# 2020 春季学期-博士课程-当代认识论前沿问题研究

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一、主题：知行哲学的当代研究：哈贝马斯专题

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I. Postmetaphysical Thinking 理论-参考文献4

1) "The Horizon of Modernity Is Shifting"
2) "Metaphysics after Kant"
3) "Themes in Postmetaphysical Thinking"
4) "The Unity of Reason in the Diversity of Its Voices"
In Postmetaphysical Thinking, The MIT Press, 1992.
5) "From Worldviews to the Lifeworld"
In Postmetaphysical Thinking II, Polity Press, 2017.
6) "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpretation"
In Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, The MIT Press, 1990.

II. Practical Reason 实践

7) "On the Pragmatic, the Ethical, and the Moral Employment of Practical Reason"
In Justification and Application, The MIT Press, 1994.

III. Critique of Technology 制作、技术批判

8) Technology and Science as "Ideology"
In Towards a Rational Society, Polity Press, 1987.
9) The Debate on the Ethical Self-Understanding of the Species
In The Future of Human Nature, Polity Press, 2003. 生物技术发展的反思

三、参考文献

郁振华：~~1)~~《沉思传统与实践转向》，《哲学研究》2017 年第 7 期；古典三项的清晰提出，概念潜力
~~2)~~《超克沉思传统：基础存在论方案之考察》，《学术月刊》2018 年第 11 期；
~~3)~~《理论之发生》，《天津社会科学》2020 年第 1 期；
4）《哈贝马斯的后形而上学的哲学观》，《学术月刊》1998 年第 5 期；
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# 1

# The Horizon of Modernity Is Shifting

context: 现代与后现代之争，
审视20世纪哲学

How modern is the philosophy of the twentieth century?

This question may seem naive. And yet, was the development of philosophical thinking at the beginning of this century marked by turning points similar to those found in painting on its way toward abstraction, in music with the transition from the octave to the twelve-tone system, and in literature with the shattering of traditional narrative structures? And if an enterprise like philosophy, so very indebted to antiquity and its renaissances, really has opened itself to the inconstant spirit of modernity, which is oriented toward innovation, experimentation, and acceleration, could one not pose a more far-reaching question: Has philosophy, too, succumbed to the aging of modernity, as for instance present-day architecture has? Are there similarities with a postmodern architecture that, with vaguely provocative gestures, is again turning to historical decoration and to the ornamentation that had once been condemned?

There are at least terminological parallels. Contemporary philosophers, too, are celebrating their farewells. Members of one group call themselves postanalytic philosophers, others call themselves poststructuralists or post-Marxists. The fact that the phenomenologists have not yet arrived at their own "post-ism" almost makes them suspect.

## Four Philosophical Movements

Platonism and Aristotelianism, even rationalism and empiricism, have lasted for centuries. Today things move faster. Philosophical movements are phenomena of effective history. They mask the constant pace of academic philosophy, which with its long rhythms stands athwart the more rapid shifts in issues and schools. Nonetheless, both when it formulates its problems, and when it has an effect on the public at large, philosophy draws from the same sources—in our century, four great movements. Even with all the differences we perceive at close range, four complexes, each with its own physiognomy, emerge from the flow of thought: analytic philosophy, phenomenology, Western Marxism, and structuralism. Hegel spoke of "shapes of spirit." This expression forces itself on us. For as soon as a shape of spirit is recognized in its uniqueness and is named, it is placed at a distance and condemned to decline. To this extent, the "posties" are not only deft opportunists with their noses to the wind; as seismographers tracking the spirit of the age, they must also be taken seriously.

In their courses, compositions, and implications, these movements of thought differ from one another in nontrivial ways. Phenomenology and above all analytic philosophy have left the deepest tracks behind in the discipline. They found their historians and their standard portrayals long ago. Individual titles have achieved the rank of founding documents: G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* and Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* on the one hand, Husserl's *Logical Investigations* on the other hand. The paths between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and his *Philosophical Investigations,* between Heidegger's *Being and Time* and his "Letter on Humanism," mark peripeties. Movements of thought branch off. Linguistic analysis splits into a theory of science and a theory of ordinary language. Phenomenology anthropologizes broadly and ontologizes deeply; along both paths it becomes permeated with existential topicality. And although phenomenology—after a final productive impetus in France (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty)—seems to be breaking up, it is only in the decades following World War II that

analytic philosophy has gained the imperial position that it claims to this day with Quine and Davidson.

An unparalleled concentration of powers characterizes the course of the latter tradition, which would seem to be guided solely through disciplined self-criticism from within, and which continually re-forms itself through self-produced problematics. In the end, it empties into the historicism of a postempirical philosophy of science (with Kuhn) and into the contextualism of a postanalytic philosophy of language (with Rorty). Yet, even in the aftermath of this self-overcoming, the achievements of linguistic analysis still triumphantly determine the explanatory level of the discipline as a whole.

Structuralism and Western Marxism embody an entirely different type of thinking. While the former received its impetus completely from without (from Saussure's linguistics and Piaget's psychology), the latter (Lukács, Bloch, and Gramsci) re-Hegelianizes Marxist thinking by leading it from political economy back to philosophical reflection. Both movements, however, make their way through human- and social-scientific disciplines before the seed of speculative thought grows in the bed of social theory.

As early as the twenties, Western Marxism entered into a symbiosis with Freudian metapsychology, and this served as the inspiration for the interdisciplinary works of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research once it had emigrated to New York. There are in this respect similarities with a structuralism that has spread radially outward via Bachelard's critique of science, Levi-Strauss' anthropology, and Lacan's psychoanalysis. Yet, while Marxist social theory regrouped as pure philosophy in Adorno's negative dialectics, structuralism was only brought completely into the domain of philosophical thought by those who wished to overcome it—Foucault and Derrida. Here too, leave is taken in opposite directions. Wherever the impulses of Western Marxism have not lost their force, its production takes on stronger social scientific and professional philosophical characteristics, whereas poststructuralism presently seems to be absorbed in a critique of reason radicalized through Nietzsche. Thus, while analytic philosophy is itself overcoming itself, and phenomenology is unraveling, in these

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latter cases the end comes with the turn either to science or to *Weltanschauungen.*

## Themes in Modern Thought

These four movements of thought belong to our century. Does that imply more than a chronological classification? Are they, in a specific sense, modern? And if they are, does placing them at a distance also imply a departure from modernity?

What catches the eye are the new instruments of representation and analysis that twentieth-century philosophy borrows from the post-Aristotelian logic developed in the nineteenth century and from Fregean semantics. But the specifically modern element that seized all movements of thought lies not so much in the method as in the themes of thinking. *Four themes* characterize the break with the tradition. The headings are: postmetaphysical thinking, the linguistic turn, situating reason, and reversing the primacy of theory over practice—or the overcoming of logocentrism.

(1) The fact that the authority of the empirical sciences has achieved autonomy is not new—nor is the positivistic glorification of this authority. But even Nietzsche, in his rejection of Platonism, remained attached to the tradition's strong concept of theory, its grasp of the totality, and its claim to a privileged access to truth. This emphatic concept of theory, which was supposed to render not only the human world but nature too intelligible in their internal structures, finally sees its decline under the premises of a postmetaphysical thinking that is dispassionate. Henceforth, it would be the procedural rationality of the scientific process that would decide whether or not a sentence has a truth-value in the first place. This antimetaphysical affect was not restricted to the logical empiricists in the Vienna Circle and their vain attempt to lay hold of a criterion of meaning that would supposedly allow metaphysics to be demarcated from science once and for all. The early Husserl, the young Horkheimer, and later the structuralists as well, all in their ways made philosophical thinking bow to the sciences' claim to exemplary status. Now we think more tolerantly about what might count as science.

(2) An equally profound caesura is formed by the paradigm shift from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language. Whereas linguistic signs had previously been taken as instruments and accessories of mental representation, the intermediate domain of symbolic meanings now takes on a dignity of its own. The relation of language to the world or of a proposition to a state of affairs takes the place of the relation between subject and object. World-constitutive accomplishments are transferred from transcendental subjectivity to grammatical structures. The reconstructive work of the linguist replaces a kind of introspection that cannot be readily checked on. That is, the rules according to which signs are linked, sentences are formed, and utterances are brought forth can be read off from linguistic formations as if from something lying before one. Analytic philosophy and structuralism are not alone in thus creating a new methodological foundation; bridges are also built to formal semantics from Husserl's theory of meaning, and even critical theory is finally overtaken by the linguistic turn.

(3) In the name of finitude, temporality, and historicity, an ontologically oriented phenomenology further robs reason of its classical attributes. Transcendental consciousness concretizes itself in the practices of the lifeworld and takes on flesh and blood in historical embodiments. An anthropologically oriented phenomenology locates further media of embodiment in action, language, and the body. Wittgenstein's language-game grammars, Gadamer's contexts of tradition in effective history, Levi-Strauss' deep structures, and the Hegelian Marxists' historical totality all mark so many attempts to re-embed an abstractly exalted reason in its contexts and to situate it in its proper domains of operation.

(4) The reversal of the classical relationship of theory to practice is at bottom indebted to the honing of a Marxian idea. But additional evidence for the rootedness of our cognitive accomplishments in prescientific practice and in our intercourse with things and persons was provided by pragmatism from Peirce to Mead, by Piaget's developmental psychology and Vygotski's theory of language, by Scheler's sociology of knowledge, and by Husserl's analysis of the lifeworld. This fact

also explains the interrelationships that have been established in the name of a philosophy of praxis between phenomenology and Marxism (beginning with the early Marcuse and the later Sartre).

## Insights—Prejudices

These themes—postmetaphysical thinking, the linguistic turn, situating reason, and overcoming logocentrism—are among the most important motive forces of philosophizing in the twentieth century, in spite of the boundaries between schools. To be sure, they have not only led to new insights but also to new prejudices.

For instance, the methodological example of the sciences did further the development of philosophy into a special discipline without cognitive privilege. Yet it also provided fuel for a type of scientism that did not simply submit the presentation of philosophical thought to sharper analytic standards, but which set up astonishing ideals of science as well—whether disciplines such as physics or neurophysiology, or a methodological procedure such as behaviorism.

Further, the linguistic turn has placed philosophizing on a more secure methodological basis and has led it out of the aporias of theories of consciousness. But an ontological understanding of language has also been built up in this way, one which makes the world-disclosing function of language independent of innerworldly learning processes and which mystifies the transformation of linguistic [world-] pictures as a poetic originary happening (*Ursprungsgeschehen*).

The skeptical concepts of reason have certainly had a salutary and sobering effect upon philosophy and have at the same time confirmed philosophy as the guardian of rationality. On the other hand, a radical critique of reason has also been on the rise, one which does not simply protest against the inflation of the understanding (*Verstand*) into instrumental reason, but which equates reason as a whole with repression—and then fatalistically or ecstatically seeks refuge in something wholly Other.

Finally, enlightenment about the relationship of theory to practice preserves philosophical thinking from illusions of independence and opens its eyes to a spectrum of validity claims extending beyond the assertoric. However, this has also led some to slide back into a type of productivism that reduces practice to labor and that covers up the links between the symbolically structured lifeworld, communicative action, and discourse.

Today, in a situation that has become more and more obscure, new convergences are becoming apparent. Yet, disputation continues by way of issues that do not age: the debate over the unity of reason in the diversity of its voices; the debate over the position of philosophical thinking in the concert of the sciences; the debate over the esoteric and the exoteric, special scientific discipline versus enlightenment; finally, the debate over the boundary between philosophy and literature. In addition, the wave of restoration that has rolled over the Western world for a good decade is also washing an issue up on shore that has accompanied modernity from the beginning: the imitation substantiality of a metaphysics renewed one more time.

# 2

# Metaphysics after Kant

Dieter Henrich has generously treated a review by me as the occasion for a metacritical debate, with the aim of bringing essential intentions of his philosophizing to the fore.[1] His twelve theses addressing the question, "What is metaphysics—what is modernity?," provide a forceful sketch of a counter-project, to which I cannot respond in an equivalent manner in this space.[2] My remarks might better be characterized as aiming at establishing a pre-understanding about the common enterprise and motives of philosophizing. A festschrift should not simply promote detailed argumentative disputation;[3] it should also offer the opportunity to get clear about thematic motives in the thinking of an outstanding colleague—and, in the mirror of an extraordinary path of thought, observed with respect and admiration from a distance marked by friendship, it also offers the opportunity to arrive at a better understanding of one's own thematic motives.

Henrich has become, in recent years more markedly than earlier, the advocate of a metaphysics that might be capable of enduring after Kant. This metaphysics takes its starting point from Kant's and Fichte's theory of self-consciousness, in order then to take up the threefold chord of reconciliation provided by Hegel's *Phenomenology,* Hölderlin's hymns, and Beethoven's symphonies. Henrich wants to place the enterprise of a post-Kantian metaphysics in the proper light, in order to counter the naturalistic background philosophy of contemporary Anglo-Saxon thinking—indeed, to vindicate its validity in the

face of analytic materialism. This alternative marks the way; it requires that we begin with the knowing and acting subject's relation to, and understanding of, itself. Rather than being understood from the perspective of the world of contingent things and events, this subject must return to its world-constituting subjectivity as the definitive horizon of self-interpretation.

Metaphysics, the rejection of naturalism, and the retreat into subjectivity thus form the headings for a philosophizing that has never denied what it is up to:

> The self which, with a view toward its own criteria of correctness, is concerned about its existence, might in the end find an internal ground for its own possibility, one which does not confront it in as alien and indifferent a manner as the aspect of nature, against which it has to turn the energy of its self-assertion.[4]

This formulation still leaves open the conditions that would have to be satisfied by "an internal ground of its own possibility." Does Henrich formulate these conditions so restrictively that, in the end, the only thing considered an appropriate candidate would be some kind of spirit or mind that is opposed to matter, or, perhaps, one that permeates nature from within—in any event, one conceived in the Platonic tradition? However that may be, for Henrich the modern position of consciousness is defined in terms of how a life that is *conscious* and originarily at home with itself can be maintained; it is *not* defined in terms of contingencies of naked self-preservation. To the extent, then, that this conscious life can only reach enlightenment about itself through metaphysical means, metaphysics retains an internal connection with modernity. This connection is Henrich's concern in his "Theses."

The reclamation of this connection distinguishes Henrich's undertaking *a limine* from the sort of return to metaphysics that is repelled by a modernity that, it seems, breeds disaster and *only* that—just as it is also distinguished from an "overcoming of metaphysics" feeding off similar motives. Henrich justifiably defends himself against confusing these. In this respect I see an affinity in basic convictions. It is a question here of alternatives in thought that have far-reaching implications, in-

cluding implications for politics. Under the headings of self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-realization, a normative content of modernity has developed that must not be identified with the blind subjectivity of self-preservation or the disposition over oneself.

Whoever equates these two, whether with prefixes directed forward or backward, either aims at getting rid of the normative content of modernity altogether or wants to trim it down to the cognitive-instrumental heritage of bourgeois ideologies (even if these are in need of supplementation). In the wake of Hegel, philosophers should no longer become indignant when they are also judged in light of the political implications of their thought. Henrich does not belong to the grand alliance that is opposed to what, in better times, one dared to call "the ideas of 1789." In this alliance, minds as diverse as Leo Strauss, Martin Heidegger, and Arnold Gehlen stand shoulder to shoulder. Even an apparently paradoxical path such as that from Carl Schmitt to Leo Strauss, which has become possible during my lifetime, is made coherent through this equation of modern reason and instrumental reason—an equation that says farewell [to modernity]. With convincing arguments, Henrich defends himself against this; of course, he would also have some reservations about the close look I give to the political implications of a philosophical thought that is supposedly pure. Thus, even in the face of the confederate spirit signalled by Henrich, the discussion has to focus on the project itself. I organize my questions according to three descriptive headings: metaphysics, antinaturalism, and the theory of subjectivity.

## I

It has become customary to transfer to the history of philosophy the concept of a paradigm stemming from the history of science and to undertake a rough division of epochs in terms of "being," "consciousness," and "language." It is possible, following Schnädelbach and Tugendhat, to distinguish the corresponding modes of thought as ontology, the philosophy of consciousness, and linguistic analysis.[5] Even with all the oppo-

sitions between Plato and Aristotle, metaphysical thinking in the wake of Parmenides takes its point of departure as a whole from the question of the being of beings and is to this extent ontological. True knowledge relates to what is purely universal, immutable, and necessary. It does not matter whether this is conceived according to the mathematical model as intuition and anamnesis or according to the logical model as thoughtfulness and discourse—the structures of beings themselves are what is layed hold of in knowledge. Important motives for the transition from ontological thinking to mentalism then resulted from skepticism about the priority of being over thought and from the specific nature of reflection upon questions of method. The relation of the knowing subject to itself provided access to an internal sphere of representations, a sphere which is peculiarly certain and belongs entirely to us, and which is antecedent to the world of represented objects. Metaphysics had emerged as the science of the universal, immutable, and necessary; the only equivalent left for this later on was a theory of consciousness that states the necessary subjective conditions for the objectivity of universal synthetic judgments *a priori*.

If we stick with this way of using these words, then under modern conditions of the philosophy of reflection there can be no metaphysical thinking in the strict sense but at most the reworking of metaphysical problems that have been transformed by the philosophy of consciousness. In this way it is also possible to explain Kant's ambiguous relationship to metaphysics as well as the change in meaning that this term undergoes at the hands of Kant's critique of reason. In contrast one might insist, as Henrich does, upon retaining the expression "metaphysics" for every manner of working through metaphysical questions, or those directed to the totality of (hu)man and world. That, too, has something to be said for it. For the conceptions of Leibniz or Spinoza or Schelling, as well as Kant's doctrine of two realms, stand within the tradition of the great systems that began with Plato and Aristotle. For Heidegger, even Nietzsche still counts as a metaphysical thinker because he is modern and stands under the principle of subjectivity. This terminological dispute does not lead any further into the matter itself. What is the real issue?

The *reconstructive tasks* of philosophy, or what Henrich calls the "clarification of the elementary modes of accomplishment by intelligence," are not in dispute. What has to be considered therein is not limited to the models provided by a metaphysics of (the objectivating knowledge of) nature and by a metaphysics of morals; it is in general not limited to Kant's architectonic of reason, with the separate faculties of objectivating knowledge, moral insight, and aesthetic judgment. *All* species competences of subjects capable of speech and action are accessible to a rational reconstruction if, namely, we recur to the practical knowledge to which we intuitively lay claim in tried-and-true productive accomplishments. In this respect philosophical work is continuous with scientific work. Besides posing questions directed toward what is universal, philosophy has no advantage over the sciences, and it certainly does not possess the infallibility of a privileged access to truth. Although the spontaneous expansion of the number series cannot very well be "disputed," "every theory of the series of natural numbers is in fact fallible" (Henrich, Second Thesis). What applies to the foundations of algebra is all the more valid for ethics.

Thus, except for details, the theoretical role of philosophy provides no occasion for more profound differences in opinion. It is rather the *enlightening* role of philosophy in the strict sense, directed toward the whole of life practices, which is controversial.[6] In another context, I have distinguished philosophy's role as "interpreter" from its role as "stand-in."[7] At issue here are those questions that Kant canonized as "unavoidable," which arise to a certain extent spontaneously and aim at answers that provide orientation. Philosophy is supposed to make possible a life that is "conscious" and "controlled" (*beherrschtes*), in a nondisciplinary sense, through coming to a reflexive self-understanding. In this respect philosophy is still faced with the task of taking the answers of the tradition, i.e., the sacred knowledge of religions and the mundane knowledge of cosmologies developed in the high cultures, and appropriating them within the narrowed and sharpened spotlight of what can still convince the daughters and sons of modernity with good reasons. Behind the verbal dispute over whether "metaphysics" is still possible after Kant, there is concealed a sub-

stantial disagreement about the existence and extent of those old truths that are capable of being critically appropriated, as well as a disagreement about the character of the change of meaning to which old truths are subjected when they are critically appropriated.

If we want to circumscribe this set of problems in terms of its genealogy, it is better to speak, for the sake of clarity, of metaphysical *and* religious questions. Thus, I do not believe that we, as Europeans, can seriously understand concepts like morality and ethical life, person and individuality, or freedom and emancipation, without appropriating the substance of the Judeo-Christian understanding of history in terms of salvation. And these concepts are, perhaps, nearer to our hearts than the conceptual resources of Platonic thought, centering on order and revolving around the cathartic intuition of ideas. Others begin from other traditions to find the way to the plenitude of meaning involved in concepts such as these, which structure our self-understanding. But without the transmission through socialization and the transformation through philosophy of *any one* of the great world religions, this semantic potential could one day become inaccessible. If the remnant of the intersubjectively shared self-understanding that makes human(e) intercourse with one another possible is not to disintegrate, this potential must be mastered anew by every generation. Each must be able to recognize him- or herself in all that wears a human face. To keep this sense of humanity alive and to clarify it—not, to be sure, through direct intervention, but through unceasing, indirect theoretical efforts—is certainly a task from which philosophers should not feel themselves wholly excused, even at risk of having the dubious role of a "purveyor of meaning" attributed to them.

In Germany today, however, the latter label is applied less to those who stand in an unbroken relationship to metaphysics than to those who, with the early Horkheimer, persevere in the critique of metaphysics because they believe that the universal concepts of idealism all too slickly and willingly conceal the concrete suffering that stems from degrading conditions of life. Skepticism, too, has its grounds.[8] Because new formations of the ancient alliance between metaphysics and obscuran-

tism are uncovered again and again by critiques of ideology and of reason, Horkheimer's response is completely plausible. In order to safeguard the conceptual motifs of great philosophical thought, he wanted to transplant them into the perspective-constituting basic concepts of an interdisciplinary social theory. Certainly the Marxist philosophy of history, in whose framework he intended to undertake this transformation, has not stood up to criticism. But that does not devalue the grounds for a materialistic skepticism toward the ideological misuse of effusive ideas; nor does it devalue the correct intuition that philosophy has lost its autonomy in relation to the sciences, with which it must cooperate. Science in the singular—or *the* exemplary science that is supposed to provide a standard for other empirical sciences, whether it be physics or neurophysiology—is a fiction popular among philosophers, but no more than that. Within a highly differentiated and broadly extended spectrum, philosophy and the particular scientific disciplines are linked by relationships of affinity that vary greatly in degree: some are more or less dependent upon philosophical thoughts, others more or less open to such speculative boosts. Philosophy no longer directs its own pieces. This holds true even for the one role in which philosophy does step out of the system of sciences, in order to answer *unavoidable* questions by enlightening the lifeworld about itself as a whole. For, in the midst of certainties, the lifeworld is opaque.

Let us leave aside the concept of the lifeworld, which I have analyzed in various places.[9] For my purpose it is sufficient that individual life histories and intersubjectively shared forms of life are joined together in the structures of the lifeworld and have a part in its totalization. The horizons of our life histories and forms of life, in which we always already find ourselves, form a porous whole of familiarities that are prereflexively present but retreat in the face of reflexive incursions. As matter-of-course and as something about which we must be reassured, this totality of the lifeworld is near and far at the same time; it is also something alien from which insistent questions emerge—for example, "What is a human being?" Thus, the lifeworld is the almost naturelike wellspring for problematizations of this familiar background to the world as a whole; and

it is from this source that basic philosophical questions draw the relation they have to the whole, their integrating and conclusive character. As Kant shows, one can circle in on them only along self-referential, and thus antinomic, paths of thought.[10]

However, the possibilities for answering such questions are also affected by changes that take place within the lifeworld itself. Only up to the threshold of modernity are a culture's accomplishments of reaching self-understanding joined together in interpretive systems that preserve a structure homologous to the lifeworld's entire structure of horizons. Until that point, the unity, unavoidably supposed, of a lifeworld constructed concentrically around "me" and "us," here and now, had been reflected in the totalizing unity of mythological narratives, religious doctrines, and metaphysical explanations. With modernity, however, a devaluing shift befell those forms of explanation that had allowed these very theories to retain a remnant of the unifying force possessed by myths of origin. The basic concepts of religion and metaphysics had relied upon a syndrome of validity that dissolved with the emergence of expert cultures in science, morality, and law on the one hand, and with the autonomization of art on the other. Already, Kant's three *Critiques* were a reaction to the emerging independence of distinct complexes of rationality. Since the eighteenth century, the forms of argumentation specializing in objectivating knowledge, moral-practical insight, and aesthetic judgment have diverged from one another. This has moreover occurred within institutions that could take upon themselves, without contradiction, the authority of defining the relevant criteria of validity. Today, philosophy could establish its own distinct criteria of validity—in the name of genealogy, of recollection (*Andenken*), of elucidating *Existenz,* of philosophical faith, of deconstruction, etc.—only at the price of *falling short* of a level of differentiation and justification that has already been reached, i.e., at the price of surrendering its own plausibility. What remains for philosophy, and what is within its capabilities, is to mediate interpretively between expert knowledge and an everyday practice in need of orientation. What remains for philosophy is an illuminating furtherance of lifeworld proc-

esses of achieving self-understanding, processes that are related to totality. For the lifeworld must be defended against extreme alienation at the hands of the objectivating, the moralizing, *and* the aestheticizing interventions of expert cultures.

Today, the illumination of common sense by philosophy can only be carried out according to criteria of validity that are no longer at the disposition of philosophy itself. Philosophy must operate under conditions of rationality that it has not chosen. It is for this reason unable, even in the role of an interpreter, to reclaim some sort of access to essential insights that is *privileged* in relation to science, morality, or art; it now disposes only over knowledge that is fallible. It must also do without the traditional doctrinal form that intervenes in and affects socialization; it must remain theoretical. Finally, it can no longer place the totalities of the different lifeworlds, which appear only in the plural, into a hierarchy of those which are of greater or lesser value; it is limited to grasping universal structures of lifeworlds in general. These are three respects in which there can no longer be, after Kant, a metaphysics in the sense of "conclusive" and "integrating" thought.[11]

## II

We encounter in Henrich the conviction, which is otherwise still found only in dialectical materialism, that philosophical thinking is ultimately determined by a dualism amounting to two "ultimate" theories: general theories either of mind or of matter. This division into idealistic and materialistic approaches is supposed to dominate modern thought as well. Now it is certainly not to be denied that, within the highly diversified discussion of mind and body, the old contest for the primacy of *res cogitans* or of *res extensa* does stir up passions. This is especially true in the Anglo-Saxon world, where the presuppositions of a Cartesian ontology retain their force unbroken, in spite of a pragmatism that extends back to Hegel.[12] Under these premises, a knowing or acting subject is precisely that which stands over and against the world *qua* the totality of all objects or facts; yet, at the same time, it must also comprehend itself as a single object among all others (or as one complex of

facts among others). The conceptual constraints that result from setting the ontological switches in this way remain the same, whether this double position of the subject as "one confronting everything and one among many" is interpreted in empiricist terms and described either via a theory of mental representations or via an analysis of language, as it has been from Hume to Quine, or whether it is conceived from the perspective of transcendental philosophy as the fundamental condition (*Grundverhältnis*) of subjectivity, as it is by Henrich. In the construction of the theory, either the innerworldly or the world-transcending position of the subject is accorded primacy. The subject either attempts to understand itself naturalistically, in terms of the knowledge it has of processes in the world. Or, from the beginning, it retreats from this self-objectification by idealistically characterizing the condition of being-in-and-outside-of-the-world-at-the-same-time, which is presented in reflection, as the fundamental phenomenon of conscious life. In any case, the opponents in this dispute find themselves in agreement about the issue. Henrich aims to recover its significance. For, of course, the demise of the premises of such an ontology would also spell the demise of this alternative, understood by Henrich as naturalism versus metaphysics.

Henrich believes that those who slip by the Cartesian language-game that places mind and body in exclusive opposition are evading the pressing problem of naturalism. That does not seem entirely plausible to me. In the first place, one would have to examine whether those who step out of the Cartesian language-game do not have good reasons for according philosophical status to "third" categories, such as "language," "action," or the "body." Attempts to think of transcendental consciousness as "embodied" in language, action, or the body, and to "situate" reason in society and history, are supported by a set of arguments that is not entirely insignificant. These arguments have been developed, from Humboldt through Frege to Wittgenstein and through Dilthey to Gadamer, from Peirce through Mead to Gehlen, and, finally, from Feuerbach through Plessner to Merleau-Ponty. These attempts need not get stuck in the cul-de-sac of a phenomenological anthropol-

ogy. They can also lead to a revision of deep-seated ontological prejudices by employing the pragmatics of language, for example, to overcome the logocentric bottleneck of a tradition that is ontologically fixated on the being of beings, epistemologically fixated on the conditions of objectivating knowledge, and semantically fixated on the truth-claim of assertoric sentences. Along the path to a pragmatics of language, it is possible to arrive at world-concepts that are more complex, and so to set aside the premises that have to be presupposed if the mind-body problematic is to be posed.[13]

In the second place, it should be borne in mind that, even then, the pressure of the problem of naturalism does not simply vanish into thin air. It merely arises in another way for those theories that do indeed *begin* with questions posed transcendentally, yet do not get stuck cutting the intelligible off from the phenomenal once and for all. These theories must find an answer to the question of how Kant can be reconciled with Darwin. It seems to me that it has been clear since Marx that the normative content of modernity can be taken up and preserved even and especially under materialistic premises. "Nature in itself" does not coincide with objectivated nature. What Marx has in mind is the emergence in natural history of the sociocultural form of life of *Homo sapiens,* which goes beyond physically objectified *natura naturata* to conceptually include, as it were, a piece of *natura naturans.* A naturalism of this sort need not be accompanied by an objectivistic self-description of culture, society, and the individual. As subjects capable of speech and action, we have, prior to all science, an *internal* connection to the symbolically structured lifeworld, to the products and competencies of socialized individuals. I have never understood why in the sciences we should be limited to the *external* connection we have to nature, why we should separate ourselves from our pretheoretical knowledge and make the lifeworld artificially unfamiliar—even if we could do so. Rat psychology might well be good for rats. On the whole, however, naturalism by no means requires the subject to give a naturalistically alienated description of itself. The subject who wants to recognize itself in its world need not insist upon using

the grammar of a language that is suitable for describing things and events, or equivalent theoretical languages.

