one can continue to argue and assert, in terms of systems theory, that in the course of this, it is a matter of nothing other than a refixing of the boundaries between the system and the environment. However, precisely the arbitrariness (or randomness) or the permanent necessity of this refixing transforms the theoretical labour into an intellectual game and brings to light the infertile fictivity (i.e. fictiveness or fictitiousness) of the construct. The mistake does not lie in the (incidentally age-old) distinction between role and person, but in the inability at incorporating the tension resulting from role and person in the theoretical construction without fatal consequences for systems theory's said theoretical construction.

In view of this structure and this importance (or status) of the concept of the role inside of systems theory, it must be disconcerting when a systems theoretician, of all theoreticians, reminds us, against the theory of communicative action and against the possibility of communicative transparency asserted by the said theory of communicative action, of the mechanisms of self-love and of the passions having an effect in every communication, in order to conclude from that, that such a theory cannot do justice to man as a whole, but only to "the already, in respect of communication, doctored general [element] in man", from which an "artifact of communication" comes into being, "with which no man [can] identify"[142]. The objection is correct, but it comes from the wrong side. Because communication theory and systems theory resemble each other also on this point much more than they would like to admit it. So, like systems theory, which safeguards system rationality because of the fact that it drives out man into the system's environment, so too communication theory: this drives out man into communication's

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[142] Thus, Luhmann, „Autopoiesis", p. 374.

environment, while in the communication system only that part or aspect of man takes part which might best satisfy communication's mental, or above all, ethical-normative demands. Both perceptions therefore carry out a division of concrete man in order to theoretically privilege that part which enables man's inclusion in a smoothly functioning social whole. The old anthropology of Reason basically did not do anything different: it isolated Reason in man as his sole capacity (or ability) which could ensure the socially interesting general [sphere or element] against merely personal taste. It is structurally indifferent (or unimportant) whether the rational-general [sphere or element], in which man is supposed to be assimilated (or absorbed) by means of the, related to that assimilation (or absorption), suitable reduction, is the system and its rationality, or that communication which is supposed to ensue when language develops in accordance with language's supposed genuine essence. Such a language must absorb the individual subject in the same sense as system rationality does it; because a subject, which communicates ideally, is nothing other than the mouthpiece of language defined in this way.

Like systems theory, so too the theory of communicative action leaves behind anthropology, in respect of which it makes a conveniently simplified image (or picture), while at the same time basing itself on an unacknowledged anthropological postulate. Said more precisely: the theory of communicative action renounces anthropological concreteness in order to theoretically underpin ideals which can only have (continued) existence in connection with an abstract image of man. It is a contradiction in terms to speak out in favour of man's "self-realisation" as a social-ethical ideal[143], without having an idea (notion or representation) of that self which is meant to realise itself, i.e. without

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[143] Habermas, *Theorie des komm. Handelns*, II, pp. 150, 153, 162ff..

implying that the true nature of this self is, or at least can be, good, rational (reasonable) etc.. Because otherwise self-realisation would possibly lead to crime, and the first social-ethical concern would then not be self-realisation, but the disciplining of the individual. Whoever supports a view (or perception) of what is "good" for the individual and social living together (i.e. co-existence) (no matter whether "good" is regarded as self-realisation or disciplining), and puts forward corresponding proposals, must simultaneously support a certain view (or perception) of man, because the definition of "good" of necessity occurs with regard to the assumed constitution (composition, texture or nature) of man; something is good for someone only insofar as this someone appears to have been so and not differently constituted (or composed); in regard to rational humans as in regard to society, self-realisation therefore does good, however in regard to irrational humans, disciplining does good. The banality of the anthropological assumptions, on which the theory of communicative action is tacitly based, can, incidentally, be hidden behind the asserted primacy of speech structures and speech acts only with difficulty. These speech structures and speech acts are in fact divided by the theory of communicative action in accordance with specifically human modes of behaviour (strategic etc. action), and are even expressly loaded with good or bad intentions. This is e.g. the case when amongst the features (or characteristics), which are supposed to single out the speech acts of communicative action for attention, truthfulness is mentioned[144]. Truthfulness is, however, the conscious moral quality (i.e. characteristic) of a subject; a speech act, which has formed as a sentence and now exists independent of a subject, is neither truthful nor untruthful, but simply true or false.

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[144] Loc. cit., I, p.412.

Like systems theory, so too the theory of communicative action bases its renunciation of anthropology i.a. on a very deficient and confused perception of the history of ideas. The theory of communicative action polemicises directly against the "philosophy of the subject", yet simultaneously it gives the impression that the elimination of the philosophy of the subject would eo ipso amount to an elimination of every anthropology. However especially when one finds fault with the philosophy of the subject in that it starts from an isolated subject as bearer of ready (cognitive and ethical) aptitudes (or predispositions), which only stands opposite objects and is not first constituted in the interaction with subjects – precisely then one must take note that philosophical *anthropology*, at the latest since Feuerbach and Marx, had taken steps, with much emphasis, against this idealistic view (or perception); pragmatistic, but also German anthropology of the 1920s and of following years have continued, in various variations and under all respective various influences, the same trend (course or line) in the history of ideas. Instead of making the necessary distinctions, the theory of communicative action conceals these achievements of anthropology, and accordingly inflates the fiction of the philosophy of the subject in order to accommodate in it the most heterogeneous positions (Kant, Hegel, Marx etc.) and consequently to be able to attribute mainly to itself the dual service of the overcoming of the philosophy of the subject and anthropology[145]. This abstract schematisation of that which has to be regarded as the philosophy of the subject necessarily, however, entails essential theoretical mistakes. If the necessary and decisive assumption of

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[145] Habermas, *Phil. Diskurs*, p. 160ff. and passim. Where the author registers a step beyond the "monological approach of the philosophy of consciousness", as for instance in Heidegger, he immediately adds that the originator of this step remains after all attached to tradition (loc. cit., pp. 165ff., 179). With regard to other cases, he thinks that the proposed solution does "not seriously" lead beyond the philosophy of the subject (loc. cit., p. 94).

the philosophy of the subject consists in the primacy of the instrumental relation of a solitary subject with something in the objective world[146], then it seems as though, for the putting aside of evil in the philosophy of the subject, the turn of the subject from the object to (another) subject would be sufficient. However with that, the core issue remains unexplained: will the subjects meet as friends or as foes, that is, will peace or conflict result from the interaction? If again the meaning of the turn of the subject to (another) subject is exactly that the latter is not regarded as an object and mere means, but as an end (goal) in itself and bearer of human dignity, then one can arrive at the same result with means pertaining to the philosophy of the subject, as Kant had done it[147]. Even Reason's change of direction towards history's events (or processes) which reach beyond the subjective consciousness of the individual[148], by no means guarantees the overcoming of history's events (or processes)' subjectivity. Because the subjectivity of Reason does not lie in the fact that it remains captive of (or trapped in) the head (or mind) of an individual and does not perceive anything of the (subjective) outside world – this assumption is absolutely nonsensical and can only crop up inside of the outlined caricature of the philosophy of the subject – , but in the fact that Reason apprehends the world of objects and of subjects from the perspective of a subject and the said subject's concrete situation.

The general incompetence of the theory of communicative action in respect of the history of ideas is reflected in its inablity to determine its own position (or place) in the history of ideas. The theory of communicative action knows of the original "internal interrelation"

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[146] Loc. cit., p. 342ff., *Theorie des komm. Handelns*, I, pp. 519, 525.
[147] On the theoretical leaps and dilemmas of ethically inspired communication theory in general see in detail Ch. IV, Sec. 1Ebc in this volume.
[148] *Phil. Diskurs*, p. 69 footnote 4.

between the philosophy of the subject and the concept of Reason or of rationality[149], but it does not want to know that detachment from the philosophy of the subject makes a defence of the Enlightenment modern era, against the postmodern attack on Reason and rationality, hopeless[150]. The (bourgeois) modern era was per definitionem oriented in terms of the philosophy of the subject and anthropologically, and whoever deserts this terrain has already sided with the (mass-democratic) postmodern era, even if he thinks that the averting of the philosophy of the subject and anthropology is advisable exactly for the more effective founding of the modern era's ideals of Reason. The manner of the founding of the modern era's ideals of Reason carries more weight in the history of ideas than the content of that which is being founded, namely, the ideologically predominant thought figure manifests itself in the (manner of) founding. The theory of communicative action thus provides, irrespective of its conscious intentions and aims, an additional objective piece of evidence of the fact that the culture of the European New Times is irrevocably at its end. The praise for a postmodernist like Foucault because of his combating of the philosophy of the subject[151] remains more eloquent than the critique of him. Yet the said praise is given in vain. Because Foucault's thought is based on anthropological premises, although he is conscious of it just as little as Habermas. Some remarks about this are appropriate, because here the confusion of anthropocentrism and anthropology, of which there was talk at the beginning of this section, is seen particularly graphically.

In Foucault this confusion is connected with the demand for a new epistemological order which, through the driving out of man from the

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[149] Loc. cit., p. 95.
[150] Cf. Sec. 2 in this chapter.
[151] *Phil. Diskurs*, p. 306ff..

position of "souverain au royaume du monde", appears to be imperative: after the end of anthropocentrism, anthropology and in general that which one calls sciences humaines, can no longer be the basis (or foundation) of knowledge, that is, the fate (or destiny) of anthropology is tied up with that of anthropocentrism[152]. Now everyone, who strives for the clarification of the bases (or foundations) of knowledge and of science, must not least of all pose the question about *whose* knowledge and science we are dealing with here. Are there other subjects of knowledge than humans, and, does knowledge stop being human knowledge when it is pursued after the decline of anthropocentrism and when it no longer revolves around anthropological question formulations? Foucault's methodically (i.e. methodologically) and, in terms of content, highly dubious dealing with the history of ideas forbids him from asking such questions, or rather, it permits him not to ask such questions. In his analyses regarding the history of ideas, one closed thought structure abruptly follows another, without the mechanisms of the transitions being made clear. A more detailed treatment of the said mechanisms of the transitions of closed thought structures must nevertheless show that the replacement of a thought structure with another always happens in a concrete human and historical situation – and irrespective of the validity of the truth claims on each and every respective occasion – arising from and complying with the polemical needs and intentions of certain subjects which reinterpret (i.e. meta-interpret), modify or simply reverse an already predominant thought structure. The subjects are not absorbed by the thought structures, but they use them as intellectual(-spiritual) weapons and follow their (actually existing) inner logic only as long as an unbridgeable gulf (or gap) between the logic of logic, and the logic of

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[152] *Les Mots*, p. 359.

polemics, does not come into being. The incessant effect of the polemical component in its intrinsic binding (bond or relationship) with concrete subjects explains, in addition, the inner variety of form and tension in the picture (or image) of all epochs with regard to the history of ideas. While Foucault overlooks or suppresses the said inner variety of form and tension in the history of ideas as it pertains to the polemical component bound to concrete subjects, he attains (or gains) those simplifications regarding the history of ideas which he needs in order to cover up the permanence of anthropological motifs in the history of ideas as a whole, and to narrow (abridge or reduce) anthropology to the triumphant anthropological discipline of the 19th century, which was supposed to have had its systematic start with Kant (!) and was supposed to have ended the intellectual(-spiritual) dominance of taxonomy and language in the 18th century[153]. The symptomatic significance of anthropology already at the threshold of the New Times (Pico, Machiavelli, Montaigne etc.) does not come up at all, and the purity of the thought structures, which allegedly held the 17th and 18th century under its spell, is safeguarded by means of a dual mishandling of the material: the dismemberment of the work of individual thinkers and scientists, which is presented only from the point of view (or aspect) of what can fit in each and every overarching thought structure in question, joins the above-mentioned erasure of the variety of form in the history of ideas. A few well-chosen (or choice) passages are, in the process, cobbled together with great art in combining and improvising vis-à-vis epochal thought constructs (or systems of ideas).

One basic component of the mass-democratic thought figure in Foucault consists therefore in the declaration of war against bourgeois

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[153] Loc. cit., pp. 352, 353.

anthropocentrism and its anthropology. The other basic component appears above all in his later work and consists in the demand for self-realisation, which, as we know, even formulated in code, ends up in a certain image of man or presupposes the same such an image of man. In declared agreement with "present-day struggles" against the ruling forms of power (or power forms), Foucault typically enough wants to raise the same question as the supposed originator of anthropology, Kant: "who are we?"; with that question, he connects the aim of "bringing about new forms of subjectivity, while we reject the kind of subjectivity which was imposed on us for centuries"[154]. Foucault of course does not pose that question as a diachronically thinking anthropologist, rather he wants to know how it relates to the present-day historical moment. All the same: no reason and also no possibility exist in respect of shaking off a centuries-long ruling – and obviously harmful and dispensable – subjectivity, if no, until now, suppressed forces in man as genus (i.e. species or race) ("we") conflict with the said harmful and dispensable subjectivity. What is, therefore, in man treated like a child (or led by the nose) and held down (or oppressed), what justifies the highly evaluative (value-bearing or judgemental) statement that we have become "captives (or prisoners) of our own history"?[155] Foucault would have to go into (or take on) this aporia (i.e. doubt, contradiction or paradox) because he requires a new subjectivity not simply as a functionalistic sociologist and social engineer, who ascertains a gulf between conventional (or traditional) modes of behaviour and new social conditions (relations or circumstances), that is, between "psychical" and "social systems", and wants to remove this gulf, no matter with what signs (i.e. symbolism). On

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[154] „Das Subjekt", pp. 246, 250.
[155] Loc. cit., p. 245.

the contrary, he thinks in normative categories, and from the new subjectivity he expects emancipatory effects (consequences or results).

The individualist, who through consumption or in any other form strives after his self-realisation, is a characteristic type of mass democracy. Another, just as indispensable mass-democratic type is homo oeconomicus, who likewise appears in varying shapes (or forms) and suggests anthropological considerations too. That means: the (national) economists and sociologists, who see in homo oeconomicus the ultimate social unit, interpret his acts on the basis of anthropological premises. New discoveries are of course not made in the course of this. One continues to move in the framework of the elementary anthropology of early economistic liberalism, which however only made up one side of bourgeois anthropology as a whole; the other side was concerned with the ethical theory and with the ethical action of relevant anthropological factors. The anthropology of today's economistic social theory is therefore, already from its origin as regards the history of ideas, a narrowed (abridged or reduced) and one-dimensional anthropology; it is not a matter here, that is, of a systematic perception of man, in light of which economic phenomena are then understood, but of partial anthropological ad hoc assumptions, which are meant to support the postulates of economic theory and economistic social theory. The indispensability of the anthropological accompanies the necessity of its narrowing (abridgement or reduction). The extent of the shifting back into the thoughts world (or ideological universe) of early liberalism is discernible from two further points of view. First, homo oeconomicus is of course supposed to be egotistical (i.e. selfish), but simultaneously rational. That means that egotism (i.e. selfishness) is not expressed in outbreaks of passion, which fight it out blindly, but on the contrary, that

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egotism is capable of being articulated as end(goal)-rational (or purposeful(expedient)-rational) behaviour, i.e. of seeking the suitable means for the end (goal), and, in the process, for the sake of exactly this (egotistical) end (goal), of doing without short-term pleasure (or enjoyment). In its combination with rationality and the concept of long-term interest, egotism (i.e. selfishness) really serves the disciplining of the passions; interests are contrasted to the passions, and the social world becomes ponderable because the interests of egotists (i.e. selfish people), who constitute the social world, put an end to the imponderability of the passions. That, however, was a typical thought figure of the 18th century[156]. Secondly, the anthropological arguments themselves, which are summoned against the economistic interweaving of egotism (i.e. selfishness) and rationality, refer to much older debates; the similarity in the argumentation of course results from the logic of the matter, not from the accurate knowledge of the precedents in the history of ideas. Against the egotistical (i.e. selfish) man, one can in fact anthropologically, anyway, in principle set nothing other than the unselfish man, and competitive society interwoven with homo oeconomicus can be accordingly exorcised only through the notion of a new solidarity[157]. In the course of this, the room to move for various combinations and dosages of fundamental anthropological factors remains quite large, so that attempts at replacing unilateral rational egotism (i.e. selfishness) with more complex motivation structures cannot fail to materialise[158]. All of this is reminiscent, down to the last detail, of the debates of the Enlightenment over the value (and status) of self-love in moral philosophy[159].

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[156] Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests*.
[157] Thus, e.g. Etzioni, *Moral Dimension*.
[158] See e.g. Elster, *Cement*, p. 250ff..
[159] In relation to that: Kondylis, *Aufklärung*, pp. 381ff., 407ff..

But regardless of the background(s) in the history of ideas, and also regardless of to what extent and in what form the hard utilitarian rationality of homo oeconomicus must be watered down in view of the realities of action in psychical and socially complex situations, such investigations or statements bear witness to a waking consciousness of the relevance and the topicality of the anthropological[160]. Much endeavour to bring down (or cause the downfall of), or at least to shake homo oeconomicus came directly or indirectly though from the ethically motivated wish for the defence of the goodness and of the dignity of man, or, of the significance of the value-like(axiological)-normative for the constitution of the social. That cannot be our concern here. On the contrary, it is to be ascertained that economistic anthropology, in comparison for instance with Parson's normativism, exhibits the theoretical advantage of putting off (i.e. postponing) as much as possible the appeal to the effect of internalised norms[161]. What economistic anthropology in principal asserts is neither completely nor in all cases wrong, nevertheless, its pragmatic and theoretical gaps (i.e. deficiencies or failings) remain so large that it cannot support even a theory of the economy, let alone a general social theory. To the extent that its starting (or basic) theses are correct and analytically useful, this is not due to the use of the economic categories of rational calculus (i.e. calculation) and of utility (profit or use) maximisation, but conversely it is due to the fact that these categories represent an economistic disguise, though they also represent a narrowing (shortening, curtailment or reduction) and a banalisation (i.e. trivialisation) of anthropological factors of far greater scope. The distance between the inferable real content of anthropology and social theory, and, the theoretical range (extent or scope) of

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[160] See e.g. Lindenberg, "Homo Socio-oeconomicus", esp. pp. 728-733.
[161] Sciulli, "Weaknesses", p. 161.

economistic anthropological and social-theoretical constructions is seen, by the way, in the pressure under which the economistic theoreticians are to keep on taking hold of (grasping or expressing) the concepts of rational calculus (i.e. calculation) and utility (profit or use) maximisation. As the main representatives of the school formulate it, only a "broad" "rational choice theory" is capable of doing justice to the totality of human behaviour; the admission that the bearers of the rational decision are not necessarily conscious of their own maximising behaviour, and are also not always in the position to account for the said maximising behaviour, belongs to that rational choice theory[162].