Linguistic behaviorism also seems to me to belong to these reductionistic forms of theory construction. The naturalism of this unquestionably impressive theory of language, developed from Morris to Quine, is not derived from the procedure of linguistic analysis but from the presuppositions of an empiricist ontology. This route is by no means *prescribed* by the conversion of the philosophy of consciousness into linguistic analysis; this is shown not only by the rudiments of linguistic philosophy in Humboldt and by the semiotics of Peirce but also by those implications of the linguistic turn that are critical of psychologism in semantics (Frege) and in logical empiricism's theory of science. Frankly, analytic materialism never impressed me very much—precisely because it is a metaphysical position, whereby I mean one that sticks to what is universal when the real issue is *carrying through* an abstractly posed program with scientific means. Such abstract attempts to establish an objectivistic self-understanding of the human being with one blow, as it were, thrive upon the scientistic background assumption that the natural sciences (with modern physics as their core) do in general furnish the model and the ultimate authority for all knowledge that is still acceptable. Nevertheless, they do not attempt an actual reduction of familiar social-scientific and historical facts to physics, biochemistry, neurophysiology, or even just sociobiology; rather, their only concern is the possibility in principle, based on a reversal of the natural attitude to the world, of taking *everything* that is intuitively known, the life-world context *as a whole,* and using the perspective of the natural-scientific observer to make it unfamiliar and explain it objectivistically.

I do not detect the pressure of the problem of naturalism in naturalistic thought-games but elsewhere altogether: namely, wherever naturalistic explanatory strategies within the social sciences are established with a prospect of success. Here I am thinking not so much of a hopelessly under-complex learning theory, nor even of game theory (which is on the rise but will also run up against its limits), since not everything can be reduced to strategic action. Rather, I have in mind a systems

theory of society, whose basic concepts allow an approach that is both more sensitive and *more comprehensive*. This theory starts from the basic phenomenon of the self-maintenance of self-referential systems in hypercomplex environments and uses a metabiological perspective—which outdoes every ontology—to make the lifeworld into something unfamiliar.

## III

By borrowing from Maturana and others, Niklas Luhmann has extended his basic concepts so far and made them so flexible that they are capable of supporting a competitive *philosophical* paradigm. The idea of a world process that takes place by way of system-environment distinctions annuls the usual ontological premises of a world of rationally ordered beings, or of a world of representable objects relating to the subject of knowledge, or of a world of existing and linguistically representable states of affairs. A theory of systems that generate themselves self-referentially is easily able to take up and absorb the heritage of the philosophy of the subject, in particular.[14] For this reason, a theory of conscious life that stands up for a nonobjectivistic self-description of the human-being-in-its-world should hardly still be seen as the paradigmatic *counter*-position to this naturalism, which both operates at the level of philosophy and is actually being worked out in detail. The conscious life of the subject in its dual position already resembles all too closely, I fear, the boundary-maintaining self-assertion of a system with its dual reference to itself and its environment.

Here we are not discussing my reasons for believing that a linguistic paradigm developed in communications-theoretic terms would be capable of offering greater resistance to this type of naturalism. However, Henrich's reservations do give me cause to indicate more precisely, at least in one respect, wherein the paradigm of consciousness and the paradigm of mutual understanding do distinguish themselves from each other.

For almost a century, various arguments have come together that have motivated the transitions from classical inferential logic to modern propositional logic, from the theoretical inter-

pretation of knowledge in terms of objects to that in terms of states of affairs, from the intentionalistic to the linguistic explanation of accomplishments of understanding and communication, and, in general, from the introspective analysis of facts of consciousness to the reconstructive analysis of publicly accessible grammatical facts. To this extent, an asymmetry exists between the explanatory power of the philosophy of consciousness, which begins with the relation-to-self of a subject that mentally represents and deals with objects, on the one hand, and the capacity for solving problems possessed by a theory of language, which begins with the conditions for understanding grammatical expressions, on the other hand. Certainly, I share with Henrich the belief that the phenomenon of self-consciousness cannot be satisfactorily clarified through a semantic analysis of the employment of *single* linguistic expressions (e.g., of the first-person singular personal pronoun). Conversely, Henrich also drops the premise that the form of logical and grammatical expressions could be explained by the theory of consciousness. Instead, he favors the thesis that relation-to-self and linguistic capability are equiprimordial. It is even intuitively plausible that "the functioning of linguistic communication includes a relation-to-self on the part of the speaker, as one of its constitutive conditions, which is just as primordial as the form of the sentence with subject and predicate" (Henrich, Tenth Thesis). This seems to suggest something like an equality of status for the two paradigms that crystalize around the relation-to-self of the speaking subject and around the form of linguistic expressions. With the very first test of its soundness, however, such a compromise would certainly shatter. In constructing the theory of language, for example, we have to decide whether to concede priority to the incorporeal intention qua free-floating element of consciousness or to the meaning embodied in the medium of linguistic symbols. We will come to opposing solutions, depending upon whether the meaning that is shared intersubjectively in a linguistic community is brought to bear as the basic concept, or whether the intersubjective understanding of an expression of identical meaning is derived from the intentions, reflected in one another in unending iteration, of different speakers.

This makes a third solution all the more advantageous. As soon as the theory of language is no longer semantically oriented toward the understanding of sentences but is pragmatically oriented toward the utterances with which speakers come to an understanding with each other about something, it will be able to take relation-to-self and sentence form into account on the same level. In order to reach an understanding about something, participants must not only understand the meaning of the sentences employed in their utterances, they must also be able to relate to each other in the role of speakers and hearers—in the presence of bystanders from their (or from a) linguistic community. The reciprocal interpersonal relations that are established through the speaker-hearer perspectives make possible a relation-to-self that by no means presupposes the lonely reflection of the knowing and acting subject upon itself as an antecedent consciousness. Rather, the self-relation arises out of an *interactive* context.[15]

That is, a speaker can in a performative attitude address himself to a hearer only under the condition that he learns to see and understand himself—against the background of others who are potentially present—from the perspective of his opposite number, just as the addressee for his part adopts the speaker's perspective for himself. This relation-to-self, which *results* from the adoption of the other's perspective in communicative action, can be investigated through the system of the three personal pronouns, which are linked through transformation relations, and can be differentiated according to each mode of communication.

This account escapes from the difficulty that has been connected from the start with the conceptualization of subjectivity and relation-to-self in the philosophy of consciousness. The subject that relates itself to itself *cognitively* comes across the self, which it grasps as an object, under this category as something already derived, and not as it-itself in its originality, as the author of spontaneous self-relation. Kierkegaard adopted this problem from Fichte by way of Schelling and made it into the starting point for a meditation that propels whoever existentially reflects upon himself into the "Sickness unto Death." Let us remind ourselves of the steps with which section A of

that work begins. First: The self is only accessible in self-consciousness. Since, then, it is impossible to go behind this self-relation in reflection, the self of subjectivity is only the relation that relates itself to itself. Second: Such a relation, which relates itself to itself as to the self in the sense just indicated, must either have posited itself or have been posited by something else. Kierkegaard regards the first alternative (the Fichtean *Wissenschaftslehre*) as untenable and therefore turns immediately to the second. The self of the existing human is this sort of derived, posited relation and therewith one that, by relating itself to itself, relates itself to something other. This other that precedes the self of self-consciousness is, for Kierkegaard, the Christian God of Redemption, while for Henrich it is the prereflexively familiar anonym of conscious life, which is open to Buddhistic as well as Platonistic interpretations.[16] Both interpretations refer to a religious dimension and thereby to a language that may be derived from the old metaphysics but also transcends the modern position of consciousness.

I do not feel the slightest impulse to hinder Henrich in pursuing these far-ranging thoughts. Henrich speaks of "discouragement." Even the rhetorical force of religious speech retains its right, as long as we have not found a convincing language for the experiences and innovations conserved in it. One will nonetheless be allowed to note that the original Fichtean problem is rendered pointless by a change of paradigm.[17] If, namely, the self is part of a relation-to-self that is performatively established when the speaker takes up the second-person perspective of a hearer toward the speaker,[18] then this self is not introduced as an *object,* as it is in a relation of reflection, but as a subject that forms itself through participation in linguistic interaction and expresses itself in the capacity for speech and action. Prelinguistic subjectivity does not need to precede the relations-to-self that are posited through the structure of linguistic intersubjectivity and that intersect with the reciprocal relations of Ego, Alter, and Neuter because everything that earns the name of subjectivity, even if it is a being-familiar-with-oneself, no matter how preliminary, is indebted to the unrelentingly individuating force possessed by the linguistic medium of formative processes—which do not

let up as long as communicative action is engaged in at all. According to Mead, no individuation is possible without socialization, and no socialization is possible without individualization.[19] For this reason, moreover, a social theory that captures this insight in a linguistic pragmatics must also break with the sort of Rousseauism that Henrich attributes to me.

## Notes

1. Jürgen Habermas, "Rückkehr zur Metaphysik—Eine Tendenz in der deutschen Philosophie?" *Merkur,* 439/440 (1985), pp. 898ff. Reprinted as an appendix in Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 267ff.

2. Dieter Henrich, "Was ist Metaphysik—was Moderne? Thesen gegen Jürgen Habermas," in his *Konzepte* (Frankfurt, 1987), 11–43.

3. [Translator's note: This essay originally appeared in a festschrift dedicated to Dieter Henrich (*Theorie der Subjektivität,* ed. K. Cramer et al. [Frankfurt, 1987], 425ff.)]

4. Dieter Henrich, "Die Grundstruktur der modernen Philosophie. Mit einer Nachschrift: Über Selbstbewußtsein und Selbsterhaltung," in *Subjektivität und Selbsterhaltung,* ed. Hans Ebeling (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 114.

5. Ernst Tugendhat and Ursala Wolf, *Logisch-semantische Propädeutik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983), 7ff.

6. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Philosophie," in *Grundkurs Philosophie,* ed. Ekkehard Martens and H. Schnädelbach (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985), 46–76.

7. Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action,* trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 1–20.

8. H. Brunkhorst, "Dialektischer Positivismus des Glücks," *Zeitschrift für philosophischer Forschung* 39 (1985), 353ff.

9. Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action,* 2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, 1987), 2: 119–160; and *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 324ff.; also, "Handlungen, Sprechakte, sprachlich vermittelte Interaktionen und Lebenswelt," in *Nachmetaphysisches Denken,* 88ff.

10. A. Kulenkampff, *Antinomie und Dialektik* (Stuttgart, 1970).

11. Cf., however, Dieter Henrich, *Fluchtlinien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 99ff.

12. P. Bieri, ed., *Analytische Philosophie des Geistes* (Mannheim, 1981).

13. J. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action* 1: 76–101.

14. Cf. my excursus on Luhmann in J. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 368ff.

15. J. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action* 2: 72ff.; cf. below, "Individuation through Socialization," section VI.

16. Dieter Henrich, "Dunkelheit und Vergewisserung," in *All-Einheit. Wege eines Gedankens in Ost und West,* ed. D. Henrich (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985), 33ff.

17. Dieter Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Frankfurt, 1967).

18. By no means does this exclude prelinguistic roots of cognitive development for early childhood: even with primitive rule consciousness, a rudimentary relation-to-self must already develop itself. Such ontogenetic assumptions do not, however, prejudice the description of the functioning of metacognitive abilities at the developmental stage of the mastered mother tongue, where achievements of intelligence are already linguistically organized.

19. Cf. below, pp. 177ff.

# 3

# Themes in Postmetaphysical Thinking

context 形而上学的地位问题 whether PM is possible

The situation of present-day philosophizing, too, has become obscure. What I have in mind is not disputation among the philosophical schools—that has always been the medium through which philosophy has advanced. Rather I have in mind the debate over a premise on which all parties after Hegel previously relied. Today, what has become unclear is the position taken toward metaphysics.

The attitude of *positivism* and its successors was for a long time unambiguous; it had unmasked the questions formulated by metaphysics as meaningless—they could be pushed aside as being without any objective basis. Of course, the unenlightened scientistic motive of elevating empirical scientific thinking itself to the position of an absolute betrayed itself in this antimetaphysical furor. Nietzsche's endeavors were ambiguous from the beginning. Heidegger's destruction of the history of metaphysics[1] and the critique of ideology Adorno directed against the veiled forms of the modern philosophy of origins (*Ursprungsphilosophie*)[2] had as their aim a *negative metaphysics*, encircling that which metaphysics had always intended and had always failed to achieve. Today the spark of a *renewal of metaphysics* is rising from the ashes of negativism—whether this be a version of metaphysics asserting itself in the wake of Kant or one that is blatantly scrambling back behind Kant's transcendental dialectic.[3]

These more serious movements of thought oscillate amidst a surreal corona of *closed worldviews* that are put together by

shabby speculation from bits of scientific theory. Ironically, New Age movements fill the need for the lost One and Whole by abstractly invoking the authority of a scientific system that is becoming ever more opaque. But in the sea of decentered world-understandings, closed worldviews can only stabilize themselves upon sheltered subcultural islands.

Despite this New Obscurity, I suspect that our situation is not essentially different from that of the first generation of Hegel's disciples. At that time the basic condition of philosophizing changed; since then there has been no alternative to postmetaphysical thinking.[4] I want to begin here by recalling some aspects of metaphysical thinking in order then to discuss four reasons for uneasiness with which this thinking was confronted—reasons that problematized and finally devalued metaphysics as a form of thought. In a rough simplification that neglects the Aristotelian line, I am using *metaphysical* to designate the thinking of a philosophical idealism that goes back to Plato and extends by way of Plotinus and Neo-Platonism, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Cusanus and Pico de Mirandola, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, up to Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Ancient materialism and skepticism, late-medieval nominalism, and modern empiricism are antimetaphysical countermovements, but they remain within the horizons of possible thought set by metaphysics itself. I venture to draw together under a single heading these diverse approaches to metaphysical thinking because, from the requisite distance, I am concerned with only three aspects. I want to take up the theme of unity within the philosophy of origins, the equation of being with thought, and the redemptive significance of the contemplative life; in short, identity thinking, the doctrine of Ideas, and the strong concept of theory. Of course, in the transition to the subjectivism of the modern period, these three moments underwent a peculiar refraction.

## I Aspects of Metaphysical Thinking

*Identity thinking*

Ancient philosophy inherits from myth its view of the whole, but it distinguishes itself from myth by the conceptual level at

which it relates everything to one. Origins are no longer recollected in narrative vividness as the primordial scene and beginning of the generational chain, as what is first *in the world.* Rather, these beginnings are removed from the dimensions of space and time and abstracted into something first which, as the infinite, stands over and against the world of the finite and forms its basis. Whether it is conceived as a world-transcendent creator-god, as the essential ground of nature or, lastly and most abstractly, as being—in each case a perspective emerges from which innerworldly things and events, which in their diversity are placed at a distance, can be made univocal *as particular entities* and at the same time be conceived as parts of a single whole. In myth the unity of the world had been produced *differently:* as the continuous contact of the particular with the particular, as the correspondence of the like and the unlike, as the mirroring of image and reflection, as concrete linking, overlapping, and intertwining. The unitary thinking of idealism breaks with the concretism involved in this way of viewing the world. The one and the many, abstractly conceived as the relationship of identity and difference, is the fundamental relation that metaphysical thinking comprehends both as logical and as ontological: the one is both axiom and essential ground, principle and origin. From it the many is derived—in the sense both of grounding and of originating. And, thanks to this origin, the many is reproduced as an ordered multiplicity.[5]

*Idealism*

The one and the whole result from a heroic effort of thought; the concept of being emerges with the transition from the grammatical form and conceptual level of narration to that of deductive explanation modeled after geometry. Thus, since Parmenides an *internal* relation has been established between abstractive thinking and its product, being. Plato concluded from this that the unifying order, which as essence underlies the multiplicity of phenomena, is itself of a conceptual nature. The genera and species in terms of which we order phenomena follow the ideal order of things themselves. Of course, the Platonic Idea is neither pure concept nor pure image but rather

the typical, the form-giving, which is extracted from perceptible multiplicity. The Ideas, which are built into what is material, bring with themselves the promise of universal unity because they taper toward the apex of the hierarchically ordered conceptual pyramid and internally refer to this apex: to the Idea of the good, which comprises in itself all others. From the conceptual nature of the ideal, being derives the further attributes of universality, necessity, and supratemporality.

The history of metaphysics derives its inner dynamic both from the tension ingrained in the doctrine of Ideas between two forms of knowledge—the discursive, which is empirically based, and the anamnestic, which aims at intellectual intuition—and from the paradoxical opposition of Idea and appearance, form and matter. That is to say, from its inception idealism deceived itself about the fact that the Ideas or *formae rerum* had themselves always contained and merely duplicated what they were supposed to exclude as matter and as nonbeing *per se*—namely the material content of those empirical individuals from which the Ideas had been read off through comparative abstraction.[6]

*Prima philosophia as philosophy of consciousness*

Nominalism and empiricism deserve credit for having exposed this contradiction within the starting point of metaphysics and for having drawn radical conclusions therefrom. Nominalist thinking demoted the *formae rerum* to *signa rerum,* which are merely associated with things by the knowing subject—to names that we tack on to things. Hume further dissolved the desubstantialized individuals left over from nominalism into the sense impressions out of which the perceiving subject initially constructs its representation of objects. In a counter maneuver, idealist philosophy renewed both identity thinking and the doctrine of Ideas on the new foundation that was exposed by the shift in paradigms from ontology to mentalism: subjectivity. Self-consciousness, the relationship of the knowing subject to itself, has since Descartes offered the key to the inner and absolutely certain sphere of the representations we have of objects. Thus, in German Idealism metaphysical thinking could take the form of theories of subjectivity. Either self-

consciousness is put into a foundational position as the spontaneous source of transcendental accomplishments, or as spirit it is itself elevated to the position of the absolute. The ideal essences are transformed into the categorial determinations of a productive reason, so that in a peculiarly reflexive turn everything is now related to the one of a generative subjectivity. Whether reason is now approached in *foundationalist* terms as a subjectivity that makes possible the world as a whole, or whether it is conceived *dialectically* as a spirit that recovers itself in a procession through nature and history, in either case reason is active as a simultaneously totalizing and self-referential reflection.

This takes up the legacy of metaphysics to the extent that it secures the precedence of identity over difference and that of ideas over matter. Even Hegel's Logic, which is supposed to mediate symmetrically between the one and the many, the infinite and the finite, the universal and the temporal, the necessary and the contingent—even this Logic cannot but confirm the idealistic predominance of the one, the universal, and the necessary, because the operations that are both totalizing and self-referential assert themselves in the concept of mediation itself.[7]

*The strong concept of theory*

Each of the great world religions stakes out a privileged and particularly demanding path to the attainment of individual salvation—e.g., the way to salvation of the wandering Buddhist monk or that of the Christian eremite. Philosophy recommends as its path to salvation the life dedicated to contemplation—the *bios theoretikos.* It stands at the pinnacle of ancient forms of life, above the *vita activa* of the statesman, the pedagogue, or the physician. Theory itself is affected by being embedded in an exemplary form of life. For the few, it offers a privileged access to truth, while for the many the path to theoretical knowledge remains closed. Theory demands a renunciation of the natural attitude toward the world and promises contact with the extra-ordinary. The sacred origins of theory linger on in the contemplative present-ation of the proportions of stellar

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orbits and cosmic cycles in general—*theoros* denoted the representative sent by the Greek cities to the public festivals.[8]

In the modern period the concept of theory loses this link to sacred occurrences, just as it loses its elite character, which is moderated into social privilege. What remains is the idealistic interpretation placed on distancing the everyday network of experience and interests. The methodic attitude ought to shield the scientist or scholar from local prejudices; but in the German university tradition up to Husserl, this attitude was inflated into the internally justified precedence of theory over practice. In the contempt for materialism and pragmatism there survives something of the absolutistic understanding of theory, which is not only elevated above experience and the specialized scientific disciplines but is also "pure" in the sense of having been purged cathartically of all traces of its earthly origin. Therein is completed the circuit of an identity thinking that self-referentially incorporates itself within the totality it grasps, and that wants in this way to satisfy the demand for justifying all premises from within itself. The modern philosophy of consciousness sublimates the independence of the theoretical mode of life into a theory that is absolute and self-justifying.[9]

I have characterized the metaphysical thinking that retained its force up until Hegel by the translation of identity thinking, the doctrine of ideas, and the strong concept of theory into the terms of the philosophy of consciousness. Since then, metaphysical thought has been problematized by historical developments that have come to it from outside and have in the final analysis been socially conditioned:

- Totalizing thinking that aims at the one and the whole was rendered dubious by a *new type of procedural rationality,* which has asserted itself since the seventeenth century through the empirical methods of the natural sciences, and since the eighteenth century through formalism in moral and legal theory as well as in the institutions of the constitutional state. The philosophy of nature and theories of natural law were confronted with a new species of requirements for justification. These requirements shattered *the cognitive privilege of philosophy.*

• In the nineteenth century the humanities were infused with a historical consciousness that reflected the new experiences of time and contingency within an ever more complex modern society. The intrusion of historical consciousness rendered the *dimension of finiteness* more convincing in comparison to an unsituated reason that had been idealistically apotheosized. A *detranscendentalization* of inherited basic concepts was thereby set in motion.

• Criticism of the *reification and functionalization of forms of life and interaction*, as well as of the objectivistic self-understanding of science and technology, spread during the nineteenth century. These themes have also promoted criticism of the foundations of a philosophy that forces everything into subject-object relations. *The shift in paradigms from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language* stands within this context.

• Finally, the *classical precedence of theory over practice* could no longer hold up against the mutual dependencies that were emerging ever more clearly. The embedding of theoretical accomplishments in the practical contexts of their genesis and employment gave rise to an awareness of the relevance of everyday contexts of action and communication. These contexts attain a philosophical status in, for example, the concept of a *lifeworld background*.

In what follows I want to go into these different aspects of the shattering of metaphysical thinking and, in doing so, to show that the transition to postmetaphysical thinking confronts us with new problems. In each case I want to indicate how, in the view of a theory of communicative action, we can react to the field of problems that arises *in the wake of* metaphysics.

## II Procedural Rationality

Philosophy remains faithful to its metaphysical beginnings as long as it can assume that theoretical reason will rediscover itself in the rationally structured world, or that nature and history are given a rational structure by reason itself—whether through some type of transcendental foundation or in the course of a dialectical permeation of the world. A totality that

is rational in itself, whether it be of the world or of a world-constituting subjectivity, guarantees participation in reason for its various parts or moments. Rationality is thought of as being material, as a rationality that organizes the contents of the world, from which it can itself be read off. Reason is of the whole and of its parts.

In contrast, both modern empirical science and autonomous morality place their confidence solely in the rationality of their own approaches and their *procedures*—namely, in the method of scientific knowledge or in the abstract point of view under which moral insights are possible. Rationality (*Rationalität*) is reduced to something formal insofar as the rationality (*Vernünftigkeit*) of content evaporates into the validity of results. The latter depends upon the rationality of the procedures one uses in trying to solve problems—empirical and theoretical problems for the community of inquirers and for the organized scientific enterprise, and moral-practical problems for the community of citizens of a democratic state and for the system of law. The order of things that is found in the world itself, or that has been projected by the subject, or has grown out of the self-formative process of spirit, no longer counts as rational; instead, what counts as rational is solving problems successfully through procedurally suitable dealings with reality. Procedural rationality can no longer guarantee an *antecedent* unity in the manifold of appearances.

The perspective from which metaphysics distinguished essence from appearance vanishes together with the anticipation of the totality of beings. In science phenomena are traced back to more and more fundamental structures whose depth matches the range of explanatory theories; but these structures no longer stand within the referential network of a totality. They no longer throw light upon the individual's position in the cosmos, upon one's place within the architectonic of reason or within the system. Essences elude the knowledge of nature just as they elude the theory of natural law. With the methodological separation of the natural sciences and the humanities, the perspectival difference between *outside* and *inside* develops and replaces the difference between *essence* and *appearance*.

Only an objectifying approach to nature based on observation is now seen as promising for the nomological empirical sciences, whereas the hermeneutical sciences only gain access to the historical-cultural world through the performative attitude of a participant in communication. A splitting-up of object realms corresponds to this privileging of the observer's perspective in the natural sciences and of the participant's perspective in the humanities. While nature resists an interpretive-reconstructive approach from within and only yields to nomological knowledge that is counterintuitive and guided by observation, the ensemble of social and cultural products is disclosed, as it were, from within through an interpretive procedure that links up with the intuitive knowledge of the participants. The knowledge of essences that explicates networks of meaning finds no hold on an objectified nature; and the hermeneutical replacement for it is now available only for that sphere of nonbeing in which, according to the conception of metaphysics, the ideal essences should never even have been able to get a foothold.

Finally, the methodically generated knowledge of the modern sciences loses even its characteristic autarky. In conceptually grasping the totality of nature and history, totalizing thought also operated self-referentially and was supposed to prove and justify itself as philosophical knowledge—whether through arguments providing ultimate justification or through the spiraling self-explication of the all-encompassing concept. In contrast, the premises with which scientific theories begin are treated as hypotheses and have to be justified through their consequences—whether through empirical confirmation or through their coherence with other statements that are already accepted. The fallibilism of scientific theories is incompatible with the type of knowledge *prima philosophia* believed itself capable of attaining. Every comprehensive, closed, and final system of statements must be formulated in a language that requires no commentary and allows of no interpretations, improvements, or innovations that might place it at a distance; it must bring its own effective history to a standstill. Such finality is incompatible with the unprejudiced openness characterizing the cognitive progress of science.

For these reasons, the reorientation of knowledge from material to procedural rationality was an embarrassment for metaphysical thinking. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the authority of the empirical sciences forced philosophy to assimilate.[10] Since that time, the idea of a return to metaphysics, which has been called for ever and again, has been stigmatized as something purely reactionary. Yet, attempts at assimilating philosophy to the natural or the human sciences, or to logic and mathematics, have only created new problems.

Both the vulgar materialism of Moleschott and Büchner and post-Machian positivism aimed at constructing a worldview along natural-scientific lines. Dilthey and historicism dissolved philosophy into the history of philosophy and the typology of *Weltanschauungen*. And the Vienna Circle set philosophy upon the narrow path of methodology and the theory of science. Yet, with each of these reactions, philosophical thinking seemed to surrender what is specific to it—namely the emphatic knowledge of the whole—without really being able to compete seriously with the sciences that were proclaimed as models in each case.

A division of labor that might guarantee to philosophy its *own* object realm with its *own* method presented itself as an alternative. As is well known, phenomenology and analytic philosophy have taken this route, each in its own way. But anthropology, psychology, and sociology have not particularly respected such special preserves; the human sciences have overstepped the demarcation lines of eidetic abstraction and of analysis; they have forced their way into the philosophical inner sanctum.

The turn to the irrational remained as a final way out. In this guise philosophy was supposed to secure its possessions and its relation to totality at the price of renouncing contestable knowledge. Philosophy has appeared in this form as existential illumination and philosophical faith (Jaspers), as a mythology that complements science (Kolakowski), as the mystical thinking of Being (Heidegger), as the therapeutic treatment of language (Wittgenstein), as deconstructive activity (Derrida), or as negative dialectics (Adorno). The antiscientism of these delimitations permits them only to say what philosophy is not and

does not want to be; as a nonscience, however, philosophy must leave its own status undetermined. Positive determinations have become impossible because cognitive accomplishments can now prove themselves only through procedural rationality, ultimately through the procedure of argumentation.

Today, these embarrassments demand that the relationship of philosophy to science be determined anew. Once it renounces its claim to be a first science or an encyclopedia, philosophy can maintain its status within the scientific system neither by assimilating itself to particular exemplary sciences nor by exclusively distancing itself from science in general. Philosophy has to implicate itself in the fallibilistic self-understanding and procedural rationality of the empirical sciences; it may not lay claim to a privileged access to truth, or to a method, an object realm, or even just a style of intuition that is specifically its own. Only thus can philosophy contribute its best to a nonexclusive division of labor,[11] namely, its persistent tenacity in posing questions universalistically, and its procedure of rationally reconstructing the intuitive pretheoretical knowledge of competently speaking, acting, and judging subjects—yet in such a way that Platonic anamnesis sheds its nondiscursive character. This dowry recommends philosophy as an indispensable partner in the collaboration of those who are concerned with a theory of rationality.

Even if philosophy does find its niche in this way *within* the scientific system, it need not by any means completely surrender the relationship to the whole that had distinguished metaphysics. There is no point in defending this relationship without some definable claim to knowledge. But the lifeworld is always already intuitively present to all of us as a totality that is unproblematized, nonobjectified, and pretheoretical—as the sphere of that which is daily taken for granted, the sphere of common sense. In an awkward way, philosophy has always been closely affiliated with the latter. Like it, philosophy moves within the vicinity of the lifeworld; its relation to the totality of this receding horizon of everyday knowledge is similar to that of common sense. And yet, through the subversive power of reflection and of illuminating, critical, and dissecting analysis, philosophy is completely opposed to common sense. By

virtue of this intimate yet fractured relation to the lifeworld, philosophy is also well suited for a role on *this side* of the scientific system—for the role of an interpreter mediating between the expert cultures of science, technology, law, and morality on the one hand, and everyday communicative practices on the other hand, and indeed in a manner similar to that in which literary and art criticism mediate between art and life.[12] Of course, the lifeworld with which philosophy maintains a type of nonobjectifying contact is not to be confused with the totality of the universal one, of which metaphysics wished to provide an image or, more precisely, a worldview. Postmetaphysical thinking operates with a different concept of the world.

## III Situating Reason

Initially, postmetaphysical thinking was thoroughly characterized by its critique of Hegel's brand of idealism. The first generation of Hegel's disciples criticized in the work of their teacher the secret preponderance of what is universal, supratemporal, and necessary over what is particular, variable, and accidental, and thus the idealistic casting given to the concept of reason. Feuerbach emphasized the priority of what is objective: subjectivity is both embedded in an inner nature and confronted by an outer nature. Marx saw spirit rooted in material production and embodied in the ensemble of social relations. Finally, Kierkegaard counterposed the facticity of one's own existence and the inwardness of the radical will to be oneself against a chimerical reason within history. All of these arguments seek to recover the finite character of mind from the self-referential, totalizing thinking of the dialectic—Marx spoke of the "process of decay" of absolute spirit. Of course, all the Young Hegelians ran the risk in turn of hypostatizing the prius of nature, society, and history into something in-itself, and of thereby slipping back unacknowledged to the level of precritical thinking.[13] The Young Hegelians were strong enough to convince [their audience]—in the name of objectivity, finitude, and facticity—of the desideratum of a reason produced in natural history, incarnated bodily, situated socially,

and contextualized historically. But they could not redeem this desideratum at the level marked out by Kant and Hegel. They thus opened the gates to Nietzsche's more radical critique of reason which, through inversion, ends up totalizing itself.

An appropriate concept of *situated reason* was established not along these lines but rather as the consequence of another critique, one directed against the foundationalist variety of thought within the philosophy of the subject. Through this discussion, which took Kant as its starting point, the basic concepts of transcendental philosophy were undermined, although perhaps not yet paradigmatically overcome.