That is, however, dynamite under the foundations of economistic anthropology. Because it cannot be precisely determined how far the broadening of economistic anthropology's original concepts may go, without it raising the question as to why then such concepts, of all concepts, should serve as the theoretical starting point, and not for instance concepts which could be taken from the areas in which the broadening took place, should these have proven to be just as capable of broadening in the reverse direction. Were the behaviour of the members of society in which Wall Street's stockbroker lives, and the behaviour of the members of society in which for instance La Rochefoucauld lived, to be explained on the basis of one and the same egotistical (i.e. selfish) anthropology, then it is incomprehensible why the conceptuality of the former has to be preferred to that of the latter – unless one presupposes that which one should prove. The inclusion of the dimension of unconscious motivation in the anthropological way of looking at things bears out this suspicion and in addition lessens the declarative force (or validity) of "rational choice theory", which can draw its character of a

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[162] Becker, *Economic Approach*, pp. 8, 7.

model, and its clarity as interpretation of acting (i.e. action), only from the fact that in "rational choice theory" the level of motivation and of calculus (i.e. calculation), and the level of the course (or sequence) of acting (i.e. action), are hardly (allowed to be) distinguised from each other. That means: the texture (or composition) of motivation, and the rationality of calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by (self-)interest, become visible in the end (goal) rationality (purposeful or expedient rationality) of the external course (or sequence) of acting (i.e. action); between both said levels no gap yawns which would suggest anthropologically determined ambivalences. From this perspective, the possibility of end(goal)-rational (purposeful(expedient)-rational) action, with "irrational", i.e. non-economic motivation, and in instrumental dependence on this "irrational", i.e. non-economic motivation, is out of the question; "(self-)interest" disciplines a limine, by means of its rationality, the "passions", which do not make their presence felt anywhere in economistic anthropology's theoretical model. The paradoxical constellation (i.e. situation) is now this: since the transparency of the model is based on the (erroneously assumed) symmetry of end(goal)-rational action and rational motivation, the said transparency must become clouded by the (rightly intended) consideration of motivational interests, which go beyond conscious calculus (i.e. calculation). Yet should the "passions" have their say in the determination of "(self-)interest", then the concept of (self-)interest must be accordingly broadened in order to include, in terms of content, very different components, if one wants to carry on using the concept of (self-)interest as the key to an anthropological construction. Because the "passions" – understood as the epitome (or embodiment) of everything which may not be stricto sensu described as *economic*, i.e. utility (profit or use) maximisation oriented towards (or aimed at) acquiring material

goods – have their own rationality and their own rational calculus (i.e. calculation), as in fact their frequent conflicts with "interests" attest.

In the next section we shall see how economistic anthropology, in the roundabout way of a selective and in advance cleansed definition of (self-)interest, wants to get to grips with the question of political order. We shall now turn to behaviouristically inspired anthropology, which must be looked upon partly as the basis (or foundation), partly as the supplement, partly as a variation of economistic anthropology[163]. The main exponent of this direction has put the demand for a new anthropological consciousness (or contemplation) on a programmatic basis, while he reminded us that the general propositions in social theory before the rise of modern sociology were exactly propositions regarding human nature[164]. What matters now to Homans is to have recourse to this tradition, and against the ignoring of the kinds of law bindedness (determinisms or law-based necessities) of human behaviour (e.g. on the part of system functionalism), to re-introduce the anthropological way of looking at things in the form of basic psychological hypotheses, which are supposed to explain man's behaviour as man, i.e. as a being (or creature) of the genus (or species) (i.e. a human being), and not merely as a member of a certain society[165]. In the course of this, two things are taken for granted: that the rejoining (or reconnection) with the anthropological-psychological orientation of social theory must take place under the direction of modern psychology, and that this modern psychology can be nothing other than the behaviouristic psychology of the individual[166]. The particular emphasis on the individualistic starting

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[163] "The two are in fact largely the same" writes Homans with regard to behaviouristic psychology and "rational choice theory", even though he holds the former to be fundamental (or basic) (*Nature*, p. 39; "Commentary", p. 226).

[164] Homans, *Nature*, p. 35.

[165] Homans, "Commentary", esp. p. 231; *Sentiments*, p. 252.

[166] Homans, *Nature*, p. 36.

point is legitimised as a consistent declaration of war on the homo sociologicus in the Parsonian mould, who is supposed to be no less impersonal than the social institutions and systems supported by him[167]. Nonetheless, a much deeper relationship (or affinity) exists between methodological individualism and behaviourism, which is probably hardly known to the behaviourist, because the said deeper relationship (or affinity) springs from the, for him, invisible disadvantages of his psychological method. One can describe these invisible disadvantages as follows: the more man is looked at as an isolated individual, the deeper can those factors which are cited for the explanation of his behaviour be placed in his constitution (composition, texture or nature), the more, in other words, is the biologicial dimension overrated. Inasmuch as behaviouristic psychology is based, during the explanation of human behaviour, on the basic schema "stimulus-response" in this or that version, behaviouristic psychology actually refers to an existential stratum, which because of its depth, is found everywhere; hence behaviouristic explanations' claim to general validity.

The only question is whether the explanations at this deep level are social-theoretically usable and fertile, or whether the level of explanation must be raised considerably, so that the person explaining may set foot on the terrain of social theory and of history too. Homans, of course, has rightly stressed that the universality of human nature lies not in the assumption (or acceptance) of identical values on the part of all humans, but in the similarity of the effect of (different) values on human behaviour; the historian and not the behaviouristic sociologist is qualified (or competent) for the explanation of the particular and changeable

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[167] Homans, "Bringing Men Back In"; "Commentary", esp. p. 229ff..

content of values[168]. But through the separation of the level of behaviouristic sociology from the level of history, and through the acknowledgement of the autonomy (or independence), and at the same time of the indispensability of the level of history, our question is not answered; a gulf still yawns between both levels, which (i.e. the said gulf) came into being from the fact that the level of behaviouristic sociology was set too low (or deep) and consequently cannot be connected anymore with the level of history. With full acknowledgement of the sole responsibility (or competence) of historical research in accounting for each and every respective content of values through the analysis of concrete situations, an anthropologically underpinned social theory must go one step further than behaviouristic social theory and name (or identify) the factors which, beyond the uniformity of the behavioural effect (or impact) of values, determine (or cause) the change in content of values as such. The real coefficients (or factors) of this change must, in other words, be described and be sufficiently formalised (i.e. sufficiently rendered into forms), first of all irrespective of the historically ascertainable (or apprehensible) content of all respective values, but against the anthropological and (or) social-ontological backdrop, in order to be included in a comprehensive social theory. Behaviouristic social theory, because of its, of necessity, individualistic stance (or positioning), cannot grasp (i.e. understand) this theoretically decisive connecting (or intermediate) link between the level of behavioural uniformity, and, the level of history or of the concrete-unique [element]. Behaviouristic social theory confuses the (correct) demand for the return of social theory to concrete man with the (wrong) assumption (or acceptance) of the possibility of an adequate description of man as an isolated individual,

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[168] *Nature*, p. 41; *Grundlagen*, p. 112.

that is, it erroneously lumps anthropology or psychology and (methodological) individualism together. No doubt, concrete humans are individuals, but the individual must not constitute the counter concept of the social, if by that the social relation in its entire spectrum, and in its intersubjective mechanism, is meant. Especially, however, the spectrum and mechanism of the social relation illuminate central social phenomena like changes in values, before which consistently carried out behaviourism stalls (fails or breaks down) while it must postulate an unambiguous and permanent relation between stimulus and response. The character, fluctuations (or variations) or radical changes (or upheavals) of the social relation between concrete humans explain why now something causes unease which in the past was perceived as pleasant, why, that is, the aforementioned relation and the value perceptions (or notions of value) connected with it changed. The same character, fluctuations or radical changes explain how representations of value and anti-value (or merit and demerit), what is worth striving after (or is desirable), and what is to be rejected, come into being at all, whereas behaviouristic psychology can make only the repetition of an already rewarded, or the non-repetition of an already punished, response, not the first carrying out of an act (or action), clear, in respect of which the actor cannot yet know whether the said first carrying out of an act will entail reward or punishment[169]. And the same character, fluctuations or radical changes explain, finally, why the principle of marginal utility theory, according to which every new unit of utility or of pleasure appears to be less desirable than the immediately preceding one, applies only partially, if at all, in the realm of specifically human values; what is called satiety in the biological sense, usually makes sense without a second thought, yet satiety with

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[169] M. Deutsch, "Homans in the Skinner Box", p. 162ff., Ekeh, *Social Exchange Theory*, p. 121.

regard to glory (or fame), power, knowledge etc. can hardly be grasped (i.e. understood) in biological categories, particularly as here every new unit very often seems more desirable than all the previous ones.

The neglecting of the social relation in its anthropologically constitutive dimension by individualistic behaviourism makes this individualistic behaviourism, moreover, incapable of theoretically distinguishing satisfactorily, on the basis of the schema "stimulus-response" or "reward-punishment", the relation between subject and object, and the relation between subject and subject, from one another. This shortcoming, which even prevents a differentiated understanding of the mechanism of rewards and punishments, is by no means abolished because of the fact that the schema "stimulus-response" is handled (or dealt with) flexibly, that is, the individual constitution (composition or texture) and the interpretive activity of the subject are inserted (i.e. interposed) between stimulus and response. Because this flexibilisation of the schema can take place both with regard to the relation between subject and object, as well as to the relation between subject and subject, and that is why it in itself contributes nothing to the distinction (or differentiation) between the two relations with regard to each other. Be that as it may, the said schema "stimulus-response" attests to the theoretical narrowness of pure behaviourism and to its endeavour at overcoming this theoretical narrowness without open capitulation. The tacit capitulation is, however, conspicuous. When Homans e.g., despite the in principle use of the schema "stimulus-response", holds each and every respective outcome of the comparison between rewards and punishments to be open, since the said outcome depends on subjective ratings (i.e. evaluations), and when he, over and above that, frequently discerns during exchange a precedence of fairness (or justice) points of view vis-à-vis the stimulus of

material gain (or profit)[170], then he in actual fact puts the behaviouristic principle at the disposal of a subject not necessarily bound to the said behaviouristic principle; at the same time he puts paid to the theoretical possibility of a unification of behaviouristic, and, economistic anthropology, or the analysis of motivation, inasmuch as this economistic anthropology or analysis of motivation is based on the assumption that rewards and punishments can be measured (in money)[171]. One can, undoubtedly, constantly twist and turn that principle at will in order to prove its validity in all concrete cases; if the behaviouristic principle in question, nevertheless, loses the unambiguous and direct (straight or rectilinear) reference which it possessed during its first formulation, then there is no compelling reason anymore to use it as the basis (or foundation) of anthropological and social-theoretical conceptuality, unless – as in the case of the economistic version of egotistical (i.e. selfish) anthropology –, one postulates what one should prove. A behaviouristically inspired social theory cannot, in any case, attain a fairly reasonable (or passable) degree of complexity, if it does not smuggle, at every step of the way, into the behaviouristic schema of behaviour, mechanisms of symbolic behaviour. The relation between both perceptions [i.e. of behaviouristic and economistic anthropology] in respect of the course of behaviour is, however, not simply complementary, as the nonchalant eclecticism of behaviouristic social theoreticians wants to suggest. Whoever ascertains empirically that precisely the same things or acts (or actions) are used or perceived, one time, as rewards, and another time, as punishments, must also heed the theoretical insight that symbolic rewards or punishments are very often the reversal of the behaviouristically ascertainable (or apprehensible)

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[170] *Social Behaviour*, p. 76 and passim.
[171] Cf. Chadwick-Jones, *Social Exchange Theory*, esp. pp. 170, 175, 168.

rewards or punishments[172]. Conditioned and symbolic behaviour indeed exist closely together in the same subject; structurally, however, they are far apart, and their difference ultimately lies in the fact that man creates tools and symbols, as it were, out of nothing, whereas other animals can use at the most already existing tools and symbols[173].

The questions, which the economistic and behaviouristic approach have raised, will occupy us several times in this work[174]. Here the point was to track down the persistent effect of anthropological motives in this thought framework, and at the same time to clarify the reasons for the enormous anthropological narrowings (shortenings, curtailments or reductions). Economistic anthropology's recourse to early liberal ideas (or thoughts) is determined by the strong economistic orientation of mass democracy and the status of homo oeconomicus in the "society of the economy"; on the other hand, the invasion (or break-in) of behaviourism into this terrain points to the mass-democratic elimination of bourgeois anthropocentrism; because behaviourism has endeavoured programmatically to keep as small as possible, and or abolish, the distance between human and generally animal behaviour. Under these circumstances, a social theory underpinned sufficiently anthropologically could hardly flourish, although the objective indispensability of the anthropological was articulated here much more clearly than in the forced admissions or dogged refusals of systems and communication theory. Another source of anthropological consciousness (or contemplation) in social theory is the still living, but represented rather by strong reminiscences, sociological tradition, which put the concept of social action in the foreground – though without having drawn until now all the important theoretical

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[172] Abrahamsson, "Homans on Exchange", esp. pp. 281, 283, 284, 279ff..
[173] Ekeh, *Social Exchange Theory*, p. 106ff..
[174] See Ch. IV, Sec. 2D, and, Ch. V, Sec. 1D.

conclusions. It does not have to be specifically explained why the concept of acting (i.e. action), as it were, invites us of its own accord to an anthropology, why such concept of acting (i.e. action), at any rate, must be connected to an anthropology: the constitutive features (or characteristics) of (social) acting (i.e. action) point to just as many constitutive features (or characteristics) of man *as* man. Weber's very deficient social-ontological reflection as well as his personal interests drove, nevertheless, the theory of acting (i.e. action) in the opposite direction, i.e. in the direction of the investigation, having effective priority, of ideal-typically ascertainable (or apprehensible) institutional and other crystallisations of social action, as well as of (long-term) processes of acting (i.e. action), which were supposed to be illuminated by a certain typology of action. Recently, and under the influence partly of phenomenological and symbolic interactionism, partly through reformulations of psychoanalysis, an attempt was made to free (or release) the theory of acting (i.e. action) from its individualistic or intentionalistic unilateralities (or one-sidednesses), to enrich it through the analysis of processes of motivation and of rationalisation, and in this form to use it as the starting point or basis of an exacting (or sophisticated) social theory[175]. In the course of this, a rather rhapsodic juxtaposition of materials and theses emerged, which however, despite the ignoring of the especially anthropological question formulation, at least indirectly articulates the enduring need for the clarification of the anthropological components of social theory.

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[175] I am thinking, e.g., of Giddens, *Constitution*, chap. 1-2.

6. The political in mass-democratic social theory and in the constitution of the social

Since the formation of the modern European state, the far-reaching identification of politics and state became common, and it accompanied the contradistinction between the state and (in itself unpolitical, i.e. economising (or economic) etc.) society. The mass-democratic blurring (or effacement) of the boundaries between state and society had to therefore, against this background, amount to a theoretical weakening or even belittlement of politics and the political. The bourgeois-liberal contradistinction between state and society was, according to all indications, just like their mass-democratic interweaving with each other, a politically-polemically useful fiction. Yet in the contrasting between both thought figures, the real transition to the social welfare state (or state providing social welfare) of the 20th century is reflected. Now the state seems to be in principle in the service of society or of (decisive (or crucial)) social organisations, and accordingly politics is looked at as the extended arm of society, as a part or "subsystem" of the same society, which should be distiguished from the other parts or "subsystems" merely by means of its special functions. This belittlement of politics and of the political indeed becomes possible, as we shall see, only through a conceptual narrowing of the same politics and the political, namely through their reduction to an apparatus of government and that which moves in the said apparatus of government's immediate environment; nonetheless, the said belittlement and associated narrowing of politics and of the political is carried on programmatically, while attempting to keep the political and the social apart, and while making the social order

understandable with the help of "specifically sociological" categories[176]. Pride also encourages this basic positioning (or stance) in representing an independent (or autonomous), and at the same time overarching discipline, which, as it were, prohibits explaining as the constitutive principle of society something which, in accordance with the prevailing structuring of knowledge, makes up the object of another discipline. That is why today there is a sociology of politics, but no political theory of the social.

The turning away from Parsons, and the calling into question of the normative as the cement of the social order, did not lead to a consciousness (or contemplation) of the constitutive social function of the political, but to endeavours at solving the question of order either through constructions of the social on an individualistic basis, or through the concept of the open system, which took into account the individualistic approach and at the same time abolished this individualistic approach inside of "system rationality". In both cases, the theoretical strategy pursued ended up preparing or toning down the terms (i.e. terminology) of the question formulation in such a way that the desired solution results unconstrainedly from the premises set. So one of the leading individualistic approaches, i.e. the economistic, starts from the notion of a rational-self-interested individual as the ultimate sociological unit; the concept of (self-)interest, which is supposed to guide this individual, is however defined in such a way that it absolutely excludes a motivation for violent or deceitful (or fraudulent) action. The economistic model indeed puts forward the individual abstractly, i.e. as if the individual acts exclusively inside of an ideal market, in which violence, compulsion (or

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[176] Such categories are for Parsons the normative in contrast to the political or economic categories, *Structure*, p. 768. The «conscience collective» was for Durkheim, likewise, a specifically sociological category. Cf. Ch. II, footnote 241.

force) or deceit (or fraud) would be detrimental, since such violence, compulsion or deceit scare away partners in exchange, and consequently would sooner or later cause the social suicide of the villain. Where the contracting parties are and remain equally free, and where the market is constituted by equally and permanently free contracting parties, there the rational pursuit of selfish interests (self-interest) must certainly renounce violence or deceit (or fraud), since the said rational pursuit of selfish interests constantly comes up against the same freedom (and rationality) of the other [contracting party]. However, the so defined rationality of (self-)interest presupposes that nothing other than the isolated individual and the pure market mechanism may come into play. The thicket (jungle or labyrinth) of concrete social relations inside of which the poisonous herb (or weed) thrives, which always has a debilitating and sometimes fatal effect on the given social order, is evaded preventively. In spite of the assumed egotism (i.e. selfishness) of individuals, the social order is therefore theoretically rescued, on the one hand through the consistent atomisation (i.e. breaking up or fragmentation of society into individuals) of the social whole, and on the other hand through the disregarding of social relations in the broader sense. It should be added that economistic sociology shares this disregarding with the normative theory of order, despite all the difference in the premises. Because the fiction of the isolated egotistical (i.e. selfish)-rational individual must take concrete and multi-dimensional social conditions (relations or circumstances) into account just as little as personal temperaments, as the fiction of the all-round socialised man [must not take these into account too][177].