The extramundane position of transcendental subjectivity, to which the metaphysical attributes of universality, supratemporality, and necessity were transferred, initially collided with the premises of the new cultural sciences. In their object realms, these sciences encounter formations that are already prestructured symbolically and that possess, as it were, the dignity of products resulting from transcendental accomplishments. Nevertheless, they are supposed to be subjected to a purely empirical analysis. Foucault describes how the human sciences plumb the empirical conditions under which diversified and individualized transcendental subjects bring forth their worlds, symbolic systems, forms of life, and institutions. In so doing, these sciences helplessly entangle themselves in a dual transcendental-empirical perspective lacking in clarity.[14] Dilthey sees this circumstance as an invitation to a critique of historical reason. He wants to reconstruct the basic concepts of transcendental philosophy in such a way that those synthetic accomplishments that have no origin and are removed from all contingency and natural necessity can henceforth find their place *within* the world, without having to surrender their internal connection to the process of world constitution.

Historicism and *Lebensphilosophie* have attributed an epistemological significance to the transmission of tradition, to aesthetic experience, and to the bodily, social, and historical existence of the individual; this significance had to explode the classical concept of the transcendental subject. Transcendental synthesis was replaced by the ostensibly concrete yet structureless productivity of "life." On the other hand, Husserl did not

hesitate to equate the transcendental ego, to which he held fast, with the existing consciousness of each individual phenomenologist. Both these lines of argumentation come together in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Under the rubric of "*Dasein*," generative subjectivity is finally brought down from the realm of the intelligible; if not really placed on this side of history, still it is set within the dimensions of historicity and individuality. The definitive figure of thought is that of the "thrown projection" relating to care about an existence that is in each case mine.

This historicization and individuation of the transcendental subject makes it necessary to restructure the architectonic of basic concepts. The subject loses its familiar dual position as one over and against everything and as one among many. As transcendental consciousness, Kant's subject had indeed stood over and against the world qua the totality of objects of experience; but as empirical consciousness in the world, it also appeared as one entity among many. In contrast, Heidegger wants to conceive of world-projecting subjectivity itself as Being-in-the-world, as an individual *Dasein* that finds itself already within the facticity of historical surroundings, yet at the same time must not surrender its transcendental spontaneity. Regardless of its world-constituting originality, transcendental consciousness is supposed to be subjected to the conditions of historical facticity and innerworldly existence. Admittedly, these conditions themselves must not be conceived as something ontic, as something coming forth in the world. Rather, they restrict from within, as it were, the generative accomplishments of the subject that is in the world; they limit the world-projecting spontaneity at its source. The transcendental distinction between *constituens* and *constitutum* is replaced by another distinction: the ontological difference between the world-project, which opens the horizon of possible encounters in the world, and what is in fact encountered therein.

Now, however, the question arises whether the disclosure of the world, the letting-be of beings, can still be conceived as an *activity* at all and attributed to a subject that accomplishes it. In *Being and Time* Heidegger still favored this version. Despite its existential rootedness in the world, the individual *Dasein* retains

the authorship of the sovereign world-project, the world-forming potency without the affiliated extramundane position. But with this decision Heidegger assumes a consequent problem, one on which Husserl labored in vain in the fifth Cartesian Meditation and for which Sartre, too, could find no solution in the third part of *Being and Nothingness*. Namely, as soon as consciousness in general breaks up into the pluralism of individual world-constituting monads, there arises the problem of how from each of their perspectives an intersubjective world can be constituted in which one subjectivity would be able to encounter another not just as an objectifying counterpower but in the other's originary world-projecting spontaneity. This problem of intersubjectivity is rendered unsolvable once one accepts the premise of a *Dasein* that can authentically project itself in response to its possibilities only in solitude.[15]

In his later philosophy Heidegger developed an alternative. Here he no longer encumbers the individual *Dasein* with the process of world-disclosure; he no longer conceives of world-constitution as an accomplishment at all but instead as the overpowering, anonymous happening of a temporalized originary power. The transformation of the ontological takes place in the medium of language as a happening beyond ontic history. With that, the problem of intersubjectivity is rendered irrelevant. Now, however, Being itself has become sovereign; it rules in an unforeseeable way over the grammatical transformation of linguistic worldviews. Language's power to create meaning is promoted by the later Heidegger to the rank of the absolute. But from this there results another problem: the prejudicing force of linguistic world-disclosure devalues all innerworldly learning processes. The ontological preunderstanding that dominates in any given period forms a *fixed* framework for the practices of the socialized individuals who are in the world. The encounter with what is innerworldly moves *fatalistically* along the paths of antecedently regulated contexts of meaning, such that these contexts themselves cannot be affected by successful problem solutions, by accumulated knowledge, by the transformed state of productive forces, or by moral insights. It thus becomes impossible to account for the dialectical interplay between the shifting horizons of meaning,

on the one hand, and the dimension in which these horizons must in fact prove their viability, on the other.

All these attempts to detranscendentalize reason continue to get entangled in the prior conceptual decisions of transcendental philosophy, decisions in which they remain trapped. The false alternatives only fall by the wayside with the transition to a new paradigm, that of mutual understanding (*Verständigung*). Subjects capable of speaking and acting who, against the background of a common lifeworld, come to an understanding with each other about something in the world, relate to the medium of their language both autonomously and dependently: they can make use of grammatical rule-systems, which make their practices possible in the first place, for their own purposes as well. Both moments are equiprimordial.[16] On the one hand, these subjects always find themselves already in a linguistically structured and disclosed world; they live off of grammatically projected interconnections of meaning. To this extent, language sets itself off from the speaking subjects as something antecedent and objective, as the structure that forges conditions of possibility. On the other hand, the linguistically disclosed and structured lifeworld finds its footing only in the practices of reaching understanding within a linguistic community. In this way, the linguistic formation of consensus, by means of which interactions link up in space and time, remains dependent upon the autonomous "yes" and "no" positions that communication participants take toward criticizable validity claims.

Natural languages do more than open the horizons of the specific worlds in which socialized subjects find themselves. They also force these subjects to their *own* independent accomplishments—namely, to an innerworldly practice oriented toward validity claims, a practice in which projected world-disclosing meanings are subjected to an *ongoing test* in which they can prove their worth. A circular process comes into play between the lifeworld as the resource from which communicative action draws, and the lifeworld as the product of this action; in this process, no gap is left by the disappearance of the transcendental subject. Of course, it was the linguistic turn in philosophy that first prepared the conceptual means needed

for an analysis of the type of reason embodied in communicative action.

## IV The Linguistic Turn

In the last two sections I have shown how post-Hegelian thought broke away from the metaphysical concept of reason as it appeared in the philosophy of consciousness. Having treated identity thinking and idealism, I still want to discuss the relationship of theory to practice; but first I would like to go into the critique of the philosophy of consciousness that paved the way for postmetaphysical thinking. Specifically, the transition from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language results in advantages not only from the standpoint of method but from the standpoint of content as well. This transition breaks out of the circle of a hopeless to-and-fro between metaphysical and antimetaphysical thinking, i.e., between idealism and materialism. Moreover, it makes it possible to attack a problem that cannot be solved using the basic concepts of metaphysics: the problem of individuality. But several very different themes come together in the critique of the philosophy of consciousness. I want at least to name the four most important of these.

(1) Whoever chooses the self-relation of the knowing subject as the starting point of his analysis has, since Fichte, had to deal with the following objection: self-consciousness could by no means be an original phenomenon, because whenever the knowing subject turns back upon itself in order to lay hold of itself as an object, the spontaneity of conscious life withdraws from the very objective form under which it would have to be subsumed.[17] Since Nietzsche, the fundamental conceptual necessity of objectification and self-objectification has also served as the target of a critique, extending to modern conditions of life in general, of thought that controls or instrumental reason.

(2) Since Frege, logic and semantics have inflicted a beating on the object-theoretical conception that results from the conceptual strategy of the philosophy of consciousness. The acts of the judging, acting, and experiencing subject were always supposed to be directed toward objects (in Husserl's words,

intentional objects). Yet, this concept of the *represented* (*vorgestellten*) object does not do justice to the propositional structure of the states of affairs that are *meant* (*gemeint*) and stated.[18]

(3) Further, naturalism has cast doubt on whether it is at all possible to approach consciousness as a foundation, as something unconditioned and original: Kant had to be brought into accord with Darwin. Later, the theories of Freud, Piaget, and Saussure offered third categories that avoided the basic conceptual dualism of the philosophy of consciousness. The categories of the expressive body, of behavior, of action, and of language introduce relations that the socialized organism of a subject capable of speaking and acting *already* has to the world, before this subject takes up an objectivating relation to something in the world.[19]

(4) Of course, it was the linguistic turn that first provided reservations such as these with a firm methodological foundation. Traditionally, language was conceived in terms of the model of assigning names to objects and was viewed as an instrument of communication that remained external to the content of thought. The new foundation, already marked out by Humboldt, depended upon turning away from this traditional conceptualization. The new, transcendentally characterized conception of language attained paradigmatic relevance primarily through the methodological advantage it had over the philosophy of the subject, which has to invoke introspective access to facts of consciousness. The description of entities that appear within the space of mental representations or in the stream of lived experiences remains tainted with the stigma of what is merely subjective. This is equally true whether one looks for support from inner experience, intellectual intuition, or immediate evidence. The intersubjective validity of observations can be ascertained through experimental practice and thus through a regulated transformation of perceptions into data. A similar objectivation seems to work when the analysis of mental representations and thoughts is undertaken using the grammatical formations with whose help they are expressed. Grammatical expressions are something publicly accessible; one can read structures off from them without having to refer to what is merely subjective. The exemplary models of

mathematics and logic also helped to direct philosophy to the public object realm of grammatical expressions. The turning point is marked by Frege and Peirce.[20]

Admittedly, at first the linguistic turn was made within the limits of semanticism, that is, at the price of abstractions that kept the problem-solving potential of the new paradigm from being fully exploited. Semantic analysis remains in essence an analysis of sentence forms, above all the forms of assertoric sentences. It disregards the speech situation, the employment of language and its context, and the claims, dialogue roles, and positions of the speaker. In a word, it disregards the pragmatics of language, which formal semantics wanted to entrust to a different, namely an empirical, investigation. In the same way, the theory of science isolated the logic of inquiry from questions about the dynamics of inquiry; the latter were supposed to be left to psychologists, historians, and sociologists.

This semanticistic abstraction cuts language down to a format that makes its distinctive self-referential character unrecognizable.[21] Just one example of this: in the case of nonlinguistic actions, the intention of the actor cannot be extracted from his manifest behavior; at most it can be indirectly inferred. In the case of a speech act, however, the very act itself gives the hearer an understanding of the intention of the speaker. Linguistic utterances identify themselves because they are structured self-referentially and comment upon the sense in which the content expressed by them is employed.

The discovery, following Wittgenstein and Austin, of this performative-propositional double structure was the first step on the way to bringing pragmatic elements into a formal analysis.[22] Only with this transition to a formal pragmatics does linguistic analysis win back those dimensions and problematics of the philosophy of the subject that had been given up for lost. The next step is the analysis of the universal presuppositions that must be fulfilled if participants in communication are to be able to come to an understanding with each other about something in the world. A peculiarity exhibited by these pragmatic presuppositions of consensus formation is that they contain strong idealizations. For example, the supposition that all participants in dialogue use the same linguistic expressions

with identical meanings is unavoidable but often counterfactual. The validity claims that a speaker raises for the content of his assertoric, normative, or expressive sentences are also bound to similar idealizations: what the speaker, here and now in a given context, asserts as valid transcends, *according to the sense of his claim,* all context-dependent, merely local standards of validity. These and similar idealizing yet unavoidable presuppositions for actual communicative practices possess a normative content that carries the tension between the intelligible and the empirical into the sphere of appearances itself. Counterfactual presuppositions become social facts. This critical thorn sticks in the flesh of any social reality that has to reproduce itself via action oriented toward reaching understanding.

The linguistic turn was made not only by propositional semantics but by semiotics as well, for example in Saussure. But structuralism also gets caught in the snare of abstractive fallacies. By elevating anonymous forms of language to a transcendental status, it downgrades the subjects and their speech to something merely accidental. How the subjects speak and what they do is supposed to be explained by the underlying system of rules. The individuality and creativity of subjects capable of speaking and acting, indeed absolutely everything that had been attributed to subjectivity as a possession, now become residual phenomena that are either neglected or devalued as narcissistic symptoms (Lacan). Whoever would nonetheless like to continue to pay them their due under structuralist premises must transfer everything that is individual and innovative into a prelinguistic sphere that is accessible only through intuition.[23]

The pragmatic turn leads the way out of this structuralist abstraction as well. Transcendental accomplishments have not by any means withdrawn into the system of grammatical rules as such. Rather, linguistic synthesis results from constructive accomplishments of mutual understanding, accomplishments that are achieved in the form of a refracted intersubjectivity. Certainly, grammatical rules guarantee an identity of meaning for linguistic expressions. But at the same time, they must leave room for individual nuances and innovative unpredictability in the use of these expressions, whose identity of meaning is only presumed. The shadow of difference that is cast on every

linguistically attained agreement is explained by the fact that the intentions of speakers also diverge again and again from the standard meanings of the expressions they use: "All understanding is for this reason always simultaneously nonunderstanding, and all accord in thoughts and feelings is simultaneously a parting of the ways." (Wilhelm von Humboldt) The intersubjectivity of linguistically achieved understanding is by nature porous, and linguistically attained consensus does not eradicate from the accord the differences in speaker perspectives but rather presupposes them as ineliminable. For these reasons, action that is oriented toward reaching understanding is also suitable as a medium for those formative processes that at once make possible both socialization and individuation. The grammatical role of the personal pronouns forces the speaker and the hearer to adopt a performative attitude in which the one confronts the other as *alter ego:* only with a consciousness of their absolute difference and irreplaceability can the one recognize himself in the other. Thus, although the nonidentical is vulnerable, has been repeatedly distorted through objectification, and has therefore always slipped through the net of basic metaphysical concepts, it remains accessible in a trivial way in everyday communicative practice.[24] But the scope of this profane rescue of the nonidentical will only be recognizable when we give up the classical precedence of theory over practice and, in so doing, also overcome the logocentric constriction of reason.

## V Deflating the Extra-Ordinary

To the extent that philosophy has withdrawn into the system of the sciences and has established itself as one academic discipline among others, it has had to renounce its privileged access to truth and the redemptive significance of theory. Today, philosophy is still a matter for the few only in the harmless sense of being special knowledge left to experts. Unlike the other scientific disciplines, to be sure, philosophy also still maintains a certain relation to pretheoretical knowledge and to the nonobjective totality of the lifeworld. *From there,* philosophical thinking can then *turn back* towards science as a whole and

undertake a self-reflection of the sciences that goes beyond the limits of methodology and the theory of science and that—in a reversal of the ultimate grounding of all knowledge in metaphysics—exposes the meaning-foundation of scientific theory-formation in prescientific practice. Such internal connections between genesis and validity have been uncovered by pragmatism from Peirce to Quine, by philosophical hermeneutics from Dilthey to Gadamer, and also by Scheler's sociology of knowledge, Husserl's analysis of the lifeworld, the anthropology of knowledge from Merleau-Ponty to Apel, and postempiricist theory of science since Kuhn. Even esoteric cognitive accomplishments have roots in the practices of prescientific dealings with things and persons. With this, the classical precedence of theory over practice is undermined.

For philosophy itself, however, this type of insight has become a source of uneasiness; indeed, the modern form of skepticism is nourished primarily by this source. Once expert cultures are no longer in need of justification and have taken upon themselves the authority to define the relevant criteria of validity, philosophy no longer disposes over its own, distinct criteria of validity, criteria that might have remained unaffected by insights into the fundamental primacy of practice over theory. Thus, conclusions keep forcing themselves on us that contradict the universalistic claims made for situated reason. Today, many areas are dominated by a contextualism that confines all truth claims to the scope of local language games and conventionally accepted rules of discourse and assimilates all standards of rationality to habits or to conventions that are only valid *in situ*.[25]

I cannot go into this discussion here and will have to rest content with one counterthesis. The insight into the fundamental primacy of practice over theory, which has relevance for validity as well, leads to a radical skepticism about reason only if the gaze of philosophy is *restricted* to questions of truth that can be dealt with by science. Ironically, philosophy has itself fostered this kind of cognitivistic reduction and has pinned reason down to only one of its dimensions, at first ontologically, later epistemologically, and then even in linguistic analysis—to the logos that inheres in the totality of beings, to

the capacity to represent and act upon objects, or to the fact-stating discourse that specializes in only one dimension of speech, the truth of assertoric sentences. The occidental deference towards logos reduces reason to something that language performs in only one of its functions, in representing states of affairs. Ultimately, methodically pursuing questions of truth is the only thing that still counts as rational. Questions of justice and questions of taste, as well as questions regarding the truthful presentation of self, are all excluded from the sphere of the rational. Whatever surrounds and borders on the scientific culture that specializes in questions of truth, every context in which this culture is embedded and rooted, then appears to be irrational as such. Contextualism is only the flipside of logocentrism.

But philosophy liberates itself from logocentrism when it is not completely absorbed by the self-reflection of the sciences, when its gaze is not fixated on the scientific system, when it reverses this perspective and looks back upon the thicket of the lifeworld. It then discovers a reason that is already operating in everyday communicative practice.[26] True, claims to propositional truth, normative rightness, and subjective truthfulness intersect here within a concrete, linguistically disclosed world horizon; yet, as criticizable claims they also transcend the various contexts in which they are formulated and gain acceptance. In the validity spectrum of the everyday practice of reaching understanding, there comes to light a communicative rationality opening onto several dimensions; at the same time, this communicative rationality provides a standard for evaluating systematically distorted forms of communication and of life that result when the potential for reason that became available with the transition to modernity is selectively utilized.

In its role as interpreter, in which it mediates between expert knowledge and everyday practices in need of orientation, philosophy can make use of that knowledge and contribute to making us conscious of the deformations of the lifeworld. But it can do so only as a critical agency, for it is no longer in possession of an affirmative theory of the good life. *After* metaphysics, the nonobjective whole of a concrete lifeworld, which is now present only as horizon and background, evades the

grasp of theoretical objectification. Marx's saying about the realization of philosophy can also be understood in this way: what has, following the disintegration of metaphysical and religious worldviews, been divided up on the level of cultural systems under various aspects of validity, can now be put together—and also put right—only in the experiential context of lifeworld practices.[27]

In the wake of metaphysics, philosophy surrenders its extraordinary status. Explosive experiences of the extraordinary have migrated into an art that has become autonomous. Of course, even after this deflation, ordinary life, now fully profane, by no means becomes immune to the shattering and subversive intrusion of extraordinary events. Viewed from without, religion, which has largely been deprived of its worldview functions, is still indispensable in ordinary life for normalizing intercourse with the extraordinary. For this reason, even postmetaphysical thinking continues to coexist with religious practice—and not merely in the sense of the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous. This ongoing coexistence even throws light on a curious dependence of a philosophy that has forfeited its contact with the extraordinary. Philosophy, even in its postmetaphysical form, will be able neither to replace nor to repress religion as long as religious language is the bearer of a semantic content that is inspiring and even indispensable, for this content eludes (for the time being?) the explanatory force of philosophical language and continues to resist translation into reasoning discourses.

## Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche,* vols. 1 & 2, trans. David Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979–1987).

2. Theodor Adorno, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique,* trans. Willis Domingo (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982). [Translator's Note: "*Ursprungsphilosophie*" might also be translated as "First Philosophy" or even "metaphysics," but since the reference to origins is somewhat obscured in these more usual terms, I generally follow the English translation of Adorno cited here and use the phrase "philosophy of origins."]

3. Dieter Henrich, *Fluchtlinien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982); R. Spaemann, *Philosophische Essays* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1956).

4. Reasons supporting this premise are given in J. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987).

5. W. Beierwaltes, *Denken des Einen* (Frankfurt, 1985).

6. T. Adorno, *Against Epistemology,* 21: "The philosophy of origins—which through self-consistency, the flight before the conditioned, turns to the subject and pure identity—also fears that it will lose itself in the determinacy of the purely subjective, which, as isolated moment, has precisely never reached pure identity and bears its defect as well as its opposite. Great philosophy has not escaped this antinomy." On the significance of the nonidentical for the history of metaphysics, cf. also K. H. Haag, *Der Fortschritt in der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983).

7. Cf. Dieter Henrich, *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), 35ff.

8. B. Schnell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (Hamburg, 1955), 401ff.

9. On Fichte's idea of final grounding, cf. V. Hösle, *Hegels System* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1988), 1: 22ff.

10. Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).*

11. Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action,* trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 1–20.

12. Cf. my excursus on Derrida: J. Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 185ff.

13. Even Marx did not adequately think through the relationship between nature in itself, nature for us, and society. Engels's dialectic of nature, which represented the extension of historical to dialectical materialism, then made the lapse into precritical thinking evident.

14. Cf. the final chapter of Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

15. Michael Theunissen, *The Other,* trans. Christopher Macann (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 187ff.

16. Cf. my reply to Taylor in: J. Habermas, "A Reply," in *Communicative Action,* ed. Axel Honneth and Hans Joas (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 215ff.; and in this volume below, "Individuation through Socialization," section IV.

17. Nonegological theories of consciousness that seek a way out of this aporia are discussed in Manfred Frank, *Die Unhintergehbarkeit von Individualität* (Frankfurt, 1986), 33–64.

18. Ernst Tugendhat, *Traditional and Analytical Philosophy,* trans. P. A. Gorner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 50–75.

19. The themes of the philosophical anthropology developed by H. Plessner and A. Gehlen are again taken up in the anthropological phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty; cf. Bernhard Waldenfels, *Phänomenologie in Frankreich* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983); and Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, *Social Action and Human Nature,* trans. Raymond Meyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

20. Cf. the writings of Charles S. Peirce from his middle period in Peirce, *Schriften zum Pragmatismus,* ed. Karl-Otto Apel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 141ff. [Translator's note: This includes translations of the following articles by Peirce from his *Collected Papers,* 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931–1958): "The Fixation of Belief," 5: 223–247; "How To Make our Ideas Clear," 5: 248–271; selections from "The Doctrine of Chances," 2: 389–414; selections from "The Theory of Probable Inference," 2: 433–477; and "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis," 2: 372–388. It also includes C. S. Peirce, "Draft of a Preface to 'My Pragmatism'," appendix to Max Fisch, "Was There a Metaphysical Club?," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce. Second Series,* ed. E. C. Moore and R. S. Robin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964), 24–29.]

21. Karl-Otto Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie,* 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973) 2: 155ff. [The majority of these essays are available in English in K.-O. Apel, *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy,* trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 77–300.]

22. John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

23. Manfred Frank, *What Is Neostructuralism?,* trans. Sabine Wilke and Richard Gray (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 359ff.

24. Cf. K. H. Haag, *Der Fortschritt in der Philosophie,* 50ff.; cf. below, "Individuation through Socialization."

25. Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?," in *Post-Analytic Philosophy,* ed. John Rajchman and Cornel West (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 3ff.; and in this volume below, pp. 134ff.

26. U. Matthiesen, *Das Dickicht der Lebenswelt und die Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Munich, 1985).

27. Cf. below, pp. 140ff.

# 6

# The Unity of Reason in the Diversity of Its Voices

"The One and the Many," unity and plurality, designates the theme that has governed metaphysics from its inception. Metaphysics believes it can trace everything back to one. Since Plato, it has presented itself in its definitive forms as the doctrine of universal unity; theory is directed toward the one as the origin and ground of everything. Prior to Plotinus, this one was called the idea of the good or of the first mover; after him, it was called *summum ens,* the unconditioned, or absolute spirit. During the last decade this theme has taken on renewed relevance. One side bemoans the loss of the unitary thinking of metaphysics and is working either on a rehabilitation of pre-Kantian figures of thought or on a return to metaphysics that goes beyond Kant.[1] Conversely, the other side attributes responsibility for the crises of the present to the metaphysical legacy left by unitary thinking within the philosophy of the subject and the philosophy of history. This side invokes plural histories and forms of life in opposition to a singular world history and lifeworld, the alterity of language games and discourses in opposition to the identity of language and dialogue, and scintillating contexts in opposition to univocally fixed meanings. To be sure, this protest against unity made in the name of a suppressed plurality expresses itself in two opposed versions. In the radical contextualism of a Lyotard or a Rorty, the old intention behind the critique of metaphysics lives on: to rescue the moments that had been sacrificed to idealism—the nonidentical and the nonintegrated, the deviant and the hetero-

geneous, the contradictory and the conflictual, the transitory and the accidental.[2] In *other* contexts, on the other hand, the apologetics of the accidental and the abandonment of the principled lose their subversive traits. In these contexts, all that is retained is the functional significance of shielding the powers of tradition, which are no longer rationally defensible, against unseemly critical claims; the point is to provide cultural protection for the flanks of a process of societal modernization that is spinning out of control.[3]

Thus, the nuanced debate surrounding the one and the many cannot be reduced to a simple for or against. The picture is made even more complex by latent elective affinities. The protest against the overpowering one that is made today in the name of an oppressed plurality allows itself at least a sympathetic detachment vis-a-vis the appearance of unitary thinking in renewed metaphysical form. For the fact is that radical contextualism itself thrives on a negative metaphysics, which ceaselessly circles around that which metaphysical idealism had always intended by the unconditioned but which it had always failed to achieve. But, from the functionalist perspective of a compensation for the burdens of societal modernization, the less radical form of contextualism can also get by with metaphysics, even though this contextualism itself no longer believes in the metaphysical claims to truth. The parties for and against the unitary thinking of metaphysics only form a clear constellation in relation to a third party, in which they detect a common opponent. I am referring to the humanism of those who continue the Kantian tradition by seeking to use the philosophy of language to save a concept of reason that is skeptical and postmetaphysical, yet not defeatist.[4] As seen by the unitary thinking of metaphysics, the procedural concept of communicative reason is too weak because it discharges everything that has to do with content into the realm of the contingent and even allows one to think of reason itself as having contingently arisen. Yet, as seen by contextualism, this concept is too strong because even the borders of allegedly incommensurable worlds prove to be penetrable in the empirical medium of mutual understanding. The metaphysical priority of unity above plurality and the contextualistic priority of plurality above unity

are secret accomplices. My reflections point toward the thesis that the unity of reason only remains perceptible in the plurality of its voices—as the possibility in principle of passing from one language into another—a passage that, no matter how occasional, is still comprehensible. This possibility of mutual understanding, which is now guaranteed only procedurally and is realized only transitorily, forms the background for the existing diversity of those who encounter one another—even when they fail to understand each other.

I want to begin (I) by recalling the ambiguous significance of the unitary thinking of metaphysics, which, in emancipating itself from mythological thinking that focuses on origins, still remains tied to the latter. Along the way, I will touch on three topics that have sparked the critique of metaphysics within the very framework of metaphysics: the relationship of identity and difference, the problem of what is ineffably individual, and the discontent with affirmative thinking—above all with the merely privative determinations of matter and evil. Then I would like to retrace (II), in the case of Kant, the turn away from a rational unity derived from the objective order of the world and toward a concept of reason as the subjective faculty of idealizing synthesis; admittedly, the old problem of idealism, how *mundus intelligibilis* and *mundus sensibilis* are to be mediated, returns here in a new form. Hegel, Marx, and Kierkegaard attempt, each in his own way, to lay claim to the medium of history in order to conceive of the unity of a historicized world as process—whether it be the unity of the world as a whole, or of the human world, or of the life history of the individual. Positivism and historicism reply to this with a new turn (III), this time toward the theory of science. As we see today, this turn prepared the way for contextualism in one version or another. The objections to this position draw attention in turn to the impossibility of circumventing the symmetrical structure of perspectives built into every speech situation, a structure that makes possible the intersubjectivity of reaching understanding in language. Thus (IV), a weak and transitory unity of reason, which does not fall under the idealistic spell of a universality that triumphs over the particular and the singular, asserts itself in the medium of language. The theme of the one

and the many arises in different ways in the ontological, the mentalistic, and the linguistic paradigms.

## I

"The one and the many" is the central topic in the *Enneads* of Plotinus. That work recapitulates the movement of thought within philosophical idealism that began with Parmenides and that led beyond the cognitive limits of the mythological way of seeing the world. *To hen panta* does not mean that everything is absorbed into one but that the many can be traced back to the one and can thereby be conceived as a whole, as totality. Through this powerful abstraction, the human mind gains an extramundane point of reference, a distancing perspective, from which the agitated in-one-another and against-one-another of concrete events and phenomena are joined together in a stable whole that is itself freed from the mutability of occurrences. This distancing view is then able to differentiate between the totality of what is and individual entities, between the world and what occurs within it. In turn, this distinction makes possible a level of explanation that is remarkably different from mythological narratives. The world in the singular refers to *one* origin, and indeed to one that can no longer be of the same sort as the original powers of mythology, which appear in the plural and compete with one another. The latter remained interwoven with the chain of generations and had their beginning *in* time; but as presuppositionless beginning, the one is a first from which time and the temporal first emerge.

Because every phenomenon in need of explanation must now be related in the last instance to the one and the whole, the necessity of disambiguation asserts itself—everything innerworldly must be made univocal as a being that is identical with itself, i.e., as an object that is in each case particular. And the explanation for the phenomena that have become objects cannot be sought at the level of the phenomena themselves but only in something that underlies the phenomena—in essences, ideas, forms, or substances, which, like the one and the whole, are themselves of a conceptual nature or, in the manner of the

archetype, at least occupy a middle ground between concepts and images. The one is therefore regarded as the first not only in the sense of the first beginning or origin but also as the first reason or ground, the primordial image, or the concept of the concept. Explanation by principles, which grasps the particular under the universal and derives it from a final axiom, this deductive mode of explanation modeled on geometry, breaks with the concretism of a worldview in which the particular is immediately enmeshed with the particular, one is mirrored in the other, and everything forms an extensive flat weave of oppositions and similarities. One could say, with Nietzsche, that mythology is familiar only with surface, only with appearance and not with essence. In opposition to that, metaphysics delves into the depths.

The world religions, especially the monotheistic ones and Buddhism, attained a conceptual level on a par with philosophical idealism. But when they put the world as a whole at a distance by means of a history of salvation or of a cosmology, the great prophets and founders of religions were led by questions posed *ethically,* whereas the Greek philosophers made the break with the immediacy of the narrative weave of concrete appearances *theoretically.* In this latter case, the advance from mythos to logos had more than socio-cognitive potential. Yet even the act of contemplation had an ethico-religious significance. A manner of living crystalized around the theoretical attitude of one who immerses himself in the intuition of the cosmos. This *bios theoretikos* was laden with expectations similar to those of the privileged paths to salvation of the wandering monk, of the eremite, or of the monastic brother. According to Plotinus, in the medium of thought the soul forms itself into a self, which becomes conscious of itself as a self in the recollective, reflexive intuition of the one. *Henosis,* the uniting of the philosopher with the one, for which discursive thinking prepares the way, is at once ecstatic self-transcendence and reflexive self-reassurance. The dematerializing and de-differentiating recognition of the one in the many, the concentration upon the one itself, and the identification with the source of the limitless light, with the circle of circles—all this does not extinguish the self but intensifies self-consciousness. Philoso-

phy refers to the conscious life as its telos. The identity of the ego forms itself in the contemplative present-ation of the identity of the world. Thus, the thinking of the philosophy of origins did indeed have an emancipatory meaning.

Metaphysics also belongs to the world-historical process described by Max Weber from the perspective of the sociology of religion as rationalization and by Karl Jaspers as the cognitive advance of the 'axial period' (extending from Buddha via Socrates and Jesus up to Mohammed).[5] Of course, that was a process of "rationalization" in an entirely different sense as well. From Freud to Horkheimer and Adorno, the dialectic inherent in metaphysical enlightenment has been retraced.[6] The spell of mythological powers and the enchantment of demons, which were supposed to be broken by the abstraction of universal, eternal, and necessary being, still live on in the idealistic triumph of the one over the many. The fear of uncontrolled dangers that displayed itself in myths and magical practices now lodges within the controlling concepts of metaphysics itself. Negation, which opposed the many to the one as Parmenides opposed nonbeing to being, is also negation in the sense of a defense against deep-seated fears of death and frailty, of isolation and separation, of opposition and contradiction, of surprise and novelty.[7] This same defensiveness still betrays itself in the idealist devaluation of the many to mere appearances. As mere *images* of the Ideas, the surging phenomena become univocal, the surveyable parts of a harmonic order.

The history of metaphysical thinking fuels the materialist suspicion that the power of mythological origins, from which no one can distance himself and go unpunished, is merely extended in idealism in a more sublime and less merciful way. Metaphysics labors in vain on certain key problems that seem to result from the rebellion of a disenfranchised plurality against a unity that is compulsory and, to that extent, illusory. From at least three perspectives, the same question is posed again and again: how are the one and the many, the infinite and the finite, related to each other?

First, How can the one, without endangering its unity, be everything (*Alles*), if the universe (*das All*) is indeed composed

of many different things? The question of how the identity of identity and difference can be conceived, which was still the concern of Hegel's *Differenzschrift,* emerges out of the problem of *methexis* in the Platonic doctrine of Ideas. Plotinus had already incisively stated this problem with a paradoxical formulation: "The one is everything and yet not even one (among all things)."[8] The one is everything insofar as it resides in every individual being as its origin; yet, at the same time, insofar as it can preserve its unity only through its distinction from the otherness of each individual being, the one is also nothing among them all. In order to be everything, the one is thus in everything; at the same time, in order to remain the one itself, it is above everything—it both lies beyond and underlies everything innerworldly.

Metaphysics entangles itself in such paradoxical formulations because, thinking ontologically, it vainly tries to subsume the one itself under objectifying categories; but as the origin, ground, and totality of all beings, the one is what first constitutes the perspective that allows the many to be objectivated as the plurality of beings. For this reason, it was still necessary for Heidegger to insist upon the ontological difference between Being and beings, which is supposed to guard against the assimilation of the one to the other.

Plotinus transfers this paradox out of the one itself and into *nous:* only within the human faculty of cognition does the gap open up between discursively grasping the many and intuitively melting together with the one; the former process merely moves toward the latter. Of course, this negative ontological concept of the one as something effusive, which refuses all involvement with discursive reasoning, clears the way for a self-referential critique of reason that continues to hold the thinking of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida under the influence of metaphysics. Whenever the one is thought of as absolute negativity, as withdrawal and absence, as resistance against propositional speech in general, the ground (*Grund*) of rationality reveals itself as an abyss (*Abgrund*) of the irrational.

Second, there arises the question of whether idealism, which traces everything back to one and thereby devalues inner-

worldly beings to phenomena or images, can do justice to the integrity of the particular entity in its individuality and uniqueness. Metaphysics uses the concepts of genus and specific difference in order to break the universal down into the particular. Following the genealogical model, the family tree of the Ideas or generic concepts branches off from each level of generality into specific differences, each species of which can in turn constitute a *genus proximum* for further specifications. The particular is a particular only relative to a universal. For the individuation of the particular into single entities there are available the nonconceptual media of space, time, and matter, as well as those accidental features through which the individual deviates from what is appropriate to it by virtue of its membership in genera and its specific differences. Thus, the individual remains accessible only in the accidental husk that clings to the core of the generically and specifically determined being, only as something that is external and contingent. Metaphysical concepts break down in the face of the individual. In the end, this motivates John Duns Scotus to extend the essential all the way down to single entities. He coins the paradoxical concept of *haecceitas*, which stamps individuation itself with the seal of the essential, yet which, as something that is itself like an essence, persists in an indifferent universality vis-a-vis what is truly individual.

From its inception, idealism had hidden from itself the fact that the Ideas inconspicuously include within themselves the merely material and accidental moments of individual things, from which they had indeed only been abstracted.[9] Nominalism exposed this contradiction and demoted substances or *formae rerum* to mere names, to *signa rerum* that, as it were, the knowing subject tacks on to things. When the modern philosophy of consciousness finally dissolved even desubstantialized individual things into the material of sensation, from which the subjects themselves first form their objects, the problem of the ineffability of an individuality that withdraws from conceptual subsumption became even more acute. The critique of the understanding (*Verstandesdenken*) is motivated by the murky constellation joining the universal, the particular, and the in-

dividual. After Hegel, this is transformed into the critique of a form of reason that controls and identifies; it terminates in Adorno's attempt to rescue the moment of the nonidentical from the assaults of instrumental reason.[10]

From within the movement of metaphysical thought itself there emerges the third theme in the critique of metaphysics—namely, the suspicion that all its contradictions come together in the venerable concept of matter; the latter constitutes the dross, as it were, of affirmative thinking. Should matter, to which innerworldly beings owe their finitude, their concretion in space and time, and their resistance, be determined purely negatively as nonbeing? Must not matter, in which the Ideas are supposed to be deluded and to wane into mere phenomena, be conceived as a principle that not only contrasts with the intelligible but *contradicts* it—not merely as privation, as a residue that is left over after the removal of all determinate being and all good, but as an active power of negation that first generates the world of appearance and evil? This question has been insistently repeated from a genetic perspective. Once the primacy of the one, which precedes and underlies everything, is posited—why then are there any beings at all, rather than nothing? The question of theodicy is simply a moral-practical variant of this: given the primacy of the good, from which everything is derived, how then does anything evil come into the world in the first place? Schelling still labored away on this question in 1804 and again in 1809 (in his treatise on human freedom). He set himself against the Platonic tradition, in which what is material or evil is represented as a mere shading, weakening, or diminishing of the intelligible and the good, and not as the principle of negating and of egoity, of closing off, of actively striving back into the depths. In his remarkable polemic against the bias toward the affirmative, against the purification and the harmonization of the unruly and the negative, of what refuses itself, there also stirs an impulse to resist the danger of idealist apotheosis—the same impulse that directly provides the impetus for the critique of ideology that extends all the way up to the pessimistic materialism of the early Horkheimer and to the optimistic materialism of Bloch.[11]

## II

Schelling's reflections already presuppose the premises of a philosophy of consciousness that no longer thinks of the unity of the many as an objective whole prior to the human mind but conceives of it as a result of the synthesis executed by mind itself. Beyond this, Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800) already contains a first, partially elaborated construction of world history. Both of these elements—reason as the source of *world-constituting* ideas, and history as the medium through which mind carries out its synthesis—revolutionize the basic concepts of metaphysics and give rise to the resulting problems that, with the Young Hegelians, set postmetaphysical thinking in motion.

It is well known that Kant connected the concept of knowledge with the synthetic accomplishments of the productive imagination and of the understanding, through which the manifold of sensations and representations are organized into a unity of experiences and judgments. Apprehension within intuition, reproduction within imagination, and recognition within the concept are spontaneous actions that run through the manifold, take up its elements, and combine them into a unity. Kant uses the construction of simple geometric forms and number series to elucidate the operation of *producing* unity in a previously unordered multiplicity. In doing this, the independently acting subject proceeds according to fundamental rules, for the representation of unity cannot emerge out of the act of combination itself. And for their part, these synthetic connections in the understanding are unified by the higher-level synthesis of pure apperception. With this title Kant refers to the formal "I think," which must be capable of accompanying all of my representations if the egological unity of a constantly identical self-consciousness is to be preserved in the manifold of representations. If the subject is not to forget itself and submerge in the stream of its lived experiences, it must hold itself fast as the same subject. Only this identity, which is produced in apprehending self-consciousness, and which is by no means empirically given but is instead transcendentally presupposed—only this identity permits the self-attribution of all

of my representations. Only through the transcendental unity of apperception does the manifold of my representations take on the general connectedness of representations that are my own, that *belong* precisely to me as the knowing subject.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* thus reaches the point from which, in its own way, it connects with that metaphysical figure of thought, universal unity. That is, the transcendental unity of the knowing subject who relates itself to itself requires, on the side of what is known, a symmetrical concept of everything that stands over and against the subject, a transcendental concept of the world as the totality of all appearances. Kant calls this world-concept a cosmological idea, i.e., a concept of reason by means of which we make the totality of conditions in the world into an object. A new type of synthesis thereby comes into play. Cosmological ideas generate the "unconditioned synthetic unity of all conditions in general"; by aiming at the whole of possible experience and at the unconditioned, they follow principles of completeness and perfection that transcend all experience. This idealizing surplus distinguishes the *world-constituting* synthesis of reason from the synthetic accomplishments of the understanding, which allow us to know something *in the world.* Because the ideas are concepts that project a world, nothing that looks in any way like an object of experience could correspond to them. In relation to the world of appearances, they are suitable only as principles that regulate the use of the understanding and obligate it to the goal of systematic knowledge, that is, to theory formation that is as unitary and complete as possible. They have heuristic value for the progress of knowledge.

By taking the totality of beings and making it dependent upon the synthetic accomplishments of the subject, Kant downgrades the cosmos into the object domain of the nomological natural sciences. The world of appearances is no longer a "whole organized according to ends." Thus, although the transcendental concept of the world traces everything back to one, it differs from the old metaphysical concept of the world in that it can no longer also satisfy the need for establishing a meaningful organization, an organization that would absorb contingencies, neutralize what is negative, and calm the fear of

death, of isolation, and of what is simply new. In exchange, Kant now offers the compensation of another world, namely the intelligible. True, the latter remains closed off to theoretical knowledge, but its rational core, the moral world, is nonetheless attested to by the fact of the "ought." That is, unlike the cosmological idea, the idea of freedom finds support in the moral law; it not only regulates but determines moral action: "Reason is here, indeed, exercising causality, as actually bringing about that which its concept contains."[12] It is only the affiliated concept of a "world of rational beings" that is regulative, a world in which each acts as if, through his maxims, he were at all times a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends. In this way like theoretical reason, practical reason also projects an unconditioned unity of all conditions in general—but this time the whole to which it is directed is that of an "ethical-civic" commonwealth. The latter would come about by systematically connecting all humans through shared objective laws. The world-constituting synthesis of reason once again comes into play, but this time its idealizing surplus does not have a merely heuristic meaning that guides cognition but a moral-practical meaning that obligates us.

Through this doubling of the transcendentally redirected concept of the world, Kant solves two of the three problems mentioned above, upon which metaphysics had labored in vain. The question of how the identity of the one and the many is to be conceived was only an unsolvable problem under the constraints imposed by the conceptual strategy of an ontologically objectifying thinking, which mixes up the world and beings in the world. But the transcendental illusion that the one and the whole must correspond to objects vanishes as soon as world-concepts are seen through as ideas of reason, that is, as the result of an idealizing synthesis. The problem of matter, too, is dissolved, because synthetic accomplishments are attributed to a subject that must be *given* its material, both in cognition and in action. Of course, the initial metaphysical question—how the one and the many or the infinite and the finite are related to each other—now reappears in a transcendentally modified form. The murky side-by-side status of the intelligible and the sensible worlds translates the old problem

into many new questions, questions about the relationship between practical and pure reason, between the causality of freedom and the causality of nature, between morality and legality, etc. Kant is unable to overcome this dualism of worlds even by introducing a third kind of Idea of Reason, one that places the consideration of nature and history under teleological perspectives. For, without the solid empirical foundation provided by the judgments of the understanding, Ideas of this kind do not have even heuristic significance. Rather, they form the *focus imaginarius* for a way of viewing nature and history that treats them *as if* they *were* capable of constituting a kingdom of ends.

In any case, the inherited problem of the ineffability of the individual remains unsolved.[13] The scientific activity of the understanding subsumes what is particular under universal laws without having to worry about what is individual. No place remains for the ego *qua* individual person between the ego as something universal and the ego as something particular, i.e., between the transcendental ego as one over and against everything and the empirical ego as one among many. To the extent that knowledge of myself is transcendental, it encounters the naked identity of the ego as the formal condition for the connectedness of my representations. To the extent that this self-knowledge is empirical, my inner nature appears as foreign to me as outer nature.

As long as a redemptive significance for the individual soul extended to philosophical theory as a form of life, the subject who devoted himself to theory did not need, *within* theory itself, to reassure himself of his unique existence; he could be satisfied by the promise of the salvation that was to be obtained through participation in the theoretical life. It was secularized confessional literature, for which Rousseau provided the great example, that recalled that the basic concepts of rational psychology had never gotten a hold on the fundamental experience of the Judeo-Christian tradition, despite the kinship of metaphysics with theology. The experience to which I am referring is the individuating gaze of that transcendent God, simultaneously judging and merciful, before whom every individual, alone and irreplaceable, must answer for his life as a whole. This individuating power of the consciousness of sin,

which could not be captured by the concepts of philosophy, sought for itself a different, literary form of expression in the autobiographical revelation of one's life story, as the published documentation of an existence that has always to answer for itself. In addition, the theme of ineffable individuality takes on new relevance as historical thinking comes on the scene.

Both romanticism and the cultural sciences that arose in its spirit filled the transcendental concept of the world with new unities in the temporal, social, and spatial dimensions: with (the one) history, (the one) culture, and (the one) language. These new singulars introduced a synthetic unity into the plurality of histories, cultures, and languages, which had until then been seen as products of natural growth. Herder, Humboldt, and Schleiermacher assumed straightaway that this synthetic unity resulted from an underlying mental or spiritual productivity. And yet *this* synthesis must be conceived according to a model *different* from that of the construction of a straight line or of a number series, because in the spheres disclosed by the cultural sciences, the particular can no longer be subsumed under the universal while the individual is disregarded. It is, in an emphatic sense, individuals who are enmeshed in their histories, their forms of life, and their conversations, and who for their part convey something of their individuality to these engulfing, intersubjectively shared, yet concrete contexts. The particular of a specific history, culture or language stands, as an individual type, between the universal and the singular. It was with groping concepts such as these that the old historical school operated.[14]

It was to this stage of the debate, which had been transformed equally by Kant's critique of metaphysics and by post-Kantian historical consciousness, that Hegel responded. The ambivalence that was only incipient in Kant emerges openly in Hegel's philosophy: by taking up and radically developing the theme of self-critique that had issued from the movement of metaphysical thought, Hegel renews the unitary thinking of metaphysics for the last time. In demolishing Platonic idealism, he adds the last imposing link to the chain of tradition that extended through Plotinus and Augustine, Thomas, Cusanus and Pico, Spinoza and Leibniz; but he does this only by revi-

talizing the concept of universal unity in a distinctive way. Hegel sees his philosophy of reconciliation as an answer to the historical need for overcoming the diremptions of modernity in modernity's own spirit. The same idealism that had denied any philosophical interest to the merely historical *qua* nonbeing is thereby placed under the historical conditions of the new era. That explains *first* why Hegel conceives of the one as absolute subject, thereby annexing the metaphysical figures of thought to that concept of autonomously acting subjectivity from which modernity draws its consciousness of freedom and, indeed, the whole of its characteristic normative content consisting of self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-realization. And it explains *secondly* why he lays claim to history as the only medium for the mediation of the one and the many, the infinite and the finite.[15]

These two aspects of his conceptual strategy compel Hegel to revise a premise that had remained in force from Plotinus to Schelling's *Jenaer Identitätsphilosophie.* Conceived in the terms of first philosophy, the one, as the ground of everything, could not be equated with the totality of beings. And the absolute had been held fast as the one itself, prior to and higher than everything. To this relationship between the one and the many, the infinite and the finite, there corresponded a subordinate position for a human spirit that was reflected into itself and already divided within itself. Characteristically, *nous* formed the first hypostasis in Plotinus: in the discursive mind, the one had already stepped outside itself. In place of this, Hegel now makes reflection itself absolute—reflection as the self-reference of a spirit that works its way up out of its substantiality to self-consciousness and which bears within itself the unity as well as the difference of the finite and the infinite. What had still been true for Schelling is inverted: the absolute subject is precisely not supposed to *precede* the world process. Rather, it exists only in the relationship of the finite and the infinite to each other, in the consuming activity of reflection itself. The absolute is the mediating process of a self-reference that produces itself unconditionally. One and all no longer stand over and against each other as relata; instead, it is now the relation itself, set in motion historically, which establishes the unity of its relata.

With this innovation, Hegel confronts both problems that Kant had bequeathed to his successors. As soon as history is placed on the level of metaphysics and the self-mediation of absolute spirit takes on the grammatical form, so to speak, of the historical progressive, the fractured continuity of a single self-formative process generates itself. This self-formative process sublates the dualisms of the sensible world and the moral world, of the constitutive and the regulative use of the Ideas of Reason, of form and content. Moreover, each particular is granted the solid form of a concrete universal by syntheses that have congealed to shapes of spirit, and for which nothing provides the material other than the preceding shapes of spirit themselves. The concrete universal is supposed to allow each conceptually grasped individual to receive its due in exactly the same way that it allows history to be glimpsed as a self-formative process. Adorno's negative dialectics can only sue for the recovery of the nonidentical from Hegel because the nonidentical was already on Hegel's programme.

But in the present context I am merely interested in the thesis that spirit falls within history. Until Hegel, metaphysical thinking was cosmologically oriented; nature was identical with the totality of beings. Now, the sphere of history is supposed to be integrated into this totality. Moreover, the synthetic labor of spirit is supposed to be performed through the medium of history and assimilated to the progressive form of the latter. Along with history, however, contingencies and uncertainties break into the circular, closed-off structure of unifying reason, and in the end these contingencies and uncertainties cannot be absorbed, even by a supple dialectic of reconciliation. With historical consciousness Hegel brought a force into play whose subversive power also set his own construction teetering. A history that takes the self-formative processes of nature and spirit up into itself, and that has to follow the logical forms of the self-explication of this spirit, becomes sublimated into the opposite of history. To bring it to a simple point that had already irritated Hegel's contemporaries: a history with an established past, a predecided future, and a condemned present, is no longer *history*.

## III

Marx and Kierkegaard drew the moral from this. Along with the primacy of practice and of existence, the participant perspective of the "for us" and the "for me" also takes the lead theoretically. Historical consciousness thereby recognizes its provinciality in relation to the future. The synthesis of the process of world history or of a life history, whether it be executed through social labor and revolutionary practice or through Christian consciousness of sin and radical choice, follows the Kantian rather than the Hegelian model. But the stages run through by social formations or by one's own existence still obey a teleology, even if it is only to be carried to its end practically or existentially. A foundationalist residue adheres to Marx's social theory and to Kierkegaard's existential-dialectical writing. Since their day, it has become ever harder to ignore the way in which history intrudes into the structures of unifying reason with the contingencies of what is unforeseeably new and other, and these contingencies belie all rash syntheses and limiting constructions. For the later nineteenth century, this experience made the scientistic renunciation of metaphysics and the withdrawal into the theory of science seem advisable.

With Newton's physics in view, Kant had already set phenomenal (which primarily means scientifically objectified) nature free from metaphysical structures of meaning; he watered the unity of the cosmos down to the heuristic goal of unified theory construction. Why, then, should history not be similarly released from the burden of unitary thinking in the philosophy of history, which was a substitute for metaphysics, and be left to the human sciences that had since been established? Indeed, unlike the nomological sciences, the hermeneutic appropriation and narrative representation of tradition no longer seemed to obey even the heuristic imperative of a unified description of reality. Historicism, in any case, declared the context-dependent knowledge of the interpreter and of the narrator to be the domain of a plurality that escapes the claims of objectivity and unity for knowledge. In dualistic conceptions of science, which arose above all in Germany, the unity of

reason was removed not only from the cosmos but from subjectivity as well. Unity evaporates into a methodological ideal that is now supposed to be valid only for the natural sciences, whereas according to historicist self-understanding, a plurality set free from all syntheses makes relativism inevitable in the human sciences. In the latter arena, then, histories triumph over the philosophy of history, cultures and forms of life triumph over culture as such, and the histories of national languages triumph over the rational grammar of language in general. Interpretation and narration supercede argumentation, multivalent (*vieldeutig*) meaning emancipates itself from simple validity, local significance is freed from the universalist claim to truth.

Philosophers have seldom been satisfied with such dichotomies; every dualism prods them to an explanation. Joachim Ritter's compensation theory represents such an attempt to come to terms with the historicist dichotomization of the scientific world.[16] Ritter begins by placing the natural sciences, which are committed to unity and universality, in relation to civil society, and the human sciences, which are committed to plurality and individuality, in relation to personal life. Then, by way of these contexts of employment, he brings the two types of science into a complementary relationship with one another. The natural sciences develop the productive forces of an industrial society undergoing modernization; the human sciences look after the powers of tradition in a lifeworld threatened in its historical substance. The natural world and the historical world are said to form a rational and dynamic whole only as long as the human sciences, which specialize in narrative re-presentation, compensate for those losses in the lifeworld that are unavoidably brought about by the depersonalization and modernization of life conditions induced by the natural sciences.

I refer to this familiar thesis because today it serves to limit the human sciences to the business of narration and, in the name of a culture of multivalence, to release them from cognitive claims of the kind connected with theory construction and, indeed, with argumentation in general. This moderate variety of contextualism includes the further thesis that the

lifeworld can only be protected from disintegration and civil war, from "hermeneutical manslaughter," when reason, in the sense of an orientation toward agreement based on reasons, is no longer imputed to it.[17] The text of the lifeworld must be made up of contexts alone. I do not want to dwell on the fact that the explanatory social sciences, together with linguistics and other reconstructive human sciences, find no place in the model of science thus established (which, incidently, Schelsky already noted in his own day[18]). More important in the present context is the fact that the compensation theory itself operates with a concept of reason that it fails to identify. Without saying so, this theory relies on an anthropology that would have to explain why human beings require an equilibrium between modernization and historicization. Such an anthropology would have to indicate *why* a deficit of compensatory enchantment, refamiliarization, and transmission of meaning comes about in the first place; *when* the deficit grows into a "loss unbearable for humans"; and *how* it can be balanced out through the production of narratives by the human sciences.[19] There is no such anthropology. And if one has any idea how difficult it is to come by universal statements about *the* human being, one is almost tempted to consider a theory that is at least available in draft form, one which tries to use the structures of the type of action that is oriented to mutual understanding in order to explain why and when lifeworlds are in danger of becoming deformed under the pressure of system imperatives.

Praising the many, difference, and the other may be able to count on acceptance today, but a mood is no substitute for arguments.[20] Of course, postempirical theory of science has indeed used arguments to change the image we have of the sciences.[21] In the wake of Kuhn, Feyerabend, Elkana, and others, unifying reason has been deprived of its last domain, physics. Richard Rorty[22] had only to draw the consequences from this to deconstruct the picture of the "mirror of nature" that had been derived from the philosophy of the subject and to relieve the natural sciences as well as epistemology from the requirement of unitary theory construction and the need for "some permanent neutral framework of all possible inquiry."[23]

Finally, then, even the weakest of the Kantian ideas of reason has been retracted. Without the spur of an idealizing world projection and a transcendent truth claim, objectifying science is swallowed up by its contingent contexts in the very same way as everyday practices are. In the laboratory as in life, the *same* culture of multivalence prevails once all standards of rationality and practices of justification claim to be nothing more than actually exercised conventions—nothing more "than just such practices."[24]

Having arrived at the threshold of the present, I want to end my retrospective in the history of ideas. As it is, the impression of a history of ideas might have been given only because an elaborate development of the arguments wrapped up in the ideas has been unnecessary for an audience of philosophical experts who are informed about the subject. However, in the matter of radical contextualism I have to become explicit. But first, one more comment about the shift in paradigms from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of language.

Of course this linguistic turn had various motives. I will name one: the conviction that language forms the medium for the historical and cultural embodiments of the human mind, and that a methodologically reliable analysis of mental activity must therefore begin with the linguistic expressions of intentional phenomena, instead of immediately with the latter. Now it is not accidental that this realm of objective spirit came into view from two angles, on the one side from the angle of language, culture, and history in general, and on the other side from the angle of individual national languages, cultures, and histories. Hence the old theme of unity and plurality comes up once again in the question of how these two aspects are to be brought into relation to each other. As before, nothing would stand in the way of the concept of *one* reason today if philosophy and science were able to reach through the thicket of natural languages to the logical grammar of a single language that describes the world, or could at least come close to this ideal in a promising way. In contrast, if even the reflexive activity of mind always remained caught in the grammatical limits of various particular worlds that were linguistically constituted, reason

would necessarily disintegrate kaleidoscopically into a multiplicity of incommensurable embodiments.

The question of how objective knowledge is possible has been answered by some theorists in an objectivistic and by others in a relativistic sense. Members of the first group reckon on an independent reality, toward which our interpretations finally converge, in the sense intended by a correspondence theory of truth. This group leaves intact the idea of reason that holds that in the long run exactly one true and complete theory would have to correspond to the objective world. On the other hand, the relativists hold a socialization theory of truth. They are of the opinion that every possible description only mirrors a particular construction of reality that inheres grammatically in one of various linguistic worldviews. There are no standards of rationality that point beyond the local commitments of the various universes of discourse. Both these positions are however confronted with insurmountable difficulties. The objectivists are faced with the problem of having to take up a standpoint between language and reality in order to defend their thesis; but they can only argue for such a null-context from within the context of the language they themselves use. On the other hand, the relativistic thesis, which concedes a perspectival right to every linguistically constituted view of the world, also cannot be put forth without a performative self-contradiction. So whoever absolutizes one of the two aspects of the linguistic medium of reason, be it its universality or its particularity, gets caught in aporias. Both Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam want to find a way out of this situation, and I will link up with their discussion here.[25]

Rorty represents a contextualism that avoids the relativistic consequence of equal status for incommensurable standards and perspectives. If he did not, he would have to explain how a kind of truth extending beyond the perspective of our Western traditions could be thought to accrue to the perspectivistic thesis itself. Rorty recognizes that contextualism must be *cautiously* formulated in order to be radical. The contextualist must exercise caution in order not to take that which he may assert as a participant within a specific historical linguistic community and a corresponding cultural form of life and translate it into

a statement made from the third-person perspective of an observer. The radical contextualist claims only that it is pointless to uphold the distinction, going back to Plato, between knowledge and opinion. "True" denotes what we hold to be justified according to our standards in a given case. And these standards of rationality are simply not to be distinguished in type from any other standards used in our culture. Practices of justification, like all other social conduct, are dependent upon our language, our traditions, and our form of life. "Truth" does not signify the correspondence between statements and some *X* prior to all interpretations; "truth" is simply an expression of commendation, with which we advise those who speak our language to accept the conceptions that we hold to be justified. Rorty explains the objectivity of knowledge in terms of the intersubjectivity of an agreement based, in good Wittgensteinian manner, on agreement in our language, our factually shared form of life. He replaces the aspiration to objectivity with the aspiration to solidarity within the linguistic community to which he contingently belongs. The cautious contextualist is not going to extend his lifeworld into the abstract; he must not dream of an ideal community of all those who communicate (Apel), freed from their provinciality, as Peirce and Mead dreamed of the ultimate community. He must rigorously avoid every idealization, and it would be for the best if he did without the concept of rationality altogether. For "rationality" is a limit concept with normative content, one which passes beyond the borders of every local community and moves in the direction of a universal one.[26]

An idealization of this sort, which conceives of truth as acceptability grounded in reasons under certain demanding conditions, would constitute a perspective that would in turn point beyond the practices of justification that are contingently established among us, one that would distance us from these practices. According to Rorty, that is not possible without a backslide into objectivism. The contextualist should not let himself be lured out of his participant perspective—even when the price he has to pay for this is admitted ethnocentrism. He admits that we have to privilege the interpretive horizon of our own linguistic community, although there can be no non-

circular justification for this. But this ethnocentric standpoint only means that we have to test all alien conceptions in light of our own standards.[27] Confronting this position, Hilary Putnam shows that an idealizing concept of truth or of validity in general is both necessary and possible without objectivistic fallacies.

Putnam establishes the unavoidability of an idealizing conceptual construction with the following argument. If the distinction between a conception that is held to be true here and now and a conception that is true, i.e., one that is acceptable under idealized conditions, collapses, then we cannot explain why we are able to learn reflexively, that is, are able also to *improve* our own standards of rationality. The dimension in which self-distancing and self-critique are possible, and in which our well-worn practices of justification can thereby be transcended and reformed, is closed off as soon as that which is rationally valid collapses into that which is socially current. To this Rorty would reply that of course someone could at any time come up with new evidence, better ideas, or a novel vocabulary; in order to take that into account, however, we should not hold our conceptions, which are always only locally justified, to be "true" in an objectivistic sense. But the objectivistic alternative invoked by Rorty does not pose itself for Putnam. Rorty once said that for him the aspiration to objectivity is not the desire to flee from one's own linguistic community but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, namely, the desire to expand the referent of "for us" to the greatest possible extent.[28] In light of this intuition, I would reformulate Putnam's objection as follows: can we explain the possibility of the critique and self-critique of established practices of justification at all if we do not take the idea of the expansion of our interpretive horizon seriously *as an idea,* and if we do not connect this idea with the intersubjectivity of an agreement that allows precisely for the distinction between what is current "for us" and what is current "for them"?