In its incapability (or incapacity) to cope with the problem of social order on the basis of its own specific conceptuality, economistic social theory

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[177] See Granovetter's excellent analysis, "Economic Action", esp. pp. 488, 493, 484, 485.

makes supplementary assumptions, which are then used tacitly as the foundation of the its theoretical construction. The most important amongst such supplementary assumptions may be that in the beginning there would be no governmental authority, but a consensus of individuals on individual rights[178]. How this consensus came about, and what guarantees its duration, remains dark (or obscure). Economistic social theory of course refers to existing social institutions, however these were supposed to, for their part, have come into being out of the same calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by (self-)interest which supports the market mechanism, so that a state of consensus on rights cannot be imagined before the pursuit of egotistical (i.e. selfish) matters of concern. Institutions are supposed to be socially beneficial because they are functionally, and in respect of the intellect(-spirit), in agreement with market-conforming behaviour. The question however is whether by means of (political) authority, protected institutions were created in order to prop up egotistical (i.e. selfish) behaviour, or in order to set boundaries (or limits) exactly in respect of this egotistical (i.e. selfish) behaviour in view of other social aims[179]. Generally, in the economistic social-theoretical context it is argued as though egotistical (i.e. selfish) economic activity, free of every political-institutional binding (or dependence), would essentially unfold no differently than under the more or less noticeable pressure of such a binding (or dependence), as if the said egotistical (i.e. selfish) economic activity, therefore, would readily compensate through self-disciplining for that which comes on the scene as external disciplining – or even as if that which seems like external disciplining basically constituted a (delegated) self-disciplining. Even in the case of an institutionally regulated self-disciplining, it must however

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[178] Coleman, *Foundations*, pp. 54, 170.
[179] Sciulli, "Weaknesses", pp. 171, 164.

be admitted that such institutionally regulated self-disciplining could not be concluded or canceled with the same easiness as a private contract, if there are supposed to be steady (or fixed) rules in society in general. The contract in itself, i.e. as institution guaranteed by (political) authority, is qualitatively something other than the contract in the sense of an arbitrarily concludable or cancelable agreement of arbitrary content between two arbitrary contracting parties. This difference applies a fortiori with regard to political-social institutions, in which the individual is born and which can assign to him in advance a status with which he is not at all content. The equating of the market and society wants to suggest that this state of affairs can be redressed through the proper (or right) use of calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by (self-)interest. This possibility though is not excluded, yet it existed also in societies which resembled anything other than an open market. Regarding the case of the unwanted (or unintended) remaining in a socially or economically inferior position, the economistic perception can indeed assert that subjection becomes imperative here because of egotistical (i.e. selfish) rationality, since rebellion would probably bring with it far greater troubles ("costs (or expenses)"). But the possibility of apprehending a political or social relation by means of the logic, or rather the vocabulary, of an economic calculus (i.e. calculation), not in the least lets one infer the consubstantiality of the political-social and the economic, and indeed against the background of the latter. The economistic social model must be based both on the assumption of calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by (self-)interest, as well as on that assumption of the in principle equality of the contracting parties inside of an open market. The theoretical invocation of calculus (i.e. calculation) cannot, therefore, serve to make plausible the actual lack of equality, without unhinging the economistic concept of the social order.

In relation to the view that calculus (i.e. calculation) accompanied by (self-)interest can constitute the mainstay (or foundation) of social order, a further remark is appropriate here. Obviously the dual and simultaneous channeling of this calculus (i.e. calculation) into general institutional regulations, and into individual undertakings, implies that not only at the individual level, but also along the line of intersection between the individual and the general or the social, long- and short-term interests do not necessarily coincide. At the individual level, the individual (or person) concerned can get by with this contrast (conflict or opposition) between long- and short-term interests without diverging stricto sensu from egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation); in the end, he continues to work for himself when he goes without his current pleasure (or enjoyment) in the expectation of a still greater pleasure (or enjoyment) *of his own*. Long-term (self-)interest does not, that is, stop being here individual (self-)interest. But the socially-institutionally defined long-term (self-)interest as a rule goes beyond, in duration and assertive force, individual long-term (self-)interest, which is why an entire individual life can pass by without the individual, who takes the supposed identity of social and individual long-term (self-)interest seriously and acts in unison with institutional commands, being able to arrive at personal (short- or long-term) pleasure (or enjoyment). In this case, egotistical (i.e. selfish)-rational calculus (i.e. calculation) must mean a decision in favour of individual pleasure (or enjoyment) at the cost of social (self-)interest defined one way or another, particularly as the individual cannot know about the period of time at his disposal. Egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation) is active (or operates), in other words, exclusively in individual, and indeed as far as possible, short-term undertakings, and it leaves the egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation) of others to be channeled twice (individually and

socially-institutionally). Then both aspects of egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation) turn against each other, and the social order goes to pieces when this happens to such a degree that it exceeds the daily, so to speak, normal anomie. Egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation) cannot, therefore, in its social-theoretically inevitable conceptual double-sidedness or conflicting nature, guarantee a sufficient cohesion (or unity) of the social order. This is of course seen by a number of sides, however the conclusion of the socially constitutive function of the political is hardly drawn. Instead of that, Parsons is either protected against economism, and a normatively loaded (or charged) concept of rationality is put in the place of egotistical (i.e. selfish) calculus (i.e. calculation)[180], or a middle way (path or course) is taken, i.e. normative factors are in fact revalued against "utilitarianism", and the achievements of the state for the maintenance (or upholding) of social order are acknowledged (which of course does not at all exhaust the social-ontological dimension of the political), however at the same time the theoretical question formulations are consciously concentrated on the "spontaneous mechanisms for coordination and cooperation"[181].

We shall linger over functionalistic systems theory a little while longer, because it also offers in this context the most complete inventory of mass-democratic commonplaces and ideological errors. Its teachings (or theories) about politics and the political do not, by the way, arise from its specific theoretical premises, but in reality they constitute a variation of the mass-democratic concept of the "society of the economy". The agreements with economistic social theory, which are partly indirect-conceptual, partly direct-notional, go correspondingly far. Conceptually,

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[180] See e.g. Bohman, "Limits", esp. pp. 221, 225.
[181] See e.g. Elster, *Cement*, esp. chap. 3-4 (revaluation of normative factors) and see p. 249ff.. Cf. footnote 158 above.

functionalistic systems theory has to do with (or comes under) the similarity between a market model, which is based on the extensive idea of several contracting parties with equal rights and who are independent of one another, and a systems model "without a top (or peak) and without a centre"[182], which does not want to allow any hierarchy amongst the subsystems; the idea of a central social authority is in both cases programatically dropped. And in both cases, whenever functionalistic systems theory requires a content-related description of society, the social superiority of the economic over the political is asserted: the latter is connected with "tribal patterns of behaviour", whereas the high degree of complexity, freedom of choice and learning capacity in respect of the modern economy fosters the cognitive element and consequently the rational shaping of society[183]. Under modern conditions "the state or politics" could not represent a "steering (control or management) centre of society", the political system constitutes merely a functional area or a subsystem (or part system) amongst several such functional areas or subsystems, of which no functional area or subsystem is capable of replacing or even relieving another functional area or subsystem; the attempt at going back to "old European traditions", that is, to make out of politics an ultimate authority responsible (or answerable) for everything, and to centre functionally differentiated society on politics, would bring about the destruction of politics; however such an attempt would today have few prospects of success since politics has, in the meantime, become so little sovereign that it can no longer determine which problems would be politicised[184].

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[182] Thus, Luhmann, *Polit. Theorie*, p. 22 (cf. the expression: "acentric societies without central organs").
[183] Thus, Luhmann, „Positivität", esp. pp. 198-202.
[184] Thus, Luhmann, *Polit. Theorie*, pp. 19, 23, 138, 155; *Ökol. Kommunikation*, p. 207; „Positivität", p. 201.

The reduction of the political factor to a subsystem (or part system), which is sociologically equal to the rest of the subsystems (or part systems), now means that politics is understood in the narrowest sense of the word, i.e. politics is identified with government and the state apparatus (or state machinery), whose area of having an effect should be separated and delimited just like those areas of having an effect of other subsystems (or part systems) too. With such an understanding of politics, the social-ontological question regarding the cohesion of society must of course remain unanswered, particularly when – despite the tacit conceptual and content-related putting first of the subsystem (or part system) "economy" – no subsystem (or part system) may in principle lay claim to social primacy; as the solution to the social-ontological question, the (different (or alternative)) description of society cannot, on the other hand, be considered through the notion of the system, because the "system" is postulated only (purely or merely) a limine. But even if we leave aside the social-ontological dimension momentarily, and remain with the narrow understanding of politics, not inconsiderable aporias (i.e. doubts, contradictions or paradoxes) crop up. The assumed equality and delimitation of the subsystems (or part systems) does not in fact in the least preclude [the possibility] that one amongst these subsystems (or part systems) could have at its disposal a broader area of having an effect than other subsystems (or part systems). Because equality can only mean the same indispensability for the constitution of the notion of the system (which is not to be confused with the same indispensability for system reality (or the reality of the system)), whereas the delimitation of the areas of having an effect does not express anything about those areas' relative magnitude, and also nothing about the possibilities of their mutual covering over (i.e. overlapping). Looked at in this way, the delimitation of a subsystem (or part system) can only mean that its

reaching (or extending) inside other subsystems (or part systems) can take place from certain (of course historically varying) points of view: the economy can considerably influence the art market, but hardly the aesthetic quality of the works of art, the government can (fiscally) burden the economy with taxes, but not triple labour productivity per octroi (i.e. per the tax, tariff or duty collected or funds allocated).