Putnam and (in a penetrating contribution to the relativism controversy) Thomas McCarthy rightfully insist upon the existence of a *symmetrical* relationship between "us" and "them" in the exemplary cases of intercultural or historical under-

standing, in which rival conceptions collide not only with each other but with conflicting standards of rationality as well.[29] The cautious contextualist's ethnocentrism, admitted by Rorty, cannot but fail to capture the symmetry among the claims and perspectives of *all* participants in a dialogue because it describes the process of understanding as an assimilative incorporation of what is alien into our (expanded) interpretive horizon. But in a situation of profound disagreement, it is not only necessary for "them" to try to understand things from "our" perspective, "we" have to try in the same manner to grasp things from "their" perspective. They would never seriously get a chance to learn from us if we did not have the chance to learn from them, and we only become aware of the limits of "our" knowledge through the faltering of "their" learning processes. The merging of interpretive horizons, which according to Gadamer is the goal of every process of reaching understanding, does not signify an assimilation to "us"; rather, it must mean a convergence, steered through learning, of "our" perspective *and* "their" perspective—no matter whether "they" or "we" or both sides have to reformulate established practices of justification to a greater or lesser extent. For learning itself belongs neither to us nor to them; both sides are caught up in it in this same way. Even in the most difficult processes of reaching understanding, all parties appeal to the common reference point of a possible consensus, even if this reference point is projected in each case from within their own contexts. For, although they may be interpreted in various ways and applied according to different criteria, concepts like truth, rationality, or justification play the *same* grammatical role in *every* linguistic community.

Certainly, some cultures have had more practice than others at distancing themselves from themselves.[30] But all languages offer the possibility of distinguishing between what is true and what we hold to be true. The *supposition* of a common objective world is built into the pragmatics of every single linguistic usage. And the dialogue roles of every speech situation enforce a symmetry in participant perspectives. They open up both the possibility for ego to adopt the perspective of alter and vice versa, and the exchangeability of the participant's and the ob-

server's perspectives. By no means do these universal pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action suggest the objectivistic fallacy according to which we could take up the extramundane standpoint of a subject removed from the world, help ourselves to an ideal language that is context-free and appears in the singular, and thereby make infallible, exhaustive, and thus definitive statements which, having neither the capacity nor the need for a commentary, would pull the plug on their own effective history. From the possibility of reaching understanding linguistically, we can read off a concept of situated reason that is given voice in validity claims that are both context-dependent and transcendent: "Reason is, in this sense, both immanent (not to be found outside of concrete language games and institutions) and transcendent (a regulative idea that we use to criticize the conduct of all activities and institutions)."[31] To put it into my own words: the validity claimed for propositions and norms transcends spaces and times, but in each actual case the claim is raised here and now, in a specific context, and accepted or rejected with real implications for social interaction.[32]

## IV

The linguistic turn did transform reason and unitary thinking, but it did not drive them out of the philosophical discussion, as is shown by the outcome of the controversy surrounding both versions of contextualism. All the same, contextualism has become a manifestation of the spirit of the times. Transcendental thinking once concerned itself with a stable stock of forms for which there were no recognizable alternatives. Today, in contrast, the experience of contingency is a whirlpool into which everything is pulled: everything could also be otherwise, the categories of the understanding, the principles of socialization and of morals, the constitution of subjectivity, the foundation of rationality itself. There are good reasons for this. Communicative reason, too, treats almost everything as contingent, even the conditions for the emergence of its own linguistic medium. But for everything that claims validity *within* linguistically structured forms of life, the structures of possible

mutual understanding in language constitute something that cannot be gotten around.

All the same, the postmodern mood is making its mark, all the way into the detective novel and onto the back-cover blurb. The publisher extols Enzensberger's new book with the notice that he enlists what is irregular against the project of homogenization, the margins against the center of power, living from difference against unity—Derrida's jargon migrates into commodity aesthetics. And a well-known author of detective stories has the thematic thread of his fable unravel in the confusion of a rich variety of contexts, to the extent that the genre-specific distinction between perpetrator and victim becomes unrecognizable in the weave of many small differences—after a sympathetic talk with the likeable murderer, who is finally caught, the police neither report him nor prosecute him.[33] Repulsion towards the One and veneration of difference and the Other obscures the dialectical connection between them. For the transitory unity that is generated in the porous and refracted intersubjectivity of a linguistically mediated consensus not only supports but furthers and accelerates the pluralization of forms of life and the individualization of lifestyles. More discourse means more contradiction and difference. The more abstract the agreements become, the more diverse the disagreements with which we can *nonviolently* live. And yet in the consciousness of the public, the idea of unity is still linked to the consequence of a forced integration of the many. Greater universalism is still treated as the enemy of individualism, not as what makes it possible. The attribution of identical meanings is still treated as the injury of metaphorical multivalence, not as its necessary condition. The unity of reason is still treated as repression, not as the source of the diversity of its voices. The background for this anxiety is still formed by the false suggestions of a unitary thinking that was left behind one-hundred-fifty years ago—just as if it were necessary today, as it was for the first generation of Hegel's students, to defend ourselves against the predominance of the great masters of metaphysics.

The reasons for this attitude appear to reside in society rather than in philosophy itself. For society has indeed become so complex that it can hardly still be made transparent from

within as the dynamic whole of a structural organization. The functionally differentiated society is decentered; the state no longer forms the political apex in which the functions relevant to the whole of society could be united; *everything* appears to have become part of the periphery. The economy and public administration have in fact expanded beyond the horizons of the lifeworld. These media-steered subsystems have congealed into a second nature. As depersonalized networks of communication, they recede from the intuitive knowledge of members, who are shunted aside into the environment of these systems. It thus seems plausible to treat society, which can no longer be grasped through narratives, in a way similar to that in which nature has been treated, to entrust it to an objectifying social science—now, of course, with the result that our self-understanding is immediately affected. That is, to the extent that the objectifying descriptions of society migrate into the lifeworld, we become alienated from ourselves as communicatively acting subjects. It is this self-objectification that transforms the perception of heightened societal complexity into the experience of being delivered over to sheer contingencies. All referents for coping with these contingencies have been lost—both the societal subject and transcendental consciousness have long since slipped away from us, the anxious members of the high-risk society.

The resulting discouragement is expressed in the radically contextualist processing of paralyzing experiences with contingency. But this discouragement will shed its character of being unavoidable if it is possible to defend and make fruitful for social theory a concept of reason that attends to the phenomenon of the lifeworld and permits the outmoded concept of the "consciousness of society as a whole" (which comes from the philosophy of the subject and finds no foothold in modern societies) to be reformulated on the basis of a theory of intersubjectivity. Even the decentered society cannot do without the reference point provided by the projected unity of an intersubjectively formed common will. I cannot pursue this thought further here. It signals, however, the practical implications resulting from the transformation of the unitary thinking of metaphysics and from the controversy surrounding contex-

tualism. I have gone into this controversy with the intention of rendering plausible a weak but not defeatistic concept of linguistically embodied reason. I want to close with a few brief theses relating to (1) the transformed status of the debate, and to (2) the question of what still remains of the normative content of metaphysics "at the moment of its downfall" (Adorno).

(1) The concept of reason that is identified in the presuppositions of action oriented toward mutual understanding frees us from the dilemma of having to choose between Kant and Hegel. Communicative reason is neither incorporeal, like the spontaneity of a subjectivity that is world-constituting yet itself without a world (*weltlos*), nor does it twist history into a circular teleology for the sake of the absolute self-mediation of a historicized spirit. The transcendental gap between the intelligible and the empirical worlds no longer has to be overcome through the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of history. It has instead been reduced to a tension transferred into the lifeworld of the communicative actors themselves, a tension between the unconditional character of context-bursting, transcendent validity claims on the one hand and, on the other hand, the factual character of the context-dependent "yes" and "no" positions that create social facts *in situ*. Kant's irreconcilable worlds, the objective world of appearances and the moral world of autonomous action, shed their transcendental-ontological dignity. Together with the inner world of the empirical subject, they return in everyday communicative practice as more or less trivial suppositions of commonality that make possible the cognitive, the regulative, and the expressive uses of language, and thus the relation to "something in the world."

Yet, beyond this, communicatively acting subjects are freed from the work of world-constituting syntheses. They already find themselves within the context of a lifeworld that makes their communicative actions possible, just as it is in turn maintained through the medium of these processes of reaching understanding. This background, which is presupposed in communicative action, constitutes a totality that is implicit and that comes along prereflexively—one that crumbles the moment it is thematized; it remains a totality only in the form of implicit, intuitively presupposed background knowledge. Tak-

ing the unity of the lifeworld, which is only known subconsciously, and projecting it in an objectifying manner onto the level of explicit knowledge is the operation that has been responsible for mythological, religious, and also of course metaphysical worldviews. With criticizable validity claims, and with the ability to orient oneself toward validity claims, everyday practice becomes permeated with idealizations that nevertheless set the stage for social facts. The ideas of meaning-identity, truth, justice, sincerity, and accountability leave their marks here. Yet they retain world-constituting power only as heuristic ideas of reason; they lend unity and organization to the situation interpretations that participants negotiate with each other. A transcendental illusion arises therefrom only when the totality of the lifeworld, presupposed as a background in everyday practice, is hypostatized as the speculative idea of the One and All, or as the transcendental idea of a mental spontaneity that brings everything forth out of itself.

The concept of pragmatic, yet unavoidable and idealizing presuppositions of action oriented toward reaching understanding must be differentiated according to the various burdens it has to bear. Those acting communicatively presuppose the lifeworld behind them in a different manner than the validity basis of their speech. In yet another way, understanding a thematically uttered propositional content presupposes understanding the associated illocutionary act, whose meaning 'comes along' unthematically in the performance of the complete speech act.

The philosophical tradition, as we have seen, has always held only privative concepts or negatively encircling formulas ready for what is individual because it has privileged the being of entities, the knowledge of objects, and the assertoric sentence or propositional content and has *equated* these with the comprehensible. But if we assume that the only thing we can understand is the propositional contents of assertions, then the individual essence—the very expression is paradoxical—unavoidably eludes the infinitely many (falsely objectifying) specifications. Since Kierkegaard we have been in a position to know that individuality can only be read from the traces of an authentic life that has been existentially drawn together into

some sort of an appropriated totality. The significance of individuality discloses itself from the autobiographical perspective, as it were, of the first-person—I alone can performatively lay claim to being recognized as an individual in my uniqueness. If we liberate this idea from the capsule of absolute inwardness and follow Humboldt and George Herbert Mead in grafting it onto the medium of a language that crosses processes of socialization and individuation with each other, then we will find the key to the solution of this final and most difficult of the problems left behind by metaphysics.[34] The performative attitude we have to take up if we want to reach an understanding with one another about something gives every speaker the possibility (which certainly has not always been put to use) of employing the "I" of the illocutionary act in such a way that it becomes linked to the comprehensible claim that I should be recognized as an individual person who cannot be replaced in taking responsibility for my own life history.

(2) The concept of communicative reason is still accompanied by the shadow of a transcendental illusion. Because the idealizing presuppositions of communicative action must not be hypostatized into the ideal of a future condition in which a definitive understanding has been reached, this concept must be approached in a sufficiently skeptical manner.[35] A theory that leads us to believe in the attainability of a rational ideal would fall back behind the level of argumentation reached by Kant. It would also abandon the materialistic legacy of the critique of metaphysics. The moment of unconditionality that is preserved in the discursive concepts of a fallibilistic truth and morality is not an absolute, or it is at most an absolute that has become fluid as a critical procedure. Only with this residue of metaphysics can we do battle against the transfiguration of the world through metaphysical truths—the last trace of "*Nihil contra Deum nisi Deus ipse.*" Communicative reason is of course a rocking hull—but it does not go under in the sea of contingencies, even if shuddering in high seas is the only mode in which it 'copes' with these contingencies.

This foundation is not even stable enough for a negative metaphysics. The latter after all continues to offer an equiva-

lent for the extramundane perspective of a God's-eye view: a perspective radically different from the lines of sight belonging to innerworldly participants and observers. That is, negative metaphysics uses the perspective of the radical outsider, in which one who is mad, existentially isolated, or aesthetically enraptured distances himself from the world, and indeed from the lifeworld as a whole. These outsiders no longer have a language, at least no speech based on reasons, for spreading the message of that which they have seen. Their speechlessness finds words only in the empty negation of everything that metaphysics once affirmed with the concept of the universal One. In contrast, communicative reason cannot withdraw from the determinate negations in language, discursive as linguistic communication in fact is. It must therefore refrain from the paradoxical statements of negative metaphysics: that the whole is the false, that everything is contingent, that there is no consolation whatsoever. Communicative reason does not make its appearance in an aestheticized theory as the colorless negative of a religion that provides consolation. It neither announces the absence of consolation in a world forsaken by God, nor does it take it upon itself to provide any consolation. It does without exclusivity as well. As long as no better words for what religion can say are found in the medium of rational discourse, it will even coexist abstemiously with the former, neither supporting it nor combatting it.

There is also something more in being able to do less and in wanting to do less than negative metaphysics entrusts to itself. The analysis of the necessary conditions for mutual understanding in general at least allows us to develop the idea of an intact intersubjectivity, which makes possible both a mutual and constraint-free understanding among individuals in their dealings with one another and the identity of individuals who come to a compulsion-free understanding with themselves. This intact intersubjectivity is a glimmer of symmetrical relations marked by free, reciprocal recognition. But this idea must not be filled in as the totality of a reconciled form of life and projected into the future as a utopia. It contains no more, but also no less, than the formal characterization of the necessary conditions for the unforeseeable forms adopted by a life that

is not misspent. No prospect of such forms of life can be given to us, not even in the abstract, this side of prophetic teachings. All we know of them is that if they could be realized at all, they would have to be produced through our own combined effort and be marked by solidarity, though they need not necessarily be free of conflict. Of course, "producing" does not mean manufacturing according to the model of realizing intended ends. Rather, it signifies a type of emergence that cannot be intended, an emergence out of a cooperative endeavor to moderate, abolish, or prevent the suffering of vulnerable creatures. This endeavor is fallible, and it does fail over and over again. This type of producing or self-bringing-forth places the responsibility on our shoulders without making us less dependent upon the "the luck of the moment." Connected with this is the modern meaning of humanism, long expressed in the ideas of a self-conscious life, of authentic self-realization, and of autonomy—a humanism that is not bent on self-assertion. This project, like the communicative reason that inspires it, is historically situated. It has not been made, it has taken shape—and it can be pursued further, or be abandoned out of discouragement. Above all, the project is not the property of philosophy. Philosophy, working together with the reconstructive sciences, can only throw light on the situations in which we find ourselves. It can contribute to our learning to understand the ambivalences that we come up against as just so many appeals to increasing responsibilities within a diminishing range of options.

## Notes

1. Robert Spaemann, "Natur," in *Philosophische Essays* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983), 19ff.; idem, *Das Natürliche und das Vernünftige* (Munich, 1987); Dieter Henrich, *Fluchtlinien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982); idem, "Dunkelheit und Vergewisserung," in *All-Einheit, Wege eines Gedankens in Ost und West,* ed. D. Henrich (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985), 33ff.

2. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Differend,* trans. Georges van den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and generally: Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

3. Odo Marquard, *Farewell to Matters of Principle,* trans. Robert M. Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

4. Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

5. Cf. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion,* trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963); and Karl Jaspers, *The Great Philosophers,* vol. 1, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962).

6. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1972).

7. Klaus Heinrich, *Dahlemer Vorlesungen,* vol. 1 (Frankfurt, 1981).

8. Werner Beierwaltes, *Denken des Einen* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985), 31ff.

9. Karl Heinz Haag, *Der Fortschritt in der Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983), 33.

10. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics,* trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

11. H. Brunkhorst, "Dialektischer Positivismus des Glücks," *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* 39 (1985): 353ff.; M. Korthals, "Die kritische Gesellschaftstheorie des frühen Horkheimer," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 14 (1985): 315ff.

12. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), B-385.

13. Cf. below, "Individuation through Socialization," section VIII.

14. E. Rothacker, "Die dogmatische Denkform in den Geisteswissenschaften und das Problem des Historismus," *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaft und der Literatur* (Mainz, 1954).

15. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 7ff.

16. Joachim Ritter, "Die Aufgabe des Geisteswissenschaften in der modernen Gesellschaft" (1963), in *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), 105ff; cf. my critique in: J. Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences,* trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Jerry Stark (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 16ff.

17. Odo Marquard, "Über die Unvermeidlichkeit der Geisteswissenschaften," in *Apologie des Zufälligen* (1986), 98ff.; idem, "Verspätete Moralistik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (March 18, 1987).

18. Helmut Schelsky, *Einsamkeit und Freiheit* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963), 222ff.

19. Odo Marquard, "In Praise of Polytheism," in *Farewell to Matters of Principle,* 87ff.

20. The compensation theory does not become more plausible when its political meaning is revealed to us. Marquard's "In Praise of Polytheism" is based on the following narrative. There are wholesome myths; they are the ones that we normally call myths and that always appear in the plural. What is harmful is monomythology, because it always lays claim to exclusivity; monomythology first appears in the doctrines of universal unity in monotheism and the philosophy of origins. Due to a paucity of safeguarded non-identity among the circle of their followers, these doctrines generate

an unfree ego-identity. In the wake of the disintegration of this religious-metaphysical unitary thinking, a vacuum arises, which in the course of the eighteenth century is filled by the most harmful monomythology of all, namely that of progress. The absolute autarchic mythology is the philosophy of history, which takes the power of the one over the human many and intensifies it into open terror. The only thing that could help counter this would be a *disenchanted* return of polytheism, in the form of *Geisteswissenschaften* that are no longer bewitched by the universalism of reason. I am amazed by the explanatory burden that this story is expected to bear. Why should the thinking of the philosophy of history, which has always entertained arguments, be vanquished by an anti-philosophy-of-history that is offered narratively, that is, without arguments? I also have no idea who, today, still thinks in terms of the philosophy of history at all, if that means "defining history as the long march into the universal and as the dissolution of the individual in the species." ("Universalgeschichte und Multiversalgeschichte," in *Apologie des Zufälligen*, 70.) Only the political meaning of the whole undertaking is clear: the continuation of a very German tradition, namely the venerable struggle against the ideas of the French Revolution.

21. Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

22. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

23. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 211.

24. Ibid., 390.

25. Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?," in *Post-Analytic Philosophy,* ed. John Rajchman and Cornel West (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 3ff.; Hilary Putnam, "Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized," *Synthese* 52 (1982): 1ff. (Reprinted in *After Philosophy—End or Transformation?,* ed. K. Baynes, J. Bohman, and T. McCarthy [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987], 222ff.)

26. Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism, Davidson, and Truth," in *Truth and Interpretation,* ed. E. LePore (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 333ff.

27. Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?," 12f.

28. Ibid., 8.

29. Thomas McCarthy, "Contra Relativism: A Thought Experiment," in Michael Krausz, ed., *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation* (Notre Dame, 1989), 256–271.

30. Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, eds., *Rationality and Relativism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

31. H. Putnam, "Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized," 228.

32. Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 322f.

33. Jan van de Wetering, *Rattenfang* (Hamburg, 1986).

34. Cf. below, "Individuation through Socialization," section IX.

35. Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

# 1
# FROM WORLDVIEWS TO THE LIFEWORLD

When we reflect theoretically on our understanding of the world and of ourselves, we speak in terms of worldviews [*Weltbilder*] or *Weltanschauungen*. While the notion of a '*Weltanschauung*' has the connotation of the *process* of comprehending the whole, the concept of a 'worldview' places the emphasis more on the *result* of an interpretation of the world – that is, its theoretical or representational character. Both expressions have the existential significance of something which provides orientation – *Weltanschauungen* and worldviews give us orientation in our life as a whole. This orientational knowledge must not be confused with scientific knowledge even when it claims to represent a synthesis of currently valid research. This explains the distanced tone of the associated terminology. When 'worldview' and '*Weltanschauung*' are not used merely as pejorative expressions to distinguish philosophy from dubious rivals,[1] the preference is to apply them retrospectively to the 'strong' traditions of the past. Then we mean first and foremost conceptions which can be traced back in one way or another to the cosmological and theocentric worldviews of the Axial Age, also including essential parts of Greek philosophy.

Even today philosophical doctrines still fulfil the function of worldviews to the extent that they have preserved their reference to the world as a whole, to the cosmos, to world history and the history of salvation [*Heilsgeschichte*], and to a process of natural evolution that includes human beings and culture.[2] Such doctrines can be justified as forms of ethical self-interpretation; but the more or less explicit self-interpretation of a particular ethos cannot claim universal validity any longer under modern conditions of the pluralism of worldviews. Moreover, philosophy in the guise of postmetaphysical thinking would also be well advised to refrain from merely producing worldviews. How can it satisfy this requirement without at the same time sacrificing its reference to the whole? Today philosophy as a discipline is disintegrating into the fragments of its hyphenated philosophies by specializing in reconstructing particular competences, such as speaking, acting and knowing, or by reflecting on the *pre-existing* cultural forms of science, morality, law, religion or art. Can these fragments be reassembled to form a whole by taking the focus on the lifeworld as our starting point? The path leading from worldviews to the concept of the lifeworld which I will sketch here suggests that we can arrive at a non-foundational 'non-hyphenated' philosophy after all.

Admittedly, the world of the lifeworld is a different one from that of worldviews. It neither signifies the sublime cosmos or an exemplary order of things, nor does it refer to a fateful *saeculum* or an eon – that is, to an ordered succession of occurrences of relevance for salvation. The lifeworld does not confront us as a theoretical object; rather, we find ourselves *in* the lifeworld in a pre-theoretical sense. It *encompasses* and *supports* us insofar as we, as finite beings, *cope* with the things and events we encounter in the world. Husserl speaks of the 'horizon' of the lifeworld and of its 'function as a ground' for our everyday activities. To anticipate, the lifeworld can be described as the insurmountable, only intuitively accompanying

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horizon of experience and as the uncircumventable, non-objectively present experiential background of a personal, historically situated, embodied and communicatively socialized everyday existence. We become aware of this mode of existence under a variety of aspects. We become aware of ourselves performatively as *experiencing* subjects who are embedded in organic life processes, as *socialized* persons who are enmeshed in their social relations and practices, and as *actors* who intervene in the world. What is compressed into this compact formula cannot be contemplated like the starry heavens above us; and it is not something that can be accepted as binding truth trusting in the word of God.

When we engage in explicit communication about something in the world, we are operating in a milieu that has always been constructed on the basis of such performative certainties. It is the task of philosophical reflection to bring the most general features – as it were, the architectonic – of the lifeworld to consciousness. Therefore, this philosophical description refers not to how the world in itself hangs together but to the conditions of our access to what takes place in the world. All that is left of the image of the world after this anthropocentric return to the ground and horizon of our beingin-the-world is the empty framework for *possible* factual knowledge.

With this, the analysis of the lifeworld background also loses the orienting function of worldviews, which with their theoretical access to the whole also promise to provide practical insight into how to lead our lives. Husserl nevertheless wants to extract an important practical lesson from the phenomenology of the lifeworld, which he conceives as a strictly descriptive enterprise. Specifically, with this concept he wants to uncover the forgotten 'meaning foundation' of science and thus to preserve knowledge-based society from the far-reaching consequences of objectivism. Today the challenge posed by an excessively scientistic form of naturalism raises a similar question – namely, whether and, if necessary, in what sense the epistemic role of the lifeworld sets limits to a scientific revision of how people understand themselves in their everyday lives.

I would like to test the plausibility of Husserl's thesis of the forgotten meaning foundation in terms of a rough outline of the development of worldviews. With the spread of an ontological world concept and, later, the construction of an epistemological concept of world,[3] European philosophy on the one hand played a central role in the cognitive process of disentangling the objective world of science from the projective objectivization of aspects of lifeworlds which operate in the background. As a secular intellectual formation, philosophy turned its back on religion while simultaneously renouncing strong metaphysical claims to knowledge. On the other hand, while it contributed to the genealogy of a disenchanted and objectivized concept of the empirical world, philosophy suppressed the epistemic role of the lifeworld. Therefore, I am interested in how reflection on this repressed background changes the self-understanding of postmetaphysical thinking.

Anticipating the communicative concept of the lifeworld, I will first explain the difference between 'lifeworld', 'objective world' and 'everyday world' (1). These basic concepts will serve to relate the critique of science to the context of worldview development. The interesting thing about this development is the progressive cognitive liberation of the 'objective world' from projections of the 'lifeworld' (2) and how the resulting problems of the objectivized

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image of the world of natural science are dealt with by transcendental philosophy (3). This picture is further complicated by the rise of human and social science, which at the same time represent a challenge for transcendental philosophy (4). The bipolar objectivization of our picture of the objective world and a corresponding detranscendentalization of the underlying constituting subjectivity explain why Husserl's critique of science becomes heightened into a dilemma. The complementarity between the lifeworld and the objective world, which we cannot circumvent *in actu*, is connected with a form of epistemic dualism which conflicts with the need for a monistic interpretation of the world (5). In conclusion, I will briefly examine some attempts to find a way out of this dilemma (6).

(1) The concept of the lifeworld is based on the distinction between performative consciousness and fallible knowledge. The unique character of the attendant, intuitively certain background knowledge that accompanies us in our everyday routines but always remains implicit can be explained by the fact that the lifeworld is present to us only in a performative manner, when we perform actions which are always directed to something *else*. The fear of losing one's foothold on loose gravel or the feeling of blushing over an embarrassing mistake, the sudden realization that one can no longer count on the loyalty of an old friend, or what it means for a long cherished background assumption suddenly to begin to totter – these are all things that we 'know'. For in situations such as these in which established routines are disrupted, a layer of implicit knowledge is uncovered, be it a habitual ability, a sensitivity, a dependable social relationship or a firm conviction. As long as they remain unthematized in the background, these components of the performative knowledge thus adumbrated form an amalgam.

In principle each of these certainties can be transformed from a resource of social cooperation and communication into a theme, especially when the normal routine is disrupted and dissonances arise. Hence, the lifeworld described in phenomenological terms can also be understood as the background of communicative action and be related to processes of reaching understanding.[4] Then it is no longer the conscious life of a transcendental ego that stands at the centre of the lifeworld horizon, as in Husserl, but instead the communicative relationship between at least two participants, alter and ego. The lifeworld appears to both participants in communication as the accompanying, only implicitly present, arbitrarily expandable horizon within which each present encounter is localized in the – likewise only performatively present – dimensions of social space and lived historical time.

This approach in terms of a theory of communication is well suited to clarifying the basic concepts of the 'lifeworld', the 'objective world' and the 'everyday world' (a) in terms of which I want to analyse the development of worldviews (b).

(a) Lifeworld certainties represent a heightened and nevertheless deficient form of 'knowledge', because they lose their performative character once they are expressed in assertions. What cannot be expressed in true or false assertions cannot count as knowledge in the strict sense. We must place the background knowledge that we have been talking about until now in quotation marks. For what we 'know' in this intuitive way can be made explicit only by transforming it into a description; however, in doing so, the performative character of what is

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merely ‘known’ dissolves – it disintegrates, as it were. Interestingly, the only exception to this are illocutionary acts. The illocutionary components of speech acts – such as ‘I concede, that I . . .’, ‘I recommend that you . . .’, or ‘I am quite certain that p’ – express the performative character of what is lived or experienced, of interpersonal relations and of convictions *as such, without explicitly representing it in terms of a proposition*, because in each case the propositional contents expressed with the illocutionary act deal with something else. An embarrassing confession, a piece of friendly advice or a firm conviction can have any content whatsoever. But only in the case of a constative speech act is this propositional content presented as an existing state of affairs. In an expressive utterance, the propositional meaning becomes the content of an experience to which the first person has privileged access and which he or she ‘discloses’ to others. In regulative speech acts, it becomes the content of an interpersonal relationship that a first person enters into with a second person. All three modalities are reflected in the validity claims of the corresponding types of speech acts, in the truthfulness, rightness or truth claims that speakers raise for first-person assertions, for propositions addressed to second persons or for descriptive statements. Thanks to this triad of validity claims, the performative meaning of subjective experiences, intersubjective obligations and what is objectively meant enters the public space of reasons via linguistic communication.

What is interesting in the present context is the relationship between ‘lifeworld’ and ‘objective world’ as reflected in the twofold structure of speech acts. When performing their illocutionary acts, speakers belong to a lifeworld, whereas in using the propositional components of these acts they *refer to* something in the objective world. In communicative action, they jointly assume the existence of this objective world as the totality of the objects or referents existing independently of description about which states of affairs can be asserted. However, this does not mean that statements cannot be made about the lifeworld itself. Those involved can assume a thirdperson attitude towards their own engagement and, in a *further* act of reaching understanding, thematize a performatively produced communicative relationship – that is, *treat it as something that occurs in the world.* This is because anything that is made into the content of a proposition is thematized as something which is given or exists in the world.

Despite the insurmountable intentional distance from events in the objective world – the gap between the performance and the explicit content of communicative act – it is part of the experience of participants in communication and of their background knowledge that the communication process in which they are currently involved takes place in *the same* world as that to which the referents of the statements they make in the same moment also belong. The lifeworld *as a component of the objective world* enjoys a kind of ‘ontological primacy’ over the respective current background consciousness of the individual involved, because the performatively present life processes – i.e., experiences, interpersonal relations and beliefs – presuppose the bodily organism, the intersubjectively shared practices and the traditions in which the experiencing, acting and speaking subjects ‘always’ find themselves.

(b) I will return to the mode of existence of these lifeworlds articulated in symbolic forms and to the objectifying description of ‘socio-cultural forms of life’. First I would like to examine the ‘picture’ we form of this all-inclusive objective world. As long as we are absorbed in

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*performing* these intentional (linguistic or non-linguistic) activities, we cannot detach ourselves from the lifeworld which is present in the background and forms the horizon within which we adopt an intentional orientation to something 'in the world'. But we can know that this same objective world, viewed from the perspective of a distanced observer, in turn *includes* us, our networks of interaction, and their background side by side with other entities. This shapes our inclusive 'everyday world', the world of common sense. We should not equate this with the philosophical concept of the 'lifeworld', even though the performative traits of the lifeworld also determine the structure of our 'everyday world', the fact that it is centred on us, our encounters and practices, our states of mind and interests. However, the 'everyday world' is inclusive. It includes not only what is familiar in a performative manner but also the perceived and known elements of the natural environment that confront us. The everyday world is not exhausted by the segments constituted by our background knowledge – that is, by the subjective life routines, the social relations and the taken-for-granted cultural beliefs with which we are familiar in the performative mode. The image we form of the 'objective world' – our worldview – is directly shaped by this everyday world.

In our everyday lives, we categorize the things we encounter in the world according to levels of practical involvement. Roughly speaking, we categorize them as persons if they can enter into communicative relations with us; we categorize them as norms, speech acts, actions, texts, signs, artefacts, and so forth, if they can be understood as things produced by persons; we categorize them as animals and plants if their self-sustaining and boundary-maintaining character as organic systems compels us to treat them with consideration (for example, to tend to or breed them); or we construe things as manipulable objects when we can strip them of all lifeworld qualities that accrue to them from other domains of experience (for example, the qualities of a 'tool' or of natural beauty). It is no accident that the ontology closely allied to everyday life which we find in Aristotle recalls this practically imbued 'picture' of the 'objective world'.

Clearly, the production of worldviews – of the historically varying pictures we make of the objective world – starts from the trivial layers of the everyday world. Whereas the scientific view of the world takes its orientation from the everyday category of bodies and comprehends the universe as the totality of physically measurable states and events regulated by natural laws, the earliest mythical traditions assimilate almost all events to communicative relations between persons. If we can believe the accounts of cultural anthropology,[5] the world reflected in those mythical narratives has a monistic structure: there is only *one* level of phenomena but nothing 'in itself' underlying them. Narrated events are structured as social interactions involving people and animals, but also the spirits of the ancestors and imaginary natural and original forces, supra-personal powers and personalized gods.[6] Almost anyone can communicate with anyone and everything with everything; they can express feelings and wishes, intentions and opinions, and influence one another.

The narratives give rise to a network of 'correspondences' in which ritualized actions are also embedded. The dealings with the mythical powers organized in burial and sacrificial rituals, in ancestor worship and natural magic, acquire their self-evidence from this embedding. In this way, the *performative attitude*, in which a first person adjusts herself to a second person in

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order to communicate with him about something, merges in magical practices with the *objectifying attitude* of a technician towards impersonal or supra-personal forces over which she wants to exercise causal influence. By communicating *with* a spirit, the sorcerer acquires power *over* it. The dominance of a single category, namely, that of communicative action, provides impressive evidence of this.

Clearly, so-called mythical worldviews are not only shaped by the totalizing features of a centred lifeworld inhabited 'by us'. They are also imbued with and structured by the performative consciousness of the lifeworld in such a way that the *distinction between lifeworld and objective world* built into the grammar of communicative action and managed practically by those involved in everyday life *merges* in the worldviews of early tribal societies. The categories of action oriented to reaching an understanding structure natural processes in the world as a whole, so that, *from our point of view*, what occurs in the world *is absorbed by the segments of the everyday world constituted by the lifeworld.*

For us today, these mythical origins and the worldview of modern science stand in a peculiar contrast, which suggests that during the development of worldviews the objective world that exists 'in itself' was progressively purified *for the participants* of the surplus lifeworld qualities projected upon it. As we learn to cope with cognitive dissonances that are empirically triggered and mastered, our view of the objective world becomes *disenchanted.* Would an exaggerated scientistic version of naturalism have to have the last word from this perspective? Or can we defend Husserl's thesis that science rests on a forgotten foundation of meaning by arguing that the progressive trend towards objectivization has led to an increasingly extreme polarization between the lifeworld, which is henceforth defined exclusively in formal terms but remains epistemically unavoidable, and a scientific objectified world?

(2) The following, very rough sketch of the development of worldviews is a proposal for how we can understand three caesuras along the path 'from worldviews to the lifeworld' as cognitive advances, each of which led to increasingly disenchanted and progressively more specific perspectives on the objective world. From this selective and correspondingly biased viewpoint, I am first interested in the step which leads from mythical thinking absorbed in the fluctuation of inner-worldly events, as outlined above, to a conception of 'the' world as a whole; I will then examine the distinctive occidental combination of theocentric and cosmological worldviews which leads to a polarization between faith and knowledge; and, finally, I will trace the emancipation of scientific knowledge of nature from metaphysics, which also breaks the link between cosmology and ethics and thus destroys the shared rational basis of faith and knowledge.

Since this account focuses narrowly on the development in the West, and even then would need to fill several books or even libraries, I can address only one aspect of my proposal regarding our topic: How did the conceptual constellations of 'lifeworld', 'objective world' and 'everyday world' shift in the wake of these presumed advances in learning?

With his concept of the 'Axial Age', Karl Jaspers highlighted the fact that, during a relatively short period around the middle of the first millennium BCE, there was a cognitive breakthrough

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in the world of civilizations that extended from the Middle East to the Far East.[7] The religious doctrines and cosmological worldviews that remain influential up to the present day arose around that time in Persia, India and China, and in Israel and Greece. These 'strong traditions' – namely, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Confucianism, Judaism and Greek philosophy – brought about a shift in worldviews from the plurality of surface phenomena linked at the same level through narratives to the unity of the world as a whole conceived in theological or 'theoretical' terms. In monotheism, the cosmic 'order of things' assumed the temporalized form of a teleological order of world ages.

In the meantime, the concept of the Axial Age has inspired a diverse international literature.[8] Of primary interest in the present context is the process by which an *involved* actor became liberated from the cognitive bias that confined her to a representation of the world from the *internal perspective* of someone entangled in mythical stories. The new dualistic worldviews broke with this twodimensional monism. With the conception of a single God beyond the world or concepts of a law-governed cosmic order, they opened up perspectives from which the world could be grasped as an objectified whole. The reference to the fixed pole of the single creator of the world, to the nomos which holds everything in balance, to the deep underlying reality of Nirvana or of eternal being, afforded the prophet or the wise man, the preacher and the teacher, the contemplative beholder and the mystic, the holy man absorbed in prayer and the philosopher sunk in intellectual contemplation, the necessary distance from the many, the contingent and the changeable. Regardless of whether the dualistic view of the world was more pronounced, as in the salvation religions of Israel and India, or less pronounced, as in Greek philosophy and Chinese wisdom teachings, these intellectual elites everywhere achieved a cognitive *breakthrough to a transcendent standpoint*.

From this vantage point, everything that takes place *within the world* could be distinguished from *the world as such or in itself*. And this perspective on being and humanity as a whole gave rise to that categorical distinction between essence and appearance which replaced the older, expressivist distinction between the spirit world and its manifestations (and in addition undermined the basis of magical conceptions in worldviews). With the differentiation between 'world' and what is 'in-the-world', *the everyday world was demoted to the realm of mere appearances*. This theoretical grasp of essences enhanced the explanatory power of narratives. The conceptual framework was now able to process the mass of practical, natural historical and medical knowledge, including astronomical and mathematical knowledge, which had accumulated in the urban centres of the early civilizations and to integrate it into a coherent whole that could be transmitted.

While myth remained tightly interwoven with everyday practices and did not acquire the self-sufficiency of a theoretical 'image' of the world, philosophical and theological conceptions of an 'objective', all-encompassing world found expression in the worldviews of the Axial Age. *For those involved*, religious or contemplative conceptions of the world as a whole marked the dissolution of the fusion of the 'objective world' with the 'lifeworld' which *we* today read out of mythical worldviews. *From our point of view*, the introduction and subordination of the everyday world *downgraded to a mere phenomenon* takes account of the fact that the performatively present lifeworld, together with the practices and network of cross-references

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in which they become accessible to communicative actors, is an entity *in* the world like all others.

However, this objectivization exacts a price. The 'lifeworld' as such does not appear in the worldviews of the Axial Age but is merged with the appearances of the 'everyday world'. For believers and philosophers, their own lifeworld operating behind their backs disappears so completely behind the ontotheologically objectivized images of the world that the projective traits which these worldviews continue to *borrow* from the performative consciousness of their vital lived existence in the world remain hidden from them. This can be shown by three aspects of the lifeworld which are reflected in the world of cosmologies and theologies.

- *First*, the cosmos and the history of salvation are depicted in dimensions of lived social space and experienced historical time. As a result, the boundaries of the object world merge with the lifeworld horizon, projected to a superhuman scale, of an inhabitable world centred on us, of which the fleeting appearances of our everyday life in turn constitute only a part. In this architectonic of what Jaspers calls the 'encompassing', the teleological constitution of the world retains the lifeworld character of our everyday dealings with human beings, animals, plants and inanimate nature.
- *Second*, the worldviews of the Axial Age are by no means theories in the sense of a value-neutral description of known facts. The reason for this is that the *theoretical* interpretation of the world is already fused with precepts of the *practical* conduct of life through its strong, value-laden conceptual frame. When the whole is described with the help of such concepts as 'God', 'Karma', 'to on' or 'Tao', the *description* of sacred history or of the cosmos simultaneously acquires the *evaluative* connotation of an exemplary being [*Seiende*] whose telos has a normative significance for the believers and wise men as something to be emulated. This conceptual fusion of the binding force of normative statements with the truth of descriptive statements is reminiscent of the lifeworld background syndrome, which dissolves only in the course of linguistic thematization and becomes ramified into the different validity dimensions of the corresponding types of speech acts.
- *Finally*, the claim to infallibility with which religious and metaphysical 'truths' appear is also a function of the practical connotations of the theoretical interpretation of the world. Because the various conceptions of the world and of the ages of the world are supposed to be 'cashed out' in paths to salvation or in politically influential models of an exemplary life, theoretical beliefs have to be as convincing and as immune to cognitive dissonances as are ethical-existential certainties. This explains the *dogmatic form of thought* which lends religious and wisdom teachings the shape of 'strong' theories. With the claim to infallible truths, the *performative mode of knowledge* as it were reaches out of the lifeworld into the domain of explicit mundane knowledge.

Insofar as the worldviews of the Axial Age can be described retrospectively as involving an unreflected projection of such aspects of the lifeworld onto the objective world, the structure of the world concept already prefigures the path leading to a possible objectivization. The cognitive development points, firstly, towards a decentred concept of the world as the totality

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of physically describable states and events, secondly, towards a separation between theoretical and practical reason, and, finally, towards a fallibilistic, but non-sceptical understanding of theoretical knowledge. These vanishing points refer, of course, to our own hermeneutic starting point – that is, to a postmetaphysical understanding of ourselves and the world as this developed from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onwards. In order to strip this 'narcissistic' developmental construction at least of the deceptive appearance of necessary progress, I would now have to discuss the historical contingencies which first explain the improbable and unique systematic interpenetration of a cosmological worldview with a theological doctrine – that is, the productive conflation of Pauline Christianity and Greek metaphysics into the twofold shape of Hellenized Christianity and theologically founded Platonism. During the centuries that followed, the discourse on revelation and natural reason contended with the explosive impact of sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine and natural philosophy, each of which observes a logic of its own. However, *the discourse on faith and knowledge* developed its explosive power only with the reception of Aristotle through Arab mediation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[9] In the course of this reception, the opposing concepts of 'faith' and 'knowledge' sharpened their respective profiles in contrast to one another.

However, the shared rational basis of faith and knowledge fell to pieces to the extent that natural philosophy lost its ability to connect up with theology, which nevertheless wanted to keep pace with contemporary science. Aristotle's teleological ontology still contains a semantic potential which was open to a practical connection interpreted in terms of a conception of salvation. However, scholastic nominalism laid the groundwork for an unbiased empirical view of nature and ultimately for nomological empirical science for which the book of nature no longer bears a divine signature; it also prepares the way for a theory of knowledge which correlates the 'nature' of modern natural science with the human mind.[10] This *second orientation* involves an inversion of the burden of proof when it comes to demonstrating the compatibility of religion and science, because henceforth stubborn philosophical discourses develop around the modern empirical sciences and the secular political powers which assert their independence from theology.[11]

Along this line of development, metaphysics, which until then had been contained within the realm of theology, assumed, in the course of the seventeenth century, the form of philosophical systems which received their formative impulses from both epistemology and social contract theory. The world of moving and causally interacting bodies conceived in physicalist terms lost the character of a 'container' of human existence. At the same time, the theoretical knowledge of this world, which is no longer affiliated with practical reason, forfeited its ability to provide practical orientation. For this reason Christian natural law also had to be replaced by human law based on practical reason alone. From that point onwards, philosophy gradually lost interest in its relation to religion. Postmetaphysical thinking concentrates on philosophy's relation to science. This gives rise to a deficit that I cannot discuss in greater detail here.[12]

With the advance to the modern secular and scientized understanding of the world, the

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conceptual constellation of lifeworld, objective world and everyday world once again undergoes a change. Because the objective world consists of everything about which true statements can be made, Newton's philosophical contemporaries comprehended the world in terms of the mechanistic picture that physics forms of nature as a whole. To the 'world' belong the objects of experience, which stand in a 'natural' – that is, law-governed – relationship with all other things. Mathematics and scientific experimentation succeed the 'natural reason' of the theologian-philosopher in its role as the canonical authority for judging notoriously unreliable everyday experiences. Underlying the sensory phenomena of the everyday world are no longer essences but the law-governed movements of causally interacting bodies.

Having taken the step to the mechanistic concept of nature, the picture of the objective world seems to be freed from objectivized aspects of the lifeworld. But what place does the lifeworld have in this objectivized understanding of the world? The world concept purged of lifeworld projections was introduced not from an ontological but, at first, from an epistemological perspective. It is the product of reflection on the conditions of possibility of reliable physical knowledge. This is why the knowing subject represents the counterpart of the objective world. The conceptual dualities of the mentalistic paradigm leave only the niche of representational subjectivity for the lifeworld. This retreat leaves behind traces both in the aporetic character of the mental and in the rumblings of practical questions for which, following the split between practical reason and scientized and postmetaphysically deflated theoretical reason, there is now no longer any clear place.

(3) In the course of the seventeenth century, empiricism developed the beginnings of the scientific image of the world which Husserl accused of 'objectivism'. This worldview developed within the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness and, hence, is haunted by its problems. In order to prepare the argument that, in the mentalist paradigm, the lifeworld is hidden behind the façade of the human mind, I will first explain the aporetic status of the mental (a) and then trace the 'moral unbelief'[13] of the empiricists which provoked Kant's transcendental turn (b).

(a) Following the introduction of the concept of the objective world as the totality of all descriptively ascertainable states and events ultimately explicable in terms of laws, a concept which henceforth became canonical for epistemology, the 'nature of the human mind' becomes a problem. From an epistemological point of view, the subject of knowledge acquired an external status vis-à-vis the world as a whole. As mind, the subject withdrew from the totality of objects of representation. On the other hand, together with its ideas, affective states and actions, it can represent itself as an *object in the world* interwoven with its causal nexus. Therefore, the objective world is not reduced without remainder to the totality of physically explicable phenomena; it also includes the mental phenomena to be explained in psychological terms.

The mental can indeed be regarded *as an object*, but it is accessible only *in the performative mode* as an active and receptive mind. This subjectivity which stands over against the objective world is the antithesis to the mental phenomena encountered in the world. Epistemology conceives of the mind *in actu* as sensing, representing and thinking

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consciousness and the subject of cognition as a self which can, in turn, subjectively represent the fact that it has representations of objects. Consciousness is inherently bound up with self-consciousness. The extramundane status of these mental states, which are peculiar because they are accessible only in a performative way in the experience of present states of consciousness, remains a thorny issue for the conception of an objectivized world as the totality of causally interconnected bodies. Under the description of mental states and events, the psyche, which is accessible only from the first-person performative perspective, acquires the status of a *temporary* anomaly. But in spite of this status as a *candidate* for scientific explanation, the mental retains a Janus face. To this day, facts of experience alert us to a vexing incompleteness of the objectivizing description of the world.[14]

Seventeenth-century philosophy at first continued to answer the question of the locus of performative consciousness which had been expelled from scientifically objectivized nature, as it were, in metaphysical terms – a dualistic answer in Descartes's case, a monadological answer in Leibniz's case, or a deist answer in Spinoza's case. But, viewed in terms of the mentalist paradigm, these ontological constructions inevitably represent a regression behind the epistemological turn. To the Cartesian objectification of the mind as *res cogitans*, Hobbes opposes a predicative conception of the mental as an activity or performance that we ascribe to a subject, so that mental faculties can be attributed to an organism, hence to a bodily thing: 'Hence it may be that the thing that thinks is the subject to which mind, reason or intellect belong; and this subject may thus be something corporeal. The contrary is assumed [by Descartes], not proved.'[15]

Following Hobbes, empiricism from Locke to Hume seems to provide the more consistent answer when it conceives of the human mind as a 'mirror of nature' located in nature itself and concentrates on the genesis of reliable knowledge.[16] Nature gives rise to sensations in the subject and reflections of itself in its judgements by causally influencing the human sense organs. From the beginning, however, those who were opposed to this conception did not appeal so much to the awkward ontological status of *experiences*; after all, we also attribute the subjectivity of conscious life to animals. But *attitudes* which people can adopt to facts and states of affairs or towards other persons are not subjective experiences which one can have or not have; rather, they are actions which one performs – and which can go wrong. It is this *normative constitution* of the mind to which Descartes already drew attention[17] and to which Kant appeals against Hume when he defines the understanding as a spontaneous faculty of applying rules or concepts.

(b) Kant found another implication even more troubling, namely that empiricism fails to explain the normativity of the mind as regards not only its epistemic but, above all, its moral-practical functions. The picture of the objective world constructed by the understanding out of contingent sensory stimulations consists exclusively of descriptive judgements – that is, of value-neutral factual knowledge. Practical reason can no longer derive moral insights from this objectivating view of the world. Evaluative and normative propositions cannot be justified on the basis of descriptive statements. With this uncoupling of practical from theoretical reason, which was completed by Hume, philosophy is in danger of losing entirely its power to provide

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practical orientation. In particular, if all mental processes could be explained on the model of physics, it would no longer be possible to derive normative orientations from this kind of knowledge.

However, as persons of flesh and blood, knowing subjects do not simply stand over against the world. When they speak to each other and engage in joint actions, they must be able to orient themselves when dealing with the things they encounter in the world. The community of researchers, as a cooperative association of acting subjects, is also embedded in a context of social and cultural relations. Philosophy had long since ceased to offer a route to salvation of its own. But now even the normative knowledge of the classical teachings of 'ethics' and 'politics', in the reconstructed version of rational morality and rational law, ultimately not only assumed an inferior status vis-à-vis empirical knowledge of the physical world, as already in Aristotle, but its status as knowledge was shaken to the core. Kant responds to this problem of the devaluation of practical knowledge, which, as I would like to show, was provoked by the mentalistic suppression of the lifeworld, by using a revolutionized epistemology to vindicate the cognitive claim of practical reason in postmetaphysical terms.

The peripeteia begins with the fact that Kant probes the constructive accomplishments of the *knowing* subject and interprets its contact with the world no longer in passive terms – taking sensory stimulation as the starting point – but, rather, in transcendental terms. This underlying idea of the constitution of a world of appearances combines elements of dependence with elements of freedom. The knowing subject enjoys the freedom of cognitive legislation of a finite mind which reacts to the contingent sensory constraints of an independently existing world.[18] Although the human mind operates at the level of transcendental consciousness under the guidance of *theoretical* reason, with the recourse to subjective conditions of possible objective experiences Kant gains a noumenal perspective from which he can shield not only the knowing subject but also the spontaneous achievements of subjectivity *as such* from empiricist distortion.

As Kant stresses in the preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, restricting the theoretical use of reason to objects of experience inspired by a critique of metaphysics under the premise of the legislative accomplishments of finite understanding can have the 'positive and very important utility' of disclosing a transcendental level of intellectual spontaneity where the freedom of the will bound up with the practical use of reason also finds its place: 'Thus I had to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*; and the dogmatism of metaphysics, i.e., the prejudice that without criticism reason can make progress in metaphysics, is the true source of all unbelief conflicting with morality, which unbelief is always very dogmatic.'[19] It is important in the present context that locating the free will in the 'kingdom of ends' first brings a phenomenon into play which can preserve the whole noumenal sphere from an obvious misunderstanding.

With the 'transcendental fact' of the moral law which anchors every deontological morality, Kant appeals to a phenomenologically convincing example of *background knowledge*. The peculiar fact of a feeling of unconditional obligation, which is supposed to bear the entire burden of proof for morality, differs from other, descriptively raised facts in that it can be

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*thematized only in the performative mode*. The consciousness of duty is nothing other than the knowledge, which is *performatively present* in the language game of responsible agency, of *being obliged* to obey a rationally justified moral imperative. When one chooses the lifeworld as the key to interpreting the freedom of the rational will, the noumenal sphere loses its metaphysical appearance of a ghostly 'hinterworld' (Nietzsche). Only when actually engaging in communicative action can we experience the obligations that we incur with social relations *as such*. Without this performative experience, we would not know what a description of this state of affairs from the perspective of a third person is about. Therefore, the normative meaning of a morally justified behavioural expectation must be sought at the original locus of the phenomenon. The normativity of a moral 'ought' can neither be objectivized speculatively into a command of the natural order of things or into an existing value, nor can it be reduced psychologically to objective states of mind – to pleasure and pain, reward and punishment. The 'idea' of freedom is just one among many ideas. Kant's doctrine of ideas throws general light on a performatively present background which is objectivized only when theoretical reason goes beyond the limits of the legitimate use of the understanding.[20] The distinction between ideas of practical and theoretical reason already anticipates the difference between lifeworld and objective world. On this reading, Kant's doctrine of ideas offers points of contact for the de-transcendentalized concept of reason as world-constituting while nevertheless being situated in the lifeworld as described in terms of the theory of communication.[21]

(4) However, the constraints of the mentalistic paradigm first had to be overcome before the lifeworld could be discovered behind the façade of subjective mind conceptualized in transcendental terms. Although the insights of Humboldt's philosophy of language already point towards a pragmatic 'supersession' of transcendental philosophy,[22] this development of the idea of 'detranscendentalization', starting from Hegel and extending via Peirce and Dewey, and via Dilthey and Husserl, to Heidegger and Wittgenstein, cannot be understood as an internal development driven solely by philosophical problems. Just as philosophy following Galileo and Newton had to cope with the sober gaze of modern natural science on the objective world, after Hegel it had to come to terms with the historical perspective of the humanities and social sciences on culture and society. Just as little as philosophy at the time could evade the question concerning facts of consciousness – that is, the status of mental episodes – could it now ignore the question of how this 'objective' mind, which clearly transcends the human mind, should be conceived and integrated into the causal nexus of events in the world.

Amazingly enough, historical, social and cultural facts began to attract systematic scientific interest only at a very late date. The historical humanities arose from formal doctrines, from the humanistic traditions of poetics, and from historical narratives and theories of language and literature; similarly, the new sciences of the state and society developed out of the classical doctrines of politics and economics. Like the canon of the 'liberal arts' – which themselves reached back to the beginnings of civilizations – these formal doctrines had their origin in professional knowledge. Like grammar, rhetoric and logic, like arithmetic, geometry and music, and even astronomy, liberal arts and formal doctrines developed out of reflection by participants on a *previously mastered* practice. The stance cultivated by the humanities and

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social science, by contrast, is completely different.

They are no longer interested in achieving reflective reassurance of the rules of an *established* practice – be it of a particular language or of the fine arts and literature, historiography, the art of government or the conduct of a household. Rather, a *methodologically guided* curiosity is now directed to comparing and analysing the diverse cultural forms of life, which, although accessible only from the participant perspective, are used *as sources of data* from the observer perspective and are processed into historical, cultural and social facts. It is this transformation of the participant into the observer perspective that first makes cultural sciences into scientific disciplines in their own right. In contrast to the object domain of natural science, however, the symbolic objects of the human sciences retain an idiosyncratic status. This is because the observer must have already participated in the lifeworld practices, he must have understood them first in the role of a virtual participant, before he can objectivize the practices and products in which they are reflected into data.

There sciences use everyday practical experiences and knowledge, which until then had been recorded only in literature and travel reports, in diaries and chronicles, in business and administrative statistics, in war reports, historical narratives, textbooks, and so forth, either as 'sources' for philologically informed historical-critical research or in order to model domains of data to be gathered empirically and analysed systematically from theoretical points of view. With this advance towards scientific objectivation of those *segments of the everyday world constituted through our background experiences*, the monolithic concept of the objective world, which, under the influence of Newtonian physics, forced itself upon epistemology, becomes even more problematic. Now we must ask again how the conceptual constellation of 'lifeworld' and 'objective world' changed after segments of the lifeworld became objects of research not only under psychological but also under cultural, social and historical aspects.

The phenomena of the everyday world are now subjected to scientific objectivation essentially from two sides.[23] By 'objectivization' is meant an increasingly impartial description of reality based on a progressive decentring of the perceptual and interpretive perspectives centred on our respective lifeworlds. We must not confuse 'objectivization', or *Versachlichung*, with reifying abstraction – that is, with the reduction of natural occurrences in the world to the sole dimension of dealing with manipulable and measurable states and events.[24] Natural science approaches the idea of impartial judgement by stripping the everyday world of its lifeworld qualities and producing counter-intuitive knowledge. The humanities and social sciences, by contrast, must pursue *the same* goal through hermeneutic interpretation and more in-depth reconstruction of everyday experiences and practices.[25] Since then, our image of the objective world has become polarized because the objectivization of everyday phenomena points *in different directions*. Before I return to this further complication for the 'scientific worldview' and the project of a naturalization of the mind, we must trace the final stage of the path leading from the worldviews to the lifeworld. For transcendental philosophy is vulnerable to the criticism of the humanities and social science especially on the interpretation that we decipher the 'kingdom of ends' at the heart of the noumenal realm as a silhouette of the mentalistically repressed lifeworld. How can the fundamental transcendental insight into the normative

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constitution and law-giving character of the human mind be defended against the empirical evidence of the historical diversity of socio-cultural forms of life? Because the new disciplines deal above all with the specificity and variability of symbolically generated artefacts, forms of life and practices, they seem to provide evidence against the assumption that there is a *single* transcendental legislation.[26] It is not the spontaneous, word-constructing character of the mind that inspires the opposition of the hermeneutic sciences but, instead, the abstract universality and extramundane status which is supposed to set transcendental consciousness apart from the exotic diversity and contingency of languages, cultures and societies.

Philosophy since Herder, Hamann, Humboldt and Hegel responds to this challenge with a critique of mentalism whose central plank is to oppose the intersubjective character of languages, practices and forms of life to the subjectivistic constitution of the human mind. This critique was radicalized by Feuerbach and Marx from the perspective of a philosophy of dialogue and social theory and by Kierkegaard from an ethical-existential perspective. However, historicism, *Lebensphilosophie*, pragmatism and the philosophy of language first ascribed epistemological relevance and relevance for the theory of science to the symbolically mediated practical life contexts of the bodily, social and historical existence of socialized individuals during the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. These intellectual movements laid the groundwork for the interpretation of Husserl's concept of the lifeworld by the theory of communication, which allowed the detranscendentalization of active subjectivity without depriving it of its world-constituting spontaneity and assimilating it to natural processes in the world.

The empirical perspective of the humanities and social sciences on the changeable forms of culture or 'objective mind' did not place the constructive character of the legislation of a transcendental subject in question, but it did problematize its intelligible status as something withdrawn from events in the world. Heidegger's transformation of Husserl's phenomenological concept of the lifeworld also shows that all attempts to detranscendentalize world-constituting subjectivity are condemned to failure as long as the 'ontological difference' between world disclosure and occurrences within the world precludes interaction between the *world-forming productivity* of being and the results of the *learning processes in the world* that this facilitates. The Heideggerian conception of a transcendental originary power which announces itself in the transformation of linguistic worldviews conceived as a history of being, but only at the cost of the disempowerment of subjects submissive to being, is not in any coherent sense 'detranscendentalized'. A different picture emerges when 'language' is not reduced to the semantics of linguistic worldviews but is understood (as Humboldt already understood it) in pragmatic terms – that is, in terms of the communicative practice of acting subjects who are *capable of learning* because they are engaged in discourse and solve problems. Languages do not merely open up the horizons of a preinterpreted lifeworld. While paving the way for possible encounters with things and events in the world, world-disclosing language does not always remain ahead of these encounters. On closer examination, linguistic communication instead compels the participants to take reasonable – that is, autonomous – 'yes' or 'no' stances. Because linguistic communication proceeds via 'yes' and 'no' responses

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to reciprocally raised and criticizable validity claims, participants in communication are exposed to the objections of opponents and can also revise their concepts *in the light of reasons* when compelled by unexpected negative experiences.

This pragmatic notion of language as the medium of a form of world disclosure *that has to be confirmed in practice and makes room for learning processes* undercuts the rigid transcendental distinction between world-constituting activity and constituted events within the world. The categorizations and perspectives which are advanced by the linguistic frame are subject in turn to sustained testing in everyday life *and especially in scientific research*. They are revised *by the participants* in problem-solving activities themselves in the course of these activities. The complementary processes of world disclosure and learning in the world are interconnected in communicative action and discourse. The communicating subjects are *involved* in this interplay, and hence also implicitly in the reproduction of their own lifeworld. Between a lifeworld which makes communicative action possible and a background exposed to continuous testing, which is confirmed in uninterrupted communicative action but is also subsequently revised as a result of problematization and learning, there is an incessant circular process in which the missing transcendental subject does not leave any gap behind.[27] Although communicative actors are *involved* in the reproduction and revision of their lifeworld, they nevertheless remain *embedded* in these lifeworld contexts.

(5) At the end of the path 'from worldviews to the lifeworld' that I have depicted in broad brushstrokes, our initial question about how the progressive objectivization of our image of the objective world should be understood still awaits an answer. Does the reflexive knowledge of the lifeworld present in performance also prove in the end to be an illusion that natural science sees through? Or does the epistemic role of the lifeworld set limits to a scientifically oriented revision of socialized subjects' operative everyday understanding of themselves *as learning, rationally motivated persons who act responsibly*? The detranscendentalization of active subjectivity performed by the theory of communication provides us with the concept of a lifeworld which remains performatively 'behind the backs' of communicative actors as an ensemble of enabling conditions, though only as long and insofar as they are involved in forming the relevant action. The lifeworld background is removed from events in the world *in principle*. Otherwise lifeworld practices and artefacts could not be treated as entities in the world or be made into objects of the human sciences and philosophy. But then what speaks against the possibility of bringing the performatively present background of our practices *completely*, thus including the research practices themselves, to the object side, and doing this *in the familiar categories of the natural sciences*?[28]

It is *bipolar objectivization* which, at the end of the path from worldviews to the lifeworld, confronts us with a semantically unbridgeable epistemic dualism – that is, with a divided image of the objective world. The vocabulary of the human sciences cannot be connected with that of natural science; statements in the one vocabulary cannot be translated into statements in the other. The human brain does not 'think'.[29] If the semantic chain breaks, entities on the one level cannot even be correlated one-to-one with entities on the other level. From the perspective of the development of worldviews outlined, this epistemic dualism loses its

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contingent character.

If we conceive of the objective world as the totality of physically measurable states and events, we are making an objectivizing abstraction in the sense that we strip the natural processes of dealing with manipulable objects within the world of all merely 'subjective' or lifeworld qualities. These processes lose all of the qualities attached to them in a 'projective' way based on *other* practical experiences (for example, as a tool or an obstacle, as poison or food, as shelter or inhospitable surroundings). On the other hand, an interpreter who seeks access to cultural expressions, actions, texts, markets, etc., must essentially engage in the very practices to which the segments of the everyday world constituted through the lifeworld owe their qualities. In the process, the interpreter draws on a prior understanding she acquired *previously* based on an ordinary language – that is, as a participant in everyday communication and as a member of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld.

This methodological connection between the observer perspective in the humanities and social science and the perspective of a participant in antecedent practices explains the peculiar dynamic generated by these disciplines themselves, which necessitates a *different* kind of abstraction from the one involved in natural science – namely, reflection on *underlying general structures* of the lifeworld. The more the social and cultural sciences objectify lifeworld practices in their functional differentiation and their historical and cultural diversity, the more they force these analyses to make a transition from *hermeneutic* to *reconstructive* interpretation and to develop a *formal* concept of the lifeworld as such that can only be acquired through *reflection*.[30] The analytical clarification of the background and presuppositions of communicative action requires a kind of reflection that is beyond the scope of the humanities and social sciences. The *only* experiential basis for this genuinely philosophical inquiry, as I tacitly assumed when I introduced the formal pragmatic concept of the lifeworld, is the *performative consciousness* of speaking and communicating, cooperating, experiencing, calculating and judging subjects who intervene in the world.[31]

Husserl correctly recognized that the progressive scientific objectification of the everyday world necessitated the disenchantment of nature and the formal characterization of the lifeworld. Within the horizon of the lifeworld, the human and natural sciences find their own modes of access to their respective object domains. But the detranscendentalization of the lifeworld also reveals the *dilemma*. On the one hand, the *dual perspective* of the natural and the human sciences is at odds with a deep-seated intuition: even a concept of the 'objective' world that has been deflated to a presupposition of communication still has a *unifying* function. Even in everyday communicative practice, the formal-pragmatic assumption of a world of objects that exists independently of description and is identical for all observers suggests unity and connection in the multiplicity of entities. Reason is 'dissatisfied' with a form of ontological dualism that erupts within the world itself and is not merely epistemic in nature. On the other hand, the bipolar objectivization is the result of a stubborn worldview development: that semantically secured dual perspective is deeply anchored in the lifeworld and sets conceptual limits to the naturalistic self-objectification of the human mind.[32] Under a naturalistic description, regardless of how accurate, a person would not be able to recognize

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herself as a person in general or as this individual person (as 'herself'). For this reason, the paradigmatic natural sciences would be able to redeem the claim to provide a monistic description, even if such were possible, only by way of elimination, hence through exclusion, not by translating the self-understanding of persons into an objectifying language. But would they then still provide an inclusive description of everything in the objective world?

(6) Those who in the final analysis accord natural science a monopoly over socially recognized empirical knowledge respond with compatibilist arguments when confronted with the dilemma that, while assuming an objective world compels us to describe the latter in monistic terms, epistemic dualism prevents us from providing such a description.[33] They want to uncouple empirical knowledge over which natural science claims a monopoly from the understanding of self and world centred on the lifeworld. I do not need to repeat my objections against this position here.[34] Others search for the constitutive conditions of empirical knowledge in the lifeworld taking the object domain-specific basic concepts of physics, biology, psychology and the humanities as their guide.[35] An epistemological link is then produced via world-disclosing theoretical languages, methodologies, and lifeworld practices between the 'segments of the world' that correspond to specific object domains. This strategy builds on Husserl's science-critical question but at the same time rids itself of the baggage of a transcendental primordial ego through the recourse to lifeworld practices.[36] But how can the world-projecting practices themselves still be conceived as something which occurs in the world? Because the projected possibilities of truth can prove themselves only with reference to contingent natural processes that we experience, we must assume that our practices and these processes themselves are somehow interconnected. This connection becomes apparent when our projects fail; without this confrontation we could not learn anything about the world.

Anyone who rejects the ontological question raised by the epistemological turn as incorrectly formulated, but at the same time does not want to project the levels of language into reality itself in the manner of Nicolai Hartmann's ontology of levels of reality, must come to terms with the pluralism of some deeply anchored world-disclosing perspectives; then the world itself disaggregates into the particularism of segments of the world that are relevant for the lifeworld.[37] From a neo-pragmatist perspective, we encounter natural processes under different functional aspects of our 'coping' with the world which vary with vocabularies and practices.[38] But those who are not content with simply insisting on such a detranscendentalized, but *divided*, epistemic situation must not capitulate before the black hole represented by the ontological question of the origin and existence of the lifeworld.

Most of the options available here lead us onto speculative paths. Thus one can take the peculiar ontic groundlessness of the lifeworld as a starting point for retranscendentalizing and deepening the transcendental difference – either to supplement the deflated post-Kantian philosophical understanding of self and the world with a religious interpretation of the world[39] or to advocate a post-Kantian metaphysics which starts from an analysis of self-consciousness and dares to take the step towards a cosmically expanded consciousness.[40] For those who are uneasy with this return to the motifs of the 'strong' traditions rooted in the Axial Age, there is, if I am not mistaken, only one alternative – namely, the attempt to outdo the

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detranscendentalization of performing subjectivity once again through a weak form of naturalism.[41]

The recovery of religious experience, of religious-metaphysical thinking in terms of unity, and of scientistic naturalism are not the only ways we can try to reconcile epistemic dualism with ontological monism. On the proposed reading in terms of a theory of communication, the transcendental spontaneity of active subjectivity withdraws into the lifeworld practices through which the reproduction of the lifeworld is interwoven with the results of learning processes within the world. To be sure, this circular process can also be exemplified by processes in social space and historical time. But this detranscendentalization is not radical enough to break out of the self-centred reconstructive analysis of general structures of possible lifeworlds in another direction – that of the evolution of socio-cultural forms of life as such. What we are describing, after all, is the structures of linguistic communication and its background of which we are aware only in performance and which can be accessed only through reflection from the perspective of a participant in lifeworld practices. We describe these structures with the help of rational reconstructions of general competences of knowing, speaking and acting subjects. The learning processes of a socialized mind are facilitated primarily by the interplay between the intentional relation to the world, reciprocal perspective-taking, the use of a propositionally differentiated language, instrumental action and cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like at least to mention the heuristic question – namely, that of the possibility of an empirical theory with which a mind thus characterized can reconstruct its natural historical genesis in such a way that it can recognize itself in it.[42] Perhaps the perspective of a 'natural history of the mind' suggests itself because we can focus on the natural conditions of emergence of a relation of complementarity between lifeworld and objective world only under the epistemic conditions of this complementarity. From an evolutionary perspective, the general structures of the lifeworld as described by philosophy seem to provide the empirical initial conditions for accelerated cultural learning processes. Our task would then be to identify the constellation of features that satisfy these conditions based on natural history and to explain them in terms of a process of natural evolution conceived in turn as a 'learning process'. It would then have to be possible to 'explain' the general structures of the lifeworld which have been reconstructed reflexively – that is, 'from the inside' – like the emergent properties of an initial constellation described in empirical terms.

Such an investigation, which is conducted in the archive of nature rather than in the laboratory, would thus have to be guided by a comprehensive theory of learning. However, this should not be conceived in a reductionist way such that we would have to make concessions from the beginning concerning 'our' performatively acquired understanding of cultural learning processes.[43] Until the theory acquires sharper contours, however, it remains unclear in what sense we can speak of 'emergence' and 'explanation'. The analyses of the increase in complexity of basic concepts observed at the linguistic levels of the life sciences, psychology, and the cultural sciences could play a heuristic role for such a natural history of the mind, which would enable us to connect the explanatory perspective 'from above' with that 'from

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below'.[44] Any such enterprise is, of course, in danger of merely dressing up a metaphysical natural philosophy in postmetaphysical garb.

## Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 57–85.

2. In what follows, I will use the term 'worldview' as long as the context does not explicitly require emphasizing the process aspect.

3. See the article 'Welt' in Joachim Ritter et al. (eds), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 10 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), pp. 408–46.

4. On the following, see Habermas, 'Actions, Speech Acts, Linguistically Mediated Interactions, and the Lifeworld', in *On the Pragmatics of Communication*, ed. and trans. Maeve Cooke (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), pp. 215–55.

5. See, especially, the classics of Anglo-American social and cultural anthropology and those of structural anthropology following Lévi-Strauss.

6. Marcel Gauchet treats shamanism as an example of this monistic world inhabited by the living and the dead alike: Here we have specialists who initiate communication with the spirit world and manipulate its representatives, but who, despite the considerable prestige and fears they inspire, are steadfastly confined to the common lot of their society. This is because the visible and the invisible is intertwined in a single world … The shaman remains a technician endowed with a special ability to move between the living and the dead, between spirits and magical forces. He is in no way an incarnating force creating a permanent union between the human world and its creator or ruler. (Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997], p. 31)

7. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (London: Routledge, 1953), pp. 1–21.

8. Johann P. Arnason, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Björn Wittrock (eds), *Axial Civilizations and World History* (London and Boston: Brill, 2005).

9. On Abelard, see, for example, Kurt Flasch, *Kampfplätze der Philosophie: Große Kontroversen von Augustin bis Voltaire* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2008), pp. 125–40.

10. Ludger Honnefelder, *Duns Scotus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2005); on the medieval origins of modern thought in general, see Honnefelder, *Woher kommen wir? Ursprünge der Moderne im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2008).

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11. On the epistemology of the practical sciences in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Matthias Lutz-Bachmann and Alexander Fidora (eds), *Handlung und Wissenschaft: Die Epistemologie der praktischen Wissenschaften im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008).

12. Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).

13. Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 81 (6:63). (Citations of Kant's works in parentheses refer to the volume and page numbers of the edition of the Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (1903–11) [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968].)

14. Thomas Nagel, 'What Is it like to Be a Bat?', in Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 165–80.

15. Thomas Hobbes, 'Second Objection', in René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 122.

16. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

17. Against Hobbes, Descartes appeals to the consciousness-transcending generality of propositions: 'Who doubts that a Frenchman and a German can reason about *the same things*, despite the fact that the words that they think of are completely different?'

18. Robert B. Pippin, 'Kant on the Spontaneity of Mind', in Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 29ff.

19. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 117 (B xxx) (emphasis in original).

20. On this interpretation of the postulates of practical reason, see Ulrich Anacker, *Natur und Intersubjektivität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), Part II.

21. Thomas McCarthy, *Ideals and Illusions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 16ff.; Habermas, 'Communicative Reason and the Detranscendentalized Use of Reason', in *Between Naturalism and Religion*, pp. 24–76.

22. See my reply in Axel Honneth and Hans Joas (eds), *Communicative Action* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 214–64.

23. This restriction to nomological natural sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities and social sciences, on the other, involves a simplification which is a consequence of the perspective of the question I am posing. In making such a rough contrast I am neglecting not

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only specific features of the biological sciences and psychology which become relevant in other contexts but also the manifold differences within the two major domains of the 'natural' and the 'human' sciences characterized *only by their mode of access* to their respective object domains.

24. I am grateful to Lutz Wingert for this clarification.

25. Not even versions of systems theory in social science that strive to eliminate all normative traits from their object domain can dispense with hermeneutic access to their symbolic objects and with 'meaning' as a basic concept.

26. Ernst Cassirer's 'theory of symbolic forms' sees itself as a direct defence of Kant's transcendental philosophy against this historicist critique.

27. Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge: Polity, 1992); Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), pp. 24–8.

28. Whether the 'original' image of man can be completely assimilated by the 'scientific image of man' is discussed by Wilfrid Sellars in 'Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man' (1960), in Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1963), pp. 1–40.

29. Maxwell Bennett, Daniel Dennett, Peter Hacker and John Searle, *Neuroscience and Philosophy: Brain, Mind, and Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

30. Habermas, 'Reconstruction and Interpretation in the Social Sciences', in Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 21–42.

31. Lutz Wingert, 'Lebensweltliche Gewißheit versus wissenschaftliches Wissen?', in Peter Janich (ed.), *Naturalismus und Menschenbild* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2008), pp. 288–309.

32. Lutz Wingert, 'Grenzen der naturalistischen Selbstobjektivierung', in Dieter Sturma (ed.), *Philosophie und Neurowissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), pp. 240–60.

33. Michael Pauen, 'Ratio und Natur: Warum unsere Fähigkeit, nach Gründen zu handeln, auch durch reduktive Ansätze in Frage gestellt werden kann', in Hans-Peter Krüger (ed.), *Hirn als Subjekt*? *Philosophische Grenzfragen der Neurobiologie* (Berlin: Akademie, 2007), pp. 417–29; for a recent account, see Ansgar Beckermann, *Gehirn, Ich, Freiheit: Neurowissenschaften und Menschenbild* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2008); for my critique of compatibilism, see Habermas, 'The Language Game of Responsible Agency and the Problem of Free Will: How Can Epistemic Dualism be Reconciled with Ontological Monism?', *Philosophical Explorations* 10/1 (2007): 13–50.

34. See ibid.

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35. Arno Ros, *Materie und Geist: Eine philosophische Untersuchung* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2005).

36. The advantage of the constructivism of the Erlangen and Marburg school is that it takes the pragmatic dimension of research seriously as a context of action and reconstructs the performative aspects of research. See Peter Janich, 'Naturwissenschaften vom Menschen versus Philosophie', in Janich (ed.), *Naturalismus und Menschenbild*, p. 45: 'The inclusion of the performative perspective in fact constitutes the most important difference between a philosophy of science that remains at the level of mere description and the methodological reconstructions of methodological-culturalistic approaches.' See also Janich, *Kleine Philosophie der Naturwissenschaften* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1997); Janich, *Kultur und Methode: Philosophie in einer wissenschaftlich geprägten Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006). However, restricting images of the world which are constitutive of object domains to 'determinations of aims' involves a narrowing down based on an inadmissible reduction of linguistic behaviour to teleological action. The background of communicative action in the lifeworld is much more complex than the background of actions analysed solely under the aspect of instrumental rationality, on which Janich focuses exclusively (see, inter alia, 'Naturwissenschaft vom Menschen versus Philosophie', p. 47). As a result, the world-disclosing element of language, which Heidegger accorded independent status at the expense of inner-worldly learning processes, is sacrificed in favour of a Fichtean stress on voluntarist 'positings'.

37. Among these approaches is also the theory of cognitive interests that I developed together with Karl-Otto Apel. See also Christoph Hubig and Andreas Luckner, 'Natur, Kultur und Technik als Reflexionsbegriffe', in Janich (ed.), *Naturalismus und Menschenbild*, pp. 52–66.

38. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 23–92.

39. Thomas Rentsch, *Gott* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005); Hans Julius Schneider, *Religion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008); see also the contributions in Hent de Vries (ed.), *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

40. Dieter Henrich, *Denken und Selbstsein: Vorlesungen über Subjektivität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007).

41. Christoph Demmerling, 'Welcher Naturalismus? Von der Naturwissenschaft zum Pragmatismus', in Janich (ed.), *Naturalismus und Menschenbild*, pp. 240–56.

42. Karl-Otto Apel speaks in this sense of a postulate of the 'self-recovery of the mind' [*Selbsteinholung des Geistes*]. Janich ('Naturwissenschaft vom Menschen versus Philosophie', p. 41) radicalizes this requirement into the methodological principle that the 'natural sciences of the human' *may* claim validity only for those results which are compatible with the fact that these findings were obtained by human beings *as investigating subjects*.

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43. This condition meets the objection raised by Hubig and Luckner ('Natur, Kultur und Technik als Reflexionsbegriffe', p. 57) that the search for an 'evolution' that encompasses both nature and culture represents a regression to a 'lower level of reflection'.

44. The synthetic materialism of Arno Ros, *Materie und Geist* seems ultimately to boil down to a form of perspectivism of the conceptual systems employed with which the same phenomena can be classified in narrower or broader spatiotemporal contexts respectively.

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# Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter

Master thinkers have fallen on hard times. This has been true of Hegel ever since Popper unmasked him in the forties as an enemy of the open society. It has also been intermittently true of Marx. The last to denounce Marx as a false prophet were the New Philosophers in the seventies. Today even Kant is affected by this decline. If I am correct, he is being viewed for the first time as a *maître penseur*, that is, as the magician of a false paradigm from the intellectual constraints of which we have to escape. Though among a philosophical audience there may still be a majority of scholars whose image of Kant has stayed the same, in the world outside his reputation is being eclipsed, and not for the first time, by Nietzsche.

Historically, Kantian philosophy marks the birth of a new mode of justification. Kant felt that the physics of his time and the growth of knowledge brought by it were important developments to which the philosopher had to respond. For Kant, the new science represented not some philosophically indifferent fact of life but proof of man's capacity to know. Specifically, the challenge Newtonian physics posed for philosophy was to explain how empirical knowledge is at all possible, an explanation that could not itself be empirical but had to be transcendental. What Kant calls "transcendental" is an inquiry into the a priori conditions of what makes experience possible. The specific upshot of Kant's transcendental inquiry is that those conditions are identical with the conditions of possible objects of experience. The first job for the philosopher, then, is to

analyze the concepts of objects as we "always already" intuitively use them. Transcendental analysis is a nonempirical reconstruction of the a priori achievements of the cognizing subject, achievements for which there is no alternative: No experience shall be thought possible under *different* conditions. Transcendental justification has nothing to do with deduction from first principles. Rather, the hallmark of the transcendental justification is the notion that we can prove the nonsubstitutability of certain mental operations that we always already (intuitively) perform in accordance with rules.

As a master thinker, Kant fell into disfavor because he used transcendental justification to found the new discipline of epistemology. In so doing, he redefined the task, or vocation if you like, of philosophy in a more demanding way. There are two principal reasons why the Kantian view of philosophy's vocation has a dubious ring today.

The first reason has directly to do with the foundationalism of epistemology. In championing the idea of a cognition *before* cognition, Kantian philosophy sets up a domain between itself and the sciences, arrogating authority to itself. It wants to clarify the foundations of the sciences once and for all, defining the limits of what can and cannot be experienced. This is tantamount to an act of showing the sciences their proper place. I think philosophy cannot and should not try to play the role of usher.

The second reason lies in the fact that transcendental philosophy refuses to be confined to epistemology. Above and beyond analyzing the bases of cognition, the critique of pure reason is also supposed to enable us to criticize the abuses of this cognitive faculty, which is limited to phenomena. Kant replaces the substantive concept of reason found in traditional metaphysics with a concept of reason the moments of which have undergone differentiation to the point where their unity is merely formal. He sets up practical reason, judgment, and theoretical cognition in isolation from each other, giving each a foundation unto itself, with the result that philosophy is cast in the role of the highest arbiter for all matters, including culture as a whole. Kantian philosophy differentiates what Weber was to call the "value spheres of culture" (science and

technology, law and morality, art and art criticism), while at the same time legitimating them within their respective limits. Thus Kant's philosophy poses as the highest court of appeal vis-à-vis the sciences and culture as a whole.[1]

There is a necessary link between the Kantian foundationalism in epistemology, which nets philosophy the unenviable role of usher, and the ahistoricity of the conceptual system Kant superimposes on culture, which nets philosophy the equally undesirable role of a judge parceling out separate areas of jurisdiction to science, morality, and art.

> Without the Kantian assumption that the philosopher can decide *questiones juris* concerning the rest of culture, this self-image collapses. . . . To drop the notion of the philosopher as knowing something about knowing which nobody else knows so well would be to drop the notion that his voice always has an overriding claim on the attention of the other participants in the conversation. It would also be to drop the notion that there is something called "philosophical method" or "philosophical technique" or "the philosophical point of view" which enables the professional philosopher, *ex officio*, to have interesting views about, say, the respectability of psychoanalysis, the legitimacy of certain dubious laws, the resolution of moral dilemmas, the soundness of schools of historiography or literary criticism, and the like.[2]

Richard Rorty's impressive critique of philosophy assembles compelling metaphilosophical arguments in support of the view that the roles Kant the master thinker had envisaged for philosophy, namely those of usher and judge, are too big for it. While I find myself in agreement with much of what Rorty says, I have trouble accepting his conclusion, which is that if philosophy forswears these two roles, it must also surrender the function of being the "guardian of rationality." If I understand Rorty, he is saying that the new modesty of philosophy involves the abandonment of any claim to reason—the very claim that has marked philosophical thought since its inception. Rorty not only argues for the demise of philosophy; he also unflinchingly accepts the end of the belief that ideas like truth or the unconditional with their transcending power are a necessary condition of humane forms of collective life.

Implied by Kant's conception of formal, differentiated reason is a theory of modernity. Modernity is characterized by a

rejection of the substantive rationality typical of religious and metaphysical worldviews and by a belief in procedural rationality and its ability to give credence to our views in the three areas of objective knowledge, moral-practical insight, and aesthetic judgment. What I am asking myself is this: Is it true that this (or a similar) concept of modernity becomes untenable when you dismiss the claims of a foundationalist theory of knowledge?

What follows is an attempt to narrate a story that might help put Rorty's criticism of philosophy in perspective. Granted, by going this route I cannot settle the controversy. What I can do is throw light on some of its presuppositions. At the outset (section 1 below) I will look at Hegel's critique of Kantian foundationalism and the substitution of a dialectical mode of justification for Kant's transcendental one. Next (section 2) I will retrace some of the lines of criticism and self-criticism that have emerged in the Kantian and Hegelian traditions. In section 3 I will dwell on a more radical form of criticism originating in pragmatist and hermeneuticist quarters, a form of attack that repudiates Kant and Hegel simultaneously. Section 4 deals with thinkers, respectable ones no less, who respond to this situation by annulling philosophy's long-standing claim to reason. In conclusion (section 5) I will argue that philosophy, while well advised to withdraw from the problematic roles of usher (*Platzanweiser*) and judge, can and ought to retain its claim to reason, provided it is content to play the more modest roles of stand-in (*Platzhalter*) and interpreter.

## 1

Hegel fashioned his dialectical mode of justification in deliberate opposition to the transcendental one of Kant. Hegel—and I can only hint at this here—agrees with those who charge that in the end Kant failed to justify or ground the pure concepts of the understanding, for he merely culled them from the table of forms of judgment, unaware of their historical specificity. Thus he failed, in Hegel's eyes, to prove that the a priori conditions of what makes experience possible are truly necessary. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel proposes to cor-

rect this flaw by taking a genetic approach. What Kant regarded as a unique (Copernican) turn to transcendental reflection becomes in Hegel a general mechanism for turning consciousness back upon itself. This mechanism has been switched on and off time and time again in the development of spirit. As the subject becomes conscious of itself, it destroys one form of consciousness after another. This process epitomizes the subjective experience that what initially appears to the subject as a being in itself can become content only in the forms imparted to it by the subject. The transcendental philosopher's experience is thus, according to Hegel, reenacted naively whenever an in-itself becomes a for-the-subject. What Hegel calls "dialectical" is the reconstruction of this recurrent experience and of its assimilation by the subject, which gives rise to ever more complex structures. Hegel goes beyond the particular manifestation of consciousness that Kant analyzed, attaining in the end knowledge that has become autonomous, that is, absolute knowledge. This highest vantage point enables Hegel, the phenomenologist, to witness the genesis of structures of consciousness that Kant had assumed to be timeless.

Hegel, it should be noted, exposes himself to a criticism similar to the one he levels against Kant. Reconstructing successive forms of consciousness is one thing. Proving the necessity of their succession is quite another. Hegel is not unaware of this gap, and he tries to close it by logical means, thereby laying the basis for a philosophical absolutism that claims an even grander role for philosophy than did Kant. In Hegel's *Logic* philosophy's role is to effect an encyclopedic conceptual synthesis of the diffuse chunks of content thrown up by the sciences. In addition, Hegel picks up Kant's latent theory of modernity, making it explicit and developing it into a critique of the diremptive, self-contradictory features of modernity. It is this peculiar twist that gave philosophy a new world-historical relevance in relation to culture as a whole. And this is the stuff of which the suspect image of Hegel as a master thinker is made.[3]

The metaphilosophical attack on the *maîtres penseurs*, whether its target be Hegel's absolutism or Kant's foundationalism, is a recent phenomenon. Antecedents of it can be found in the

strands of self-criticism that have run through Kantianism and Hegelianism for quite some time. I shall comment briefly on two lines of self-criticism that I think complement each other in an interesting way.

## 2

In reference to Kant's transcendental philosophy there are today three distinct critical positions: the analytic one of Strawson, the constructivist one of Lorenzen, and the critical-rationalist one of Popper.

*Analytic philosophy* appropriates Kant by jettisoning any claim to ultimate justification (*Letztbegründung*). From the very outset it drops the objective Kant had in mind when he deduced the pure concepts of the understanding from the unity of self-consciousness. The analytic reception of Kant is confined to comprehending those concepts and rules that underlie experience insofar as it can be couched in elementary propositions. The analysis focuses on general, indispensable, conceptual preconditions that make experience possible. Unable to prove the objective validity of its basic concepts and presuppositions, this analysis nevertheless makes a universalistic claim. Redeeming it involves changing Kant's transcendental strategy of justification into a testing procedure. If the hypothetically reconstructed conceptual system underlying experience as such is valid, not a single intelligible alternative to it can possibly exist. This means any alternative proposal will be scrutinized with a view to proving its derivative character, that is, with a view to showing that the alleged alternative inevitably utilizes portions of the very hypothesis it seeks to supplant. A strategy of argumentation like this tries to prove that the concepts and presuppositions it singles out as fundamental cannot be dispensed with. Turned modest, the transcendental philosopher of the analytic variety takes on the role of the skeptic who keeps trying to find counterexamples that might invalidate his theories.[4] In short, he acts like a hypothesis-testing scientist.

The *constructivist position* tried to compensate for the justificatory shortfall that has now opened up from the perspective of transcendental philosophy in the following way. It concedes

from the start that the basic conceptual organization of experience is conventional while at the same time putting a constructivist critique of language in the service of epistemology.[5] Those conventions are considered valid that are generated methodically and therefore transparently. It should be clear that this approach lays, rather than uncovers, the foundations of cognition.

On the face of it, the *critical-rationalist position* breaks completely with transcendentalism. It holds that the three horns of the "Münchhausen trilemma"—logical circularity, infinite regress, and recourse to absolute certitude—can only be avoided if one gives up any hope of grounding or justifying whatsoever.[6] Here the notion of justification is being dislodged in favor of the concept of critical testing, which becomes the critical rationalist's equivalent for justification. In this connection I would argue that criticism is itself a procedure whose employment is never presuppositionless. That is why I think that critical rationalism, by clinging to the idea of irrefutable rules of criticism, allows a weak version of the Kantian justificatory mode to sneak into its inner precincts through the back door.[7]

Self-criticism in the Hegelian tradition has developed along lines parallel to the self-criticism among Kantians. Again, three distinct positions might be said to be represented by the young Lukács and his materialist critique of epistemology, which restricts the claim to justification of dialectics to the man-made world and excludes nature; by K. Korsch's and H. Freyer's practicism, wherein the classical relation of theory and practice is stood on its head and the "interested" perspective of creating a society of the future informs the theoretical reconstruction of social development; and finally by the negativism of Adorno, who finds in comprehensive logic of development only the proof that it is impossible to break the spell of an instrumental reason gone mad.

I cannot examine these positions here. All I shall do is to point out certain interesting parallels between the Hegelian and Kantian strands of self-criticism. The self-criticism that begins by doubting the Kantian transcendental deduction and

the self-criticism that begins by doubting Hegel's passage to absolute knowledge have this in common: they reject the claim that the categorial makeup and the pattern of development of the human spirit can be proved to be necessary. With regard to constructivism and practicism a similar convergence occurs: both are involved in a shift from rational reconstruction to creative praxis, which is to make possible a theoretical recapitulation of this praxis. Critical rationalism and negativism, for their part, share something too, which is that they reject transcendental and dialectical means of cognition while at the same time using them in a paradoxical way. One may also view these two attempts at radical negation as showing that these two modes of justification cannot be abolished except on penalty of self-contradiction.

My comparison between parallel self-critical strategies to restrict the justificatory claims of transcendental and dialectical philosophies gives rise to the following question: Do these self-limiting tendencies merely reinforce each other, encouraging the skeptic to reject justification all the more roundly? Or does the retrenchment on either side to a position of diminished justificatory objectives and strategies represent a precondition for viewing them not as opposites but as supplementing each other? I think the second possibility deserves serious consideration. The genetic structuralism of Jean Piaget provides an instructive model along these lines, instructive for all philosophers, I think, but particularly those who want to remain philosophers. Piaget conceives "reflective abstraction" as that learning mechanism which explains the transition between cognitive stages in ontogenetic development. The end point of this development is a decentered understanding of the world. Reflective abstraction is similar to transcendental reflection in that it brings out the formal elements hidden in the cognitive content, identifies them as the schemata that underlie the knowing subject's action, differentiates them, and reconstructs them at the next highest stage of reflection. Seen from a different perspective, the same learning mechanism has a function similar to Hegel's power of negation, which dialectically supersedes self-contradictory forms of consciousness.[8]

## 3

The aforementioned six positions in the tradition of Kant and Hegel stick to a claim to reason, however small in scope, however cautious in formulation. It is this final intention that sets off Popper and Lakatos from a Feyerabend and Horkheimer and Adono from a Foucault. They still say *something* about the indispensable conditions of claims to the validity of those beliefs we hold to be justified, claims that transcend all restrictions of time and place. Now any attack on the master thinkers questions this residual claim to reason and thus in essence makes a plea for the abolition of philosophy. I can explain this radical turn by taking briefly about a wholly different criticism, one that has been raised against both Kant *and* Hegel.