Already in light of such rather quantitative considerations, it can be indisputably ascertained, historically and sociologically, that politics constitutes the only "subsystem (or part system)" in which demands and challenges (or provocations) from all the other subsystems (or part systems) are addressed, and which can reach (or extend) inside all other subsystems (or part systems) from its own *specific* points of view. This fundamental constellation (or correlation (of forces)) has assumed, according to each and every respective institutional order, the most diverse and most different forms, yet the said fundamental constellation has characterised all polities until now. With regard to that, there is therefore no caesura (i.e. break) between stateless and state-organised, between pre-modern and modern societies. The chieftain and the boule (i.e. legislative assembly or council, or senate) of the Athenians, the Roman Imperator (i.e. supreme army commander and Emperor) and the Chinese Emperor, the absolutistic king and the modern sovereign parliament are indeed, as political forms of government, only parts of the corresponding societies, but those parts which can be called upon (appealed to or invoked) by all other parts for the most various of reasons, and which – no matter out of what motives and to what extent – feel answerable (or responsible) and competent both in regard to the behaviour or the state (or condition) of all other parts, as well as in regard to the relations of the same other parts with themselves (i.e. the said

political forms of government), and with one another (i.e. with the other parts of society). For the economy *as* economy it may e.g. not matter whether criminal bands (or gangs) or religious sects fight bloody battles, politics however must see to civil peace just as to the general state (or condition) of the economy – at least to the extent that the cohesion of the polity appears to be affected by that economy (in accordance with each and every respective dominant interpretation of the situation). It is true that society as such and as a whole does not make up a system capable of acting[185]. Nevertheless, the cause of that does not lie only in modern society's complexity. Societies were always incapable of collective action, namely, of the aim-directed (or purposeful) coordination of the subsystems (or part systems), as long as the political subsystem (or part system) failed to bindingly interpret society's will and to act in society's name (irrespective of whether the interpretation and the action were "correct" or not), and there is today no sign of the fact that the specific political readiness to speak in society's name in toto has become slighter than in other times. It is false to equate this readiness with the (by the way, silly) wish or endeavour to drive out or even to replace the other subsystems (or part systems) by means of the political, and for instance *as* politics to represent the economy *as* economy (see next paragraph); the said political readiness can only mean that the political subsystem (or part system) looks at and handles the rest of the subsystems (or part systems) from a specific political point of view. That is why a heavily interventionistic program, or for instance a program of implementing a planned economy, cannot be necessarily and from the outset deduced from the political readiness in question. Although the lack of desire for intervention can be *a* sign of political weakness, on the other hand it is no

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[185] Thus, Luhmann, *Soziol. Aufklärung*, II, pp. 80, 87.

doubt conceivable that precisely a strong political subsystem (or part system), from political points of view, leaves very large free spaces [for activity] to other subsystems (or part systems). The historical experiences do not, incidentally, allow a causal interrelation to be etablished between growing social differentiation and the weakening of the political factor (always in the narrower sense). The European New Times know, in any case, the parallel development of the centralistic state and of society increasingly being differentiated (or increasingly differentiating itself), and indeed both in the absolutistic as well as in the bourgeois age. Something analogous can be observed since decades ago in the so-called developing countries, where political centralism and interventionism actually becomes the motor (i.e. engine or driving force) of social differentiation[186]. And examples from the history of the 20th century, as well as purely theoretical considerations, permit the conclusion that also the reverse process, namely the sudden enormous dynamicisation of the political subsystem (or part system) on a highly complex social basis remains quite conceivable under certain conditions.

The seemingly disarming thesis that the politicisation of a complex modern society would destroy this society, basically constitutes a banality, which applies to all societies and with regard to every subsystem (or part system). No society could centre on a single activity, entirely regardless of each and every respective historically determined degree of interweaving of individual social activities with one another. The dogged effort at centring social life on aesthetic, religious, scientific or economic activity would not have a less devastating effect than the consistent claim of a monopoly of politics. The specific political point of view concerns the manner (or method) of the subsystems' (or part systems') coherence,

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[186] In relation to that: Smelser, "Modernization", esp. p. 273.

not necessarily the manner (or method) as to how inside of each and every resepective subsystem (or part system) the corresponding social activity is carried out. So-called "totalitarian" attempts, of religious or other inspiration, at comprehensively subjugating the various social activities to one sole point of view, can indeed lead to the reinforced (intensified or increased) control of man, but not to the abolition of the specific character of the corresponding activities. Even a deeply religious society must cultivate its fields, and it cannot replace tillage (or agriculture) with worship and prayer, even if prayers and ritual acts would constantly accompany agro-economic activity as such. The same applies to the other social activities, to say nothing of the personal activities, and that is why no "totalitarianism" and no "despotism" can be as comprehensive as they perhaps wanted to be in respect of their claim, or as they often appear to be in demonising descriptions. Over and above that, it is a purely fictive notion to thus interpret the evolutionistic schema of differentiation as though in the "pre-modern" past the lack of differentiation of the subsystems (or part systems) enabled a primacy of the political which is no longer applicable. In the hitherto described basic constellation, hardly anything has changed through the centuries despite the (great) variety of institutional forms. An "oriental despotism (i.e. despotic regime)" could and wanted to influence the production method (mode or manner of production), or the patriarchal institutions of the village community living under it, only within narrow limits, whereas the theoretical precedence of "politics", understood in Aristotelian terms, in the European Middle Ages did not at all exclude feudal fragmentation and local autonomy; phenomena of a refeudalisation on a highly technicised (i.e. high-technology) basis in modern mass democracies have just as little to do with a drastic change (or transformation) in the status and in the function of politics, but they interrelate with economic and

social developments, which pose the question of the cohesion of society on a new basis. However, this question remains, and with it politics remains too, particularly if no-one can know whether the material preconditions of the modern processes of differentiation will survive (endure, persist or remain) in the future or not.

Just as false is the deduction of a reduced status of modern politics from the fact that modern politics cannot determine which problems are (or will be) politicised. Here a constant feature (or characteristic) of the political is again made out to be the result of a specifically modern development, out of which then the fictive contradistinction between a weak present-day politics and a strong politics in the historical past comes into being. Yet the political and politics have not exclusively or even principally determined which problems should be politicised. Their specific area (or field) was and is the cohesion of society and the maintenance (or upholding) of the social order (always in respect of a binding interpretation of these terms (i.e. terminology) by a concrete bearer), but the political and politics have never been able to decide with which concrete question the in themselves abstract ideas of cohesion and of order have had to be connected on each and every respective occasion; as a rule it was the case that this question came from the non-political subsystems (or part systems), and the political subsystem (or part system) then took a stand in relation to the other subsystems (or part systems) in its own way and in accordance with its own setting of an aim. If a main source of such questions today lies in the economy, then such a main source of questions could have lain in times gone by for instance in theology; the new-times state did not e.g. cause the long religious wars, however it had to come to grips with the political questions of cohesion and of order posed in the course of the said religious wars, in its own

sense (i.e. in accordance with its own wishes or purpose) and in its own (self-)interest.

Behind the above-mentioned false argument is the perception that politics is necessarily connected with an, in terms of content, independent (or autonomous) ideology about politics or a specifically political doctrine (or teaching) of faith, so that the many times promised end of ideology in general must accompany the end of conventional (or traditional) politics. It is indeed asserted that the main task of the political subsystem (or part system) in the framework of the progressive (or advancing) differentiation of social spheres (im Rahmen der fortschreitenden Differenzierung der sozialen Sphären) is the reduction of social complexity by means of the law (and justice), and at the same time the extensive positivisation of this law (and justice), that is, the said law (and justice's) freeing from the premise of eternal validity and truth, and the handing over (or ceding) of the question of truth to science[187]. The assertion contains severe (intense or strong) shortenings (i.e. curtailments, narrowings or reductions) and distortions of actual developments (processes or events) in today's Western mass democracies. Positive law (and justice) in fact does not apply here alone and without connection to articles of faith which lay claim to ontological truth and supra-historical validity for themselves, that is, the said articles of faith of positive law (and justice) belong to the mainstays (or foundations) of the ruling ideology and as such make up the object of philosophical etc. investigations and rationalisations (i.e. as explanations or justifications), while at the same time they are also to the fore of juristic dogmatics (i.e. discussions of legal dogma). "Human dignity" and "human rights" constitute just as little truths which the social subsystem (or part system)

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[187] Thus, Luhmann, *Polit. Planung*, pp. 53ff., 58ff.; „Positivität", p. 198.

of science discovered and then put at the disposal of society, as for instance the doctrine (or teaching) of man as image and likeness of God, whose place the said "human dignity" and "human rights" took. The positivisation of the law (and justice) takes place at a logically subordinate level (or stage), at which the ultimate questions of the polity as regards meaning and identity are not posed, because at the level of premises they are held to be solved; essentially things are not different in respect of the Code of Hammurabi or in respect of Roman law (and justice). That area (or realm) of the law (and justice), which is seemingly or really indifferent to those ultimate questions, can be called postive law (and justice), its existence however proves nothing about the power and lack of power of politics, but only that a more or less greater part of the law (and justice), under conditions of social stability, can be seen as politically irrelevant. Moreover, this part of the law (and justice) can never incorporate in itself (or assimilate within itself) the entire area (or realm) of the law (and justice); as much as it may expand (or extend itself), it must remain outside of the ideologically sacrosanct place in which the articles of faith mentioned above linger undisturbed. And if positive law (and justice) in its indifference vis-à-vis ultimate questions seems relativistic and arbitrarily manageable, then this relativism only constitutes one side of the dualistic complex "relativism-universalism", which, as we know[188], characterises the ruling ideology in mass democracy. The consequence of the relativism of the content pertaining to positive law (and justice) should, in any case, be the formalism of a legitimation, which would be based on the mere following of (or compliance with) certain procedures. However, the formal (i.e. form-related or form-adhering) procedure and the modes of acting connected

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[188] See footnote 2 above.

with such formal procedure in themselves keep intellects(-spirits) (or minds) busy only when the essential content-related questions have found an acceptable solution for the socially decisive forces, when, that is, the material foundations of the social system appear so solid that a reference to the said material foundations of the social system could serve as direct confirmation of ruling ideological topoi (e.g. affluence as proof of the superiority of democracy). Should these foundations crackle, then the procedure itself becomes a content-related question, or else the content-related questions bluntly disregard all questions of procedure.

Systems theory can of course hardly, in accordance with its inner logic, get involved in a serious consideration of crisis situations. There is no mention of social and historical crises, or of crises caused by the internal contradictions of the system itself, which mess up procedures and institutional normalities. Only the possibility of a crisis is taken into account briefly and in passing, which, as it were, could from the outside befall the system should the ecologically understood environment again diminish the meaning of the system's internal differentiation. The question as to whether the political subsystem (or part system) would then master the necessary adaptation processes is merely touched upon and left unanswered[189]. The helplessness of politics inside of a highly differentiated system, which in the face of large problems as a rule only has "opportunistic strategies of consoling (i.e. feeding with hopes) and tolerating (enduring or putting up with)" to offer, is not supposed to be overcome by means of another politics, but by means of the modelling of society according to the pattern of the latest cybernetic models[190]. But precisely such an undertaking would depend on the farsightedness and the

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[189] Luhmann, *Polit. Theorie*, p. 24.
[190] Luhmann, *Sozial. Aufklärung*, III, pp. 290-92.

vigour of a political bearer, because during the said undertaking's carrying out, specifically political questions would have to be posed – and indeed the more emphatically, the more the reshaping of society would aim at remedying the mistakes and omissions of a bad or weak politics. Thus, the services of a central authority of self-reflection of the social whole would also be in demand, which however according to systems theory's view (or perception) cannot exist in highly complex societies, since in these highly complex societies only a variety of descriptions of society is possible[191]. The fallacy (or non sequitur) in this thesis can be discovered without difficulty, and it is connected anew with an untenable contradistinction between pre-modern and modern societies. In no society until now has there been, namely, a central authority of self-reflection which would have been acknowledged as such by everyone without exception to such an extent that every individual would have gone without his own reflection on society as a whole. Whoever speaks politically, that is, in the name of the whole of society, does not do it because he, objectively and consensually (or amicably) with all other people, represents society's central authority of self-reflection, but because he, amongst the various actors who make the claim of doing this, prevails (or asserts himself) or hopes to prevail (or assert himself) against weaker or stronger resistance, for a shorter or longer period of time, so that his reflection on society, i.e. his perception of society's cohesion and its order, is regarded as binding. The mass-democratic pluralism of world theories (i.e. world views) and of values in this regard does not mean a radical break with the past – unless one has of this past a very clichéd and one-dimensional notion in mind. Because the aforementioned pluralism constitutes, as we have already said, the other side of the ideological

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[191] Thus, Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur*, I, p. 33; III, p. 429.

confession of faith in certain universal values, and it in fact is *politically* justified exactly by invoking these universal values; thus e.g. by means of the familiar argument that pluralism brings one up (educates or trains people) to be tolerant and for the purpose of socially desired peaceableness. Seen in this way, value pluralism is not the negation of the possibility of the political, but, on the contrary, the ideological prop of a certain politics. Nonetheless, politics functions in highly complex society principally neither as the appendage of, nor as backing for, pluralism. Politics's main task consists in the supervision (or monitoring) of those knots (i.e. hubs) which hold the exceedingly fine social network together. A modern society is extremely vulnerable not because of its complexity in itself, but because of the dependence of this complexity on relatively few vital centres.

Finally, the political factor is mitigated (or weakened) or by-passed inside of systems theory through flight to (or taking refuge in) conceptual extrapolation and the historical future. This extrapolation and this future jointly bear the name of "world society" („Weltgesellschaft")[192]. Conceptually, systems theory needs world society because only an all-embracing system can provide a systems theory universal validity. However, one can play with constructions as one likes, and that is why the inner conceptual requirements of a social theory cannot provide the yardstick of the social theory's soundness. The offered real justification for the absorbing of "old-European" politics into world society interrelates, on the other hand, not in a specific way with the theoretical premises of systems theory, but it comes from age-old and still very widespread liberal thought. The economy is here looked at as the driving force of universalisation, and since political and statelike are

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[192] Luhmann, *Soziol. Aufklärung*, II, p. 55ff..

simultaneously identified with each other in practice, the disintegration of states inside of an economically unified world appears as the sufficient reason for the withering of politics. The logical and historical leap into this train (or line) of thought lies in the unproblematic, virtually vulgar Marxist deduction of the political constellation (i.e. conjuncture or correlation of forces) from the economic. But just as an economically homogenous collective or a nation does not necessarily coincide with a state, so too the concept of a world economy or world society eo ipso does not result in either the abolition of all states or the founding of a world state. With that, it is not in the least being said that the state in its new-times European shape (or form) is eternal and that a world state is historically or theoretically impossible. It is meant that even inside of an open world society the specifically political problem of social cohesion and of social order continues to exist, and in fact would assume an unheard of sharpness (or acuteness). World society and the end of the world of states would ensure the end of all wars only when the only form of war until now had been war between different national collectives. We know, however, also of civil wars, and we know that these are often still crueler. The only thing for which world society in itself can answer is, first of all, merely the transformation (or conversion) of all wars into civil wars. Accordingly, the task, inside of world society or a world state – should they ever come about – to prevent or to wage civil wars (according to the objectives of each and every respective political subject), remains an eminently political task[193].

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[193] The analysis of this segment (or paragraph) leads us to the threshold of the social-ontological discussion of the political. This social-ontological discussion is undertaken as an orientating sketch in Ch. II, Sec. 3C of the present volume, and in detail in Volume 2 of this work. On the question of the world state, see my thoughts in „Der Traum".

7. Outlook

The suspicion or accusation of ideology proves very little when it is expressed sweepingly and from the outside. In order for it to be substantial, the suspicion or accusation of ideology must be based on an immanent analysis which discovers logical and historical mistakes or gaps in a theory's fundamental assumptions. Should the analysis bring to light such mistakes, then these are traced back to either individual incapability and subjective biasses, or they spring from a (to some extent) coherent thought style, which finds expression, for its part, in a thought figure which displays central structural correspondences (or equivalents) with the (idealised) structuring and way of functioning of a certain society. We have here drawn our attention to mistakes of this second type, and think that the immanent, logical and historical discussion carried out in respect of the mistakes of the said second type bears out the suspicion of ideology, that is, an ideological thought style has been demonstrated to be the source of the mistakes. It should have become clear in which sense this thought style can be called mass-democratic, and how it happens that the mass-democratic thought style brings about unconscious commonalities between social theories, even when these social theories are consciously demarcated from one another.

The incursion of ideology into social theory is not of course a new phenomenon, and also not temporary (or passing). The examination of social theories in terms of the critique of ideology becomes, however, precisely through the frequently proclaimed end of ideologies, a particularly topical task. Because it is a matter of the following: the assumption of the end of ideologies – as the inevitable victory of the "knowledgeable society" or of, expressed in different terms, economically or ethically rational man – constitutes one aspect of the

evolutionistic philosophy of history, on which, as we have shown, mass-democratic social theory depends. This philosophy of history maintains there was a radical break between modern and pre-modern society, and the social theory, which starts from the fact of this break, accordingly looks disparagingly down upon the long tradition of social-theoretical thought, especially upon that of anthropological and political orientation. Social theory should now change its content-related and methodical (i.e. methodological) orientation to the extent that the factors of shaping of the social are changed by the effected historical break. But it is by no means self-evident to infer from a historical break a change in the factors of shaping of the social, that is, a change in the social-ontological factors; or, it is only for the ideological self-understanding of modern mass democracy self-evident; or (seen from the outside) it is understandable that modern mass democracy, no less than earlier social formations, would like to believe that the world-historical Last Judgement would have passed (or handed down) an irrevocable judgment in its favour. Nonetheless, it is a question of whether historical developments or breaks (and the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society undoubtedly constitutes a deep break, which can only be compared with the transition from from the Neolithic Period to high culture (developed or advanced civilisation)) must unhinge the fundamental (or basic) social-ontological factors, or whether the said historical developments or breaks take place inside of this marked out (or delimited) framework of fundamental (or basic) social-ontological factors. In the first case, the historical break was meant to have actually brought forth a social theory which would say goodbye to earlier (or former) assumptions about man and society, in the latter case, that break would remain in principle an object of historical and sociological analysis, which would have not gone into the basic social-ontological questions or only in passing.