Its proponents can be found in *pragmatism* and *hermeneutic philosophy*. Their doubts concerning the justificatory and self-justificatory potential of philosophy operate at a more profound level than do the self-criticisms within the Kantian and Hegelian traditions. They step resolutely outside the parameters set by the philosophy of consciousness and its cognitive paradigm, which stresses the perception and representation of objects. Pragmatism and hermeneutics oust the traditional notion of the solitary subject that confronts objects and becomes reflective only by turning itself into an object. In its place they put an idea of cognition that is mediated by language and linked to action. Moreover, they emphasize the web of eveyday life and communication surrounding "our" cognitive achievements. The latter are intrinsically intersubjective and cooperative. It is unimportant just how this web is conceptualized, whether as "form of life," "lifeworld," "practice," "linguistically mediated interaction," a "language game," "convention," "cultural background," "tradition," "effective history," or what have you. The important thing is that these commonsensical ideas, though they may function quite differently, attain a status that used to be reserved for the basic concepts of epistemology. Pragmatism and hermeneutics, then, accord a higher position to acting and speaking than to knowing. But there is more to it than that. Purposive action and linguistic communication play a qualitatively different role from that of self-reflection in

the philosophy of consciousness. They have no justificatory function any more save one: to expose the need for foundational knowledge as unjustified.

Charles S. Peirce doubted that radical doubt is possible. His intentions were the same as those of Dilthey, who doubted that neutrality in interpretive understanding is possible. For Peirce problems always arise in a specific situation. They come to us, as it were. We do not go to them, for we do not fully control the totality of our practical existence. In a similar vein Dilthey argues that we cannot grasp a symbolic expression unless we have an intuitive preunderstanding of its context, for we do not have unlimited freedom to convert the unproblematic background knowledge of our own culture into explicit knowledge. Every instance of problem solving and every interpretaion depend on a web of myriad presuppositions. Since this web is holistic and particularistic at the same time, it can never be grasped by an abstract, general analysis. It is from this standpoint that the myth of the given—that is, the distinctions between sensibility and understanding, intuition and concept, form and content—can be debunked, along with the distinctions between analytic and synthetic judgments, between a priori and a posteriori. These Kantian dualisms are all being dissolved, a fact that is vaguely reminiscent of Hegel's metacritique. Of course, a full-fledged return to Hegel is made impossible by the contextualism and historicism to which the pragmatist and hermeneutic approaches subscribe.

There is no denying that pragmatism and hermeneutics represent a gain. Instead of focusing introspectively on consciousness, these two points of view look outside at objectifications of action and language. Gone is the fixation on the cognitive function of consciousness. Gone too is the emphasis on the representational function of language and the visual metaphor of the "mirror of nature." What takes their place is the notion of justified belief spanning the whole spectrum of what can be said—of what Wittgenstein and Austin call illocutionary force—rather than just the contents of fact-stating discourses. "Saying things is not always saying how things are."[9]

Do these considerations strengthen Rorty's interpretation of pragmatism and hermeneutics, which argues for the abnega-

tion by philosophical thought of any claim to rationality and indeed for the abnegation of philosophy per se? Or do they mark the beginning of a new paradigm that, while discarding the mentalistic language game of the philosophy of consciousness, retains the justificatory modes of that philosophy in the modest, self-critical form in which I have presented them? I cannot answer this question directly for want of compelling and simple arguments. Once again, the answer I will give is a narrative one.

## 4

Marx wanted to supersede (*aufheben*) philosophy by realizing it—so convinced was he of the truth of Hegelian philosophy, whose only fault was that concept and reality cleaved unbearably, a fault that Hegel studiously overlooked. The corresponding, though fundamentally different, present-day attitude toward philosophy is the dismissive goodbye and good riddance. These farewells take many forms, three of which are currently in vogue. For simplicity's sake I will call them the therapeutic, the heroic, and the salvaging farewell.

Wittgenstein championed the notion of a *therapeutic* philosophy, therapeutic in the specific sense of self-healing, for philosophy was sick to the core. Wittgenstein's diagnosis was that philosophy had disarrayed language games that function perfectly well in everyday life. The weakness of this particular farewell to philosophy is that it leaves the world as it is. For the standards by which philosophy is being criticized are taken straight from the self-sufficient, routinized forms of life in which philosophy happens to survive for now. And what about possible successors? Field research in cultural anthropology seems to be the strongest candidate to succeed philosophy after its demise. Surely the history of philosophy will henceforth be interpreted as the unintelligible doings of some outlandish tribe that today is fortunately extinct. (Perhaps Rorty will one day be celebrated as the path-breaking Thucydides of this new approach, which incidentally could only get under way after Wittgenstein's medicine had proved effective.)

There is a sharp contrast between the soft-spoken farewell of the therapeutic philosopher and the noisy demolition undertaken by someone like Georges Bataille or Heidegger. Their goodbye is *heroic*. From their perspective too, false habits of living and thinking are concentrated in elevated forms of philosophical reflection. But instead of accusing philosophy of homely category mistakes or simple disruptions of everyday life, their deconstruction of metaphysics and objectivating thought has a more incisive, epochal quality. This more dramatic farewell to philosophy does not promise a cure. Rather, it resembles Hölderlin's pathos-laden idea of a rescue attempt *in extremis*. The devalued and discredited philosophical tradition, rather than being replaced by something even more valueless than itself, is supposed to give way to a *different* medium that makes possible a return to the immemorial—to Bataille's sovereignty or Heidegger's Being.

Least conspicuous, finally, is the *salvaging* type of farewell to philosophy. Contemporary neo-Aristotelians best exemplify this type insofar as they do exegeses that are informed by hermeneutics. Some of their work is unquestionably significant. But all too often it departs from pure interpretation in an effort to salvage some old truth or other. At any rate, this farewell to philosophy has a disingenuous ring: While the salvager keeps invoking the need to preserve philosophy, he wants to have nothing to do with its systematic claims. He does not try to make the ancients relevant to the discussion of some subject matter. Nor does he present the classics as a cultural treasure prepared by philosophy and history. What he does is to appropriate by assimilation texts that were once thought to embody knowledge, treating them instead as sources of illumination and edification.

Let us return for a moment to the critique of Kant, the master thinker, and in particular to his foundationalism in epistemology. Clearly, present-day philosophies of the sort just described wisely sidestep the Kantian trap. The last thing they think they can do is show the natural sciences to their proper place. Contemporary poststructuralist, late-pragmatist, and neohistoricist tendencies share a narrow objectivistic conception of science. Over against scientific cognition they carve out

a sphere where thought can be illuminating or awakening instead of being objective. These tendencies prefer to sever all links with general, criticizable claims to validity. They would rather make do without notions like consensus, incontrovertible results, and justified beliefs. Paradoxically enough, whereas they make these (unnecessary) sacrifices, they somehow keep believing in the authority and superiority of philosophical insights: their own. In terms of their views on science, the philosophers of the definitive farewell agree with the existentialist proposal (Jaspers, Sartre, Kolakowski) for a division of labor that puts science on one side and philosophical faith, life, existential freedom, myth, cultivation, or what have you, on the other. All these juxtapositions are identical in structure. Where they differ is in their assessment of what Max Weber termed the cultural relevance of science, which may range from negative to neutral to positive. As is well known, Continental philosophy has a penchant for dramatizing the dangers of objectivism and instrumental reason, whereas Anglo-American philosophy takes a more relaxed view of them.

With his distinction between normal and abnormal discourse, Richard Rorty has come up with an interesting variation on the above theme. In times of widely acknowledged theoretical progress, normality takes hold of the established sciences. This means methods become available that make problem solving and dispute settling possible. What Rorty calls commensurable discourses are those discourses that operate with reliable criteria of consensus building. In contrast, discourses are incommensurable or abnormal when basic orientations are contested. Generally, abnormal conversations tend to pass over into normal ones, their ultimate purpose being to annul themselves and to bring about universal agreement. Occasionally, however, abnormal discourses stop short of taking this self-transcending step and are content with "interesting and fruitful disagreement." That is, they become *sufficient unto themselves*. It is at this point that abnormal discourses take on the quality that Rorty calls "edifying." According to him, philosophy as a whole verges on edifying conversation once it has sloughed off all pretensions to problem solving. Such philosophical edification enjoys the benefits of all three types of farewell: therapeutic

relief, heroic overcoming, and hermeneutic reawaking. It combines the inconspicuously subversive force of leisure with an elitist notion of creative linguistic imagination and with the wisdom of the ages. The desire for edification, however, works to the detriment of the desire for truth: "Edifying philosophers can never end philosophy, but they can help prevent it from attaining the secure path of a science."[10]

I am partly sympathetic to Rorty's allocation of roles, for I agree that philosophy has no business playing the part of the highest arbiter in matters of science and culture. I find his argument unconvincing all the same. For even a philosophy that has been taught its limits by pragmatism and hermeneuticism will not be able to find a resting place in edifying conservation *outside* the sciences without immediately being drawn back into argumentation, that is, justificatory discourse.

The existentialist or, if you like, exclusive division of labor between philosophy and science is untenable. This is borne out by the particular version of discourse theory Rorty proposes. Ultimately, there is only one criterion by which beliefs can be judged valid, and that is that they are based on agreement reached by argumentation. This means that *everything* whose validity is at all disputable rests on shaky foundations. It matters little if the ground underfoot shakes a bit less for those who debate problems of physics than for those who debate problems of morals and aesthetics. The difference is a matter of degree only, as the postempiricist philosophy of science has shown. Normalization of discourse is not a sufficiently trenchant criterion for distinguishing science from edifying philosophical conversation.

## 5

To those who advocate a cut-and-dried division of labor, research traditions representing a blend of philosophy and science have always been particularly offensive. Marxism and psychoanalysis are cases in point. They cannot, on this view, help being pseudosciences because they straddle normal and abnormal discourse, refusing to fall on either side of the dividing line. On this point Rorty speaks the same language as

Jaspers. What I know about the history of the social sciences and psychology leads me to believe that hybrid discourses such as Marxism and psychoanalysis are by no means atypical. To the contrary, they may well stand for a type of approach that marks the beginning of new research traditions.

What holds for Freud applies to all seminal theories in these disciplines, for instance, those of Durkheim, Mead, Max Weber, Piaget, and Chomsky. Each inserted a genuinely philosophical idea like a detonator into a particular context of research. Symptom formation through repression, the creation of solidarity through the sacred, the identity-forming function of role taking, modernization as rationalization of society, decentration as an outgrowth of reflective abstraction from action, language acquisition as an activity of hypothesis testing—these key phrases stand for so many paradigms in which a philosophical idea is present in embryo while at the same time empirical, yet universal, questions are being posed. It is no coincidence that theoretical approaches of this kind are the favorite target of empiricist counterattacks. Such cyclical movements in the history of science, incidentally, do not point to a convergence of these disciplines in one unified science. It makes better sense to view them as stages on the road to the philosophization of the sciences of man (*Philosophischwerden der Humanwissenschaften*) than as stages in the triumphal march toward objectivist approaches, such as neurophysiology, that quaint favorite child of the analytic philosophers.

What I have said lies mainly in the realm of speculative conjecture. But unless I am completely mistaken, it makes sense to suggest that philosophy, instead of just dropping the usher role and being left with nothing, ought to exchange it for the part of stand-in (*Platzhalter*). Whose seat would philosophy be keeping; what would it be standing in for? Empirical theories with strong universalistic claims. As I have indicated, there have surfaced and will continue to surface in nonphilosophical disciplines fertile minds who will give such theories a try. The chance for their emergence is greatest in the reconstructive sciences. Starting primarily from the intuitive knowledge of competent subjects—competent in terms of judgment, action, and language—and secondarily from systematic knowledge

handed down by culture, the reconstructive sciences explain the presumably universal bases of rational experience and judgment, as well as of action and linguistic communication. Marked down in price, the venerable transcendental and dialectical modes of justification may still come in handy. All they can fairly be expected to furnish, however, is reconstructive hypotheses for use in empirical settings. Telling examples of a successful cooperative integration of philosophy and science can be seen in the development of a theory of rationality. This is an area where philosophers work as suppliers of ideas without raising foundationalist or absolutist claims à la Kant or Hegel. Fallibilistic in orientation, they reject the dubious faith in philosophy's ability to do things single-handedly, hoping instead that the success that has for so long eluded it might come from an auspicious matching of different theoretical fragments. From the vantage point of my own research interests, I see such a cooperation taking shape between philosophy of science and history of science, between speech act theory and empirical approaches to pragmatics of language, between a theory of informal argumentation and empirical approaches to natural argumentation, between cognitivist ethics and a psychology of moral development, between philosophical theories of action and the ontogenetic study of action competences.

If it is true that philosophy has entered upon a phase of cooperation with the human sciences, does it not run the risk of losing its identity? There is some justification in Spaemann's warning "that every philosophy makes a practical and a theoretical claim to totality and that not to make such a twofold claim is to be doing something which does not qualify as philosophy."[11] In defense, one might argue that a philosophy that contributes something important to an analysis of the rational foundations of knowing, acting, and speaking does retain at least a thematic connection with the whole. But is this enough? What becomes of the theory of modernity, what of the window on the totality of culture that Kant and Hegel opened with their foundational and hypostatizing concepts of reason? Down to Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences*, philosophy not only usurped the part of supreme judge, it also played a directing role. Again, what happens when it surrenders the role of judge

in matters of science as well as culture? Does this mean philosophy's relation to the totality is severed? Does this mean it can no longer be the guardian of rationality?

The situation of culture as a whole is no different from the situation of science as a whole. As totalities, neither needs to be grounded or justified or given a place by philosophy. Since the dawn of modernity in the eighteenth cenury, culture has generated those structures of rationality that Max Weber and Emil Lask conceptualized as cultural value spheres. Their existence calls for description and analysis, not philosophical justification.

Reason has split into three moments—modern science, positive law and posttraditional ethics, and autonomous art and institutionalized art criticism—but philosophy had precious little to do with this disjunction. Ignorant of sophisticated critiques of reason, the sons and daughters of modernity have progressively learned to differentiate their cultural tradition in terms of these three aspects of rationality such that they deal with issues of truth, justice, and taste discretely rather than simultaneously. At a different level, this shift toward differentiation produces the following phenomena: (1) The sciences disgorge more and more elements of religion, thus renouncing their former claim to being able to interpret nature and history as one whole. (2) Cognitivist moral theories disgorge issues of the good life, focusing instead strictly on deontological, generalizable aspects of ethics, so that all that remains of "the good" is the just. (3) With art it is likewise. Since the turn to autonomy, art has striven mightily to mirror one basic aesthetic experience, the increasing decentration of subjectivity. It occurs as the subject leaves the spatiotemporal structures of everyday life behind, freeing itself from the conventions of everyday perception, of purposive behavior, and of the imperatives of work and utility.

I repeat, these eminent trends toward compartmentalization, constituting as they do the hallmark of modernity, can do very well without philosophical justification. But they do pose problems of mediation. First, how can reason, once it has been thus sundered, go on being a unity on the level of culture? And second, how can expert cultures, which are being pushed more

and more to the level of rarefied, esoteric forms, be made to stay in touch with everyday communication? To the extent to which philosophy keeps at least one eye trained on the topic of rationality, that is, to the extent to which it keeps inquiring into the conditions of the unconditional, to that extent it will not dodge the demand for these two kinds of efforts at mediation.

The first type of problem of mediation arises within the spheres of science, morals, and art. In this area we witness the rise of countermovements. For example, in human sciences nonobjectivist approaches bring moral and aesthetic criticism into play without undermining the primacy of issues of truth. Another example is the way in which the discussion of ethics of responsibility and ethics of conviction and the expanded role of utilitarian considerations within universalist ethics have brought the calculation of consequences and the interpretation of needs into play—and these are perspectives situated rather in the domains of the cognitive and the expressive. Let us finally look at postmodern art as the third example. It is characterized by a strange simultaneity of realistic, politically committed schools on the one hand and authentic followers of that classical modernism to which we owe the cystallization of the specific meaning of the aesthetic on the other. In realistic and politically committed art, elements of the cognitive and the moral-practical come into play once again, but at the level of the wealth of forms unloosed by the avant-garde. To that extent they act as agents of mediation. Counterdevelopments like these, it seems, mitigate the radical differentiation of reason and point to its unity. Everyday life, however, is a more promising medium for regaining the lost unity of reason than are today's expert cultures or yesteryear's classical philosophy of reason.

In everyday communication, cognitive interpretations, moral expectations, expressions, and evaluations cannot help overlapping and interpenetrating. Reaching understanding in the lifeworld requires a cultural tradition that ranges across *the whole spectrum*, not just the fruits of science and technology. As far as philosophy is concerned, it might do well to refurbish its link with the totality by taking on the role of interpreter on

behalf of the lifeworld. It might then be able to help set in motion the interplay between the cognitive-instrumental, moral-practical, and aesthetic-expressive dimensions that has come to a standstill today like a tangled mobile.[12] This simile at least helps identify the issue philosophy will face when it stops playing the part of the arbiter that inspects culture and instead starts playing the part of a mediating interpreter. That issue is how to overcome the isolation of science, morals, and art and their respective expert cultures. How can they be joined to the impoverished traditions of the lifeworld, and how can this be done without detriment to their reigonal rationality? How can a new balance between the separated moments of reason be established in communicative everyday life?

The critic of the master thinkers will likely express his alarm one more time. What in the world, he will ask, gives the philosopher the right to offer his services as a translator mediating between the everyday world and cultural modernity with its autonomous sectors when he is already more than busy trying to hold open a place for ambitious theoretical strategies within the system of the sciences? I think pragmatism and hermeneutics have joined forces to answer this question by attributing epistemic authority to the community of those who cooperate and speak with one another. Everyday communication makes possible a kind of understanding that is based on claims to validity and thus furnishes the only real alternative to exerting influence on one another in more or less coercive ways. The validity claims that we raise in conversation—that is, when we say something with conviction—transcend this specific conversational context, pointing to something beyond the spatiotemporal ambit of the occasion. Every agreement, whether produced for the first time or reaffirmed, is based on (controvertible) grounds or reasons. Grounds have a special property: they force us into yes or no positions. Thus, built into the structure of action oriented toward reaching understanding is an element of unconditionality. And it is this unconditional element that makes the validity (*Gültigkeit*) that we claim for our views different from the mere de facto acceptance (*Geltung*) of habitual practices.[13] From the perspective of first persons, what we consider justified is not a function of custom but a

question of justification or grounding. That is why philosophy is "rooted in the urge to see social practices of justification as more than just such practices."[14] The same urge is at work when people like me stubbornly cling to the notion that philosophy is the guardian of rationality.

## Notes

1. "The critique . . . arriving at all its decisions in the light of fundamental principles of its own institution, the authority of which no one can question, secures to us the peace of a legal order, in which our disputes have to be conducted solely by the recognized methods of legal action." I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, p. 601.

2. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 392ff.

3. Rorty approvingly paraphrases a dictum by Eduard Zeller: "Hegelianism produced an image of philosophy as a discipline which somehow both completed and swallowed up the other disciplines, rather than *grounding* them. It also made philosophy too popular, too interesting, too important, to be properly professional; it challenged philosophy professors to embody the World-Spirit, rather than simply getting on with their *Fach*." Rorty (1979), p. 135.

4. G. Schönrich, *Kategorien und transzendentale Argumentation* (Frankfurt, 1981), chapter 4, pp. 182ff; R. Bittner, "Transzendental," in *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, vol. 5 (Munich 1974), pp. 1524ff.

5. C. F. Gethmann and R. Hegselmann, "Das Problem der Begründung zwischen Dezisionismus und Fundamentalismus," *Zeitschrift für allegemeine Wissenschaftstheorie* 8 (1977): 432ff.

6. H. Albert, *Treatise on Critical Reason* (Princeton, 1985).

7. H. Lenk, "Philosophische Logikbegründung und rationaler Kritizismus," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 24 (1970): 183ff.

8. T. Kesselring, *Entwicklung und Widerspruch—Ein Vergleich zwischen Piagets genetischer Erkenntnistheorie und Hegels Dialektik* (Frankfurt, 1981).

9. Rorty (1979), p. 371.

10. Rorty (1979), p. 372.

11. R. Spaemann, "Der Streit der Philosophen," in H. Lübbe, ed., *Wozu Philosophie?* (Berlin, 1978), p. 96.

12. J. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 3–14.

13. See J. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 114ff.

14. Rorty (1979), p. 390.

# 1

# On the Pragmatic, the Ethical, and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason

*For Judith*

Contemporary discussions in practical philosophy draw, now as before, on three main sources: Aristotelian ethics, utilitarianism, and Kantian moral theory. Two of the parties to these interesting debates also appeal to Hegel who tried to achieve a synthesis of the classical communal and modern individualistic conceptions of freedom with his theory of objective spirit and his "sublation" (*Aufhebung*) of morality into ethical life. Whereas the communitarians appropriate the Hegelian legacy in the form of an Aristotelian ethics of the good and abandon the universalism of rational natural law, discourse ethics takes its orientation for an intersubjective interpretation of the categorical imperative from Hegel's theory of recognition but without incurring the cost of a historical *dissolution* of morality in ethical life. Like Hegel it insists, though in a Kantian spirit, on the internal relation between justice and solidarity. It attempts to show that the meaning of the basic principle of morality can be explicated in terms of the content of the unavoidable presuppositions of an argumentative practice that can be pursued only in common with others. The moral point of view from which we can judge practical questions impartially is indeed open to different interpretations. But because it is grounded in the communicative structure of rational discourse as such, we cannot simply dispose of it at will. It forces itself intuitively on anyone who is at all open to this reflective form of communicative action. With this fundamental assumption, discourse ethics situates itself squarely in the Kantian tradition yet without leaving itself vulnerable to the objections with which the abstract ethics of conviction

has met from its inception. Admittedly, it adopts a narrowly circumscribed conception of morality that focuses on questions of justice. But it neither has to neglect the calculation of the consequences of actions rightly emphasized by utilitarianism nor exclude from the sphere of discursive problematization the questions of the good life accorded prominence by classical ethics, abandoning them to irrational emotional dispositions or decisions. The term *discourse ethics* may have occasioned a misunderstanding in this connection. The theory of discourse relates in different ways to moral, ethical, and pragmatic questions. It is this differentiation that I propose to clarify here.

Classical ethics, like modern theories, proceeds from the question that inevitably forces itself upon an individual in need of orientation faced with a perplexing practical task in a particular situation: how should I proceed, what should I do?[1] The meaning of this "should" remains indeterminate as long as the relevant problem and the aspect under which it is to be addressed have not been more clearly specified. I will begin by taking the distinction between pragmatic, ethical, and moral questions as a guide to differentiating the various uses of practical reason. Different tasks are required of practical reason under the aspects of the purposive, the good, and the just. Correspondingly, the constellation of reason and volition changes as we move between pragmatic, ethical, and moral discourses. Finally, once moral theory breaks out of the investigative horizon of the first-person singular, it encounters the reality of an alien will, which generates problems of a different order.

## I

Practical problems beset us in a variety of situations. They "have to be" mastered; otherwise we suffer consequences that are at very least annoying. We *must* decide what to do when the bicycle we use every day is broken, when we are afflicted with illness, or when we lack the money necessary to realize certain desires. In such cases we look for reasons for a rational choice between different available courses of action in the light of a task that we *must* accomplish if we *want* to achieve a certain goal. The goals themselves can also become problematic, as, for example, when holiday plans fall through or when

we must make a career decision. Whether one travels to Scandinavia or to Elba or stays at home or whether one goes directly to college or first does an apprenticeship, becomes a physician or a salesperson—such things depend in the first instance on our preferences and on the options open to us in such situations. Once again we seek reasons for a rational choice but in this case for a choice between the goals themselves.

In both cases the rational thing to do is determined in part by what one wants: it is a matter of making a rational choice of means in the light of fixed purposes or of the rational assessment of goals in the light of existing preferences. Our will is already fixed as a matter of fact by our wishes and values; it is open to further determination only in respect of alternative possible choices of means or specifications of ends. Here we are exclusively concerned with appropriate techniques—whether for repairing bicycles or treating disease—with strategies for acquiring money or with programs for planning vacations and choosing occupations. In complex cases decision-making strategies themselves must be developed; then reason seeks reassurance concerning its own procedure by becoming reflective—for example, in the form of a theory of rational choice. As long as the question "What should I do?" has such pragmatic tasks in view, observations, investigations, comparisons, and assessments undertaken on the basis of empirical data with a view to efficiency or with the aid of other decision rules are appropriate. Practical reflection here proceeds within the horizon of purposive rationality, its goal being to discover appropriate techniques, strategies, or programs.[2] It leads to recommendations that, in the most straightforward cases, are expressed in the semantic form of conditional imperatives. Kant speaks in this connection of rules of skill and of counsels of prudence and, correspondingly, of technical and pragmatic imperatives. These relate causes to effects in accordance with value preferences and prior goal determinations. The imperative meaning they express can be glossed as that of a *relative ought,* the corresponding directions for action specifying what one "ought" or "must" do when faced with a particular problem if one wants to realize certain values or goals. Of course, once the values themselves become problematic, the question "What should I do?" points beyond the horizon of purposive rationality.

In the case of complex decisions—for example, choosing a career—it may transpire that the question is not a pragmatic one at all. Someone who wants to become a manager of a publishing house might deliberate as to whether it is more expedient to do an apprenticeship first or go straight to college; but someone who is not clear about what he wants to do is in a completely different situation. In the latter case, the choice of a career or a direction of study is bound up with one's "inclinations" or interests, what occupation one would find fulfilling, and so forth. The more radically this question is posed, the more it becomes a matter of what life one would like to lead, and that means what kind of person one is and would like to be. When faced with crucial existential choices, someone who does not know what he wants to be will ultimately be led to pose the question, "Who am I, and who would I like to be?" Decisions based on weak or trivial preferences do not require justification; no one need give an account of his preferences in automobiles or sweaters, whether to himself or anyone else. In the contrasting case, I shall follow Charles Taylor in using the term *strong preferences* to designate preferences that concern not merely contingent dispositions and inclinations but the self-understanding of a person, his character and way of life; they are inextricably interwoven with each individual's identity.[3] This circumstance not only lends existential decisions their peculiar weight but also furnishes them with a context in which they both admit and stand in need of justification. Since Aristotle, important *value decisions* have been regarded as clinical questions of the good life. A decision based on illusions—attaching oneself to the wrong partner or choosing the wrong career—can lead to a failed life. The exercise of practical reason directed in this sense to the good and not merely to the possible and expedient belongs, following classical usage, to the sphere of ethics.

Strong evaluations are embedded in the context of a particular self-understanding. How one understands oneself depends not only on how one describes oneself but also on the ideals toward which one strives. One's identity is determined simultaneously by how one sees oneself and how one would like to see oneself, by what one finds oneself to be and the ideals with reference to which one fashions oneself and one's life. This existential self-understanding is evaluative in its core and, like all evaluations, is Janus faced. Two components

are interwoven in it: the descriptive component of the ontogenesis of the ego and the normative component of the ego-ideal. Hence, the clarification of one's self-understanding or the clinical reassurance of one's identity calls for an *appropriative* form of understanding—the appropriation of one's own life history and the traditions and circumstances of life that have shaped one's process of development.[4] If illusions are playing a role, this hermeneutic self-understanding can be raised to the level of a form of reflection that dissolves self-deceptions. Bringing one's life history and its normative context to awareness in a critical manner does not lead to a value-neutral self-understanding; rather, the hermeneutically generated self-description is logically contingent upon a critical relation to self. A more profound self-understanding alters the attitudes that sustain, or at least imply, a life project with normative substance. In this way, strong evaluations can be justified through hermeneutic self-clarification.

One will be able to choose between pursuing a career in management and training to become a theologian on better grounds after one has become clear about who one is and who one would like to be. Ethical questions are generally answered by unconditional imperatives such as the following: "You must embark on a career that affords you the assurance that you are helping other people." The meaning of this imperative can be understood as an "ought" that is not dependent on subjective purposes and preferences and yet is not absolute. What you "should" or "must" do has here the sense that it is "good" for you to act in this way in the long run, all things considered. Aristotle speaks in this connection of paths to the good and happy life. Strong evaluations take their orientation from a goal posited absolutely for me, that is, from the highest good of a self-sufficient form of life that has its value in itself.

The meaning of the question "What should I do?" undergoes a further transformation as soon as my actions affect the interests of others and lead to conflicts that should be regulated in an impartial manner, that is, from the moral point of view. A contrasting comparison will be instructive concerning the new discursive modality that thereby comes into play. Pragmatic tasks are informed by the perspective of an agent who takes his preferences and goals as his point of departure. Moral problems cannot even be conceived from this point of view because other persons are accorded merely the

status of means or limiting conditions for the realization of one's own individual plan of action. In strategic action, the participants assume that each decides egocentrically in accordance with his own interests. Given these premises, there exists from the beginning at least a latent conflict between adversaries. This can be played out or curbed and brought under control; it can also be resolved in the mutual interest of all concerned. But without a radical shift in perspective and attitude, an interpersonal conflict cannot be perceived by those involved *as* a moral problem. If I can secure a loan only by concealing pertinent information, then from a pragmatic point of view all that counts is the probability of my deception's succeeding. Someone who raises the issue of its permissibility is posing a *different* kind of question—the moral question of whether we all could will that anyone in my situation should act in accordance with the same maxim.

Ethical questions by no means call for a complete break with the egocentric perspective; in each instance they take their orientation from the telos of one's own life. From this point of view, other persons, other life histories, and structures of interests acquire importance only to the extent that they are interrelated or interwoven with my identity, my life history, and my interests within the framework of an intersubjectively shared form of life. My development unfolds against a background of traditions that I share with other persons; moreover, my identity is shaped by collective identities, and my life history is embedded in encompassing historical forms of life. To that extent the life that is good for me also concerns the forms of life that are common to us.[5] Thus, Aristotle viewed the *ethos* of the individual as embedded in the *polis* comprising the citizen body. But ethical questions point in a different direction from moral questions: the regulation of interpersonal conflicts of action resulting from opposed interests is not yet an issue. Whether I would like to be someone who in a case of acute need would be willing to defraud an anonymous insurance company just this one time is not a moral question, for it concerns my self-respect and possibly the respect that others show me, but not equal respect for all, and hence not the symmetrical respect that everyone should accord the integrity of all other persons.

We approach the moral outlook once we begin to examine our maxims as to their compatibility with the maxims of others. By maxims Kant meant the more or less trivial, situational rules of action by

which an individual customarily regulates his actions. They relieve the agent of the burden of everyday decision making and fit together to constitute a more or less consistent life practice in which the agent's character and way of life are mirrored. What Kant had in mind were primarily the maxims of an occupationally stratified, early capitalist society. Maxims constitute in general the smallest units in a network of operative customs in which the identity and life projects of an individual (or group) are concretized; they regulate the course of daily life, modes of interaction, the ways in which problems are addressed and conflicts resolved, and so forth. Maxims are the plane in which ethics and morality intersect because they can be judged alternately from ethical and moral points of view. The maxim to allow myself just one trivial deception may not be *good* for me—for example, if it does not cohere with the picture