Now, the self-understanding of a social formation appears as objective self-knowledge and knowledge of history only so long as the social formation in question is on the up and up and clears its adversaries out of the way. That is today the case with mass democracy. However, precisely at its planetary high point, its own contradictions, in fact its explosive potentialities, which were intimated at the beginning of this chapter, become increasingly apparent. Social-theoretically, mass democracy's contradictions and explosive potentialities are of importance because they make known in themselves the topicality of the classical question formulations. The increasing complexity in terms of detail brings about a reduction of the great aporias (i.e. doubts, contradictions or paradoxes) to formulae of almost archaic simplicity. After the decline of bourgeois anthropocentrism, and under the conditions of planetarily unfolded (or developed) highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced) mass democracy, the question regarding man's essence (or nature) and possibilities is posed even more directly and more acutely than at the threshold of the European New Times. On the one hand, the image of man is unified like never before by means of the henceforth dense (or compact) existing side by side, or existing inside of one another, cultures, nations and races, while at the same time the waning significance of historical and social attributes for the determination of human identity, as a result of the spreading of universalistic ideologies, paradoxically but logically reduces man to his constitution (composition, texture or nature) as biological being; on the other hand, this man reduced to his mere humanness (or human quality), that is, man in general and as such, stands across from nature, he must in a time of highly demographic and ecological tension measure his powers against nature's powers. The question about the animal, which creates tools on a planet populated by billions which has already become narrow (i.e. cramped), is posed no less

acutely and no less elementarily than before a few millions of years ago in the African savannas when hordes of animals [or (proto)humans] wandered around. And likewise the other great social-ontological question must appear on the horizon as acute and elementary, that great social-ontological question regarding social cohesion and social order, if namely the relations between humans reach such a density and intensity that the boundaries of every known political unit (unity or entity) from the past will become full of holes or even burst open.

Contemporary history therefore does enough for its part in order to heighten awareness of the examination of problems of a social theory centred on man and the political – provided of course that one is in a position to put in order (or classify) contemporary history in terms of universal (or world) history, and to recognise deeper continuities, without being put off by the evolutionistically underpinned arrogant self-assessments of modern society. Our main concern here, however, is not the status pertaining to universal (or world) history of contemporary history, but that dimension of depth of social theory, which is called social ontology. As our preceding arguments (or discussions) have hopefully shown, no large-scale social theory can manage without an – even reluctant or tacit – recourse to basic anthropological and political categories. The political and man were and are the most comprehensive and most flexible theoretical framework for the putting in order (or classification) and the understanding of social-theoretically relevant phenomena. This priority of the *theoretical*, that is, of the descriptive standpoint implies, on the other hand, that for us our concern cannot be to protect "man" against the inhuman anonymity of "systems" or to save his ethical personality from its supposed degradation by materialistic economism etc.. Those, who project onto man's nature an ethical-

normative ideal so that the lack of realisation of the same ethical-normative ideal amounts to a degeneration or devastation of man, complain and worry about "man". Man is, however, indestructible and is in complete existential fullness here, and the only presupposition (or precondition) with regard to his indestructibility and complete existential fullness lies in the fact of his mere existence, not in a certain way of life. That is why both the functionalistic dissolution of the human [sphere or element], as well as the human [sphere or element]'s ethical-normative interpretation, which directly or indirectly pays homage to a substantialism against which functionalism then turns, are to be rejected. A third, social-ontologically and historically sound way of looking at things has to start from the banal ascertainment that since the times of the primeval (or primordial) horde there is no period of history in which we would not recognise specifiable (namable or assignable) basic given facts of our own behaviour. Similar considerations enable insight into the social-ontological importance (status or value) of the political, of which we likewise expect exclusively theoretical and not ethical-normative explanations (insights or information). Indeed, the theoretical fertility of this insight can be proved in several and important part questions (i.e. secondary (incidental or minor) questions), thus e.g. during a methodical (i.e. methodological) clarification of the relations between social theory and the science of history, or in the attempt at an overcoming of the artificial alternative in "individualism vs. holism"[194].

The programmatic putting first of the political and of the anthropological allows, finally, the constant, positive or negative continuing (or picking up the thread) of a thousands of years old social-theoretical tradition – and indeed not only of the West and not only of the (Western) modern

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[194] See Ch. II, Sec. 2BC in this volume.

era. The frequently mentioned smug self-confidence of mass-democratic social theory, the conviction in respect of a radical break with the "pre-modern age" etc. is often articulated in the form of an ignorance or ignoring of older theoretical positions. The translation (or transmission) of age-old questions into an ever-changing and all the more complicated vocabulary gives rise to the impression of constant theoretical progress, in relation to which the claim to originality is based not seldom on the lack of sufficient knowledge of sources and of the literature; what for the obscure doctoral candidate is prohibited, brings others fame (or glory). The reminding of the age of central methodical (i.e. methodological) and content-related questions seems to cause uneasiness because the said reminding eo ipso refreshes the memory in respect of the age of the (social) world and of man. For our part, we certainly do not want to contest either the change and the breaks in the history of society, nor the renewal and the deepening in the history of social theory. On the contrary, we shall develop our own social-ontological perception (or view) also in the confrontation with important social-theoretical approaches of the 20th century, and i.a. expound how formal-sociological and interactionistic points of view can be constructed as a comprehensive theory of the social relation. At the same time we want to furnish proof of, even where the distance between anthropological and political question formulations seems to be the greatest, how for instance in formal sociology, questions pertaining to justification (substantiation or a rationale) would have to remain unanswered as long as reference is hardly made to man and the political. As much as the substantialistic and normativistic perceptions of the political and of man do not hold: the political and anthropological basic orientation of the oldest and older social theory is not in the least outdated.[iii]

i The translator sees this notion of theory not being able to "climb down to the specific features of the individual ontological strata of reality", as well as aspects of Kondylis's further critique of the cybernetic thought model immediately following the aforementioned notion, as being also applicable, mutatis mutandis, to all ideologies in general, and in particular to the (often heavily) ideological (including hedonistic-consumerist lifestyle-based) theories which dominate mass-democratic Western universities and associated ideologues in fields once commonly known as the "humanities"; and since their mainly non-sociological variants ((forms of:) postmodernism, (post)structuralism, deconstruction, intertextuality, feminism, etc.) are qualitatively (and quantitatively) irrelevant in relation to the expounding of Kondylis's social ontology and to the production of (social) theory with serious claims to scientific validity (as to the description and explanation of reality), that is why they are justifiably paid no (e.g. Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Baudrillard, Kristeva et al.), or relatively little attention (e.g. Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Bourdieu), in *Das Politische und der Mensch*. Cf. Kondylis's analysis in *Das Politische und der Mensch* p. 29 in regard to mass-democratic Western society, with the exchange of signs and symbols as being the focus of labour, rather than industry and agriculture as was the case in bourgeois-(liberal-)capitalistic society (where of course ideology still had the place it has in every society, but which could at least provide the social backdrop for the theoretical propounding of the concept of "action" and not "communication" as opposed to the centre stage held in "learned thought" by "the Holy Spirit" in previous societies). See, inter alia, also p. 37 in relation to the ignoring of the material preconditions of "differentiation" and "complexity", and of the overcoming of the shortage of goods, for the variety of values and world views in Western mass-democratic societies. Cf. pp. 57-59 in regard to the dispelling of anthropology (and anthropocentrism) from normative social-theoretical constructs, social theory and ideology in general.

ii The translator here clarifies for English readers that Kondylis is referring to e.g. theocentric and post-modern ideologies having different content but similar or the same thought structures (which also applies to the position in favour of "Man" itself and all intellectual(-spiritual) positions or stances in general): an identity formed against an inimical identity, a normative stance which seeks to diminsh or eliminate other stances, etc.. Therefore, theocentric and post-modern ideologies, in attacking anthropocentrism, i.e. instead of "Man", "God" or "acceptable (or politically correct as to gender, race etc.) pluralism and tolerance (based on e.g. reality being trapped in or determined by language or communication)", in other words, an anti-anthropological stance, function to ideologically guide theorists or those involved in politics in both the narrower and broader senses.

iii For the benefit of any ideologues who may be interested in the possibility of science, because neither Kondylis nor the translator (as translator) had or has an ideological program, it is a matter of complete indifference as to whether a human is referred to in the English language as "man", "woman", "human", "person" etc. or whether anyone is referred to as "he" or "she" etc.. Linguistic conventions are employed in accordance with the choice of the translator (if someone were to edit the current text by changing "he" to "she" or to "she/he/it/they" etc. absolutely no substantive gain would be made whatsoever in terms of knowledge, and the translator, personally, would not care less). It is, from the point of view of value-free, i.e. non-normative, observation and explanation (science), absolutely of no emotional interest whatsoever whether there is slavery, freedom, equality, inequality, racism, sexism, patriarchy, prosperity, poverty, genocide, torture, oppression, normal or deviant sex etc. – regardless of how all of these are defined on each and every respective occasion. Facts are facts, and the ideologically captive, who cannot see with absolute consistency beyond ideology and their own "false consciousness", will always be the main actors in any field of human endeavour pertaining to (general and or popularised) theoretical knowledge (with the *possible exception* of (aspects of) e.g. the physical, mathematical and mechanical-technical sciences, or the domain of logic, when very narrowly defined, or e.g. when the social sciences deal strictly with quantitative analysis within clearly set parameters, provided the theoreticians involved have a consistent non-normative attitude and underlying dedication to facts and logical coherence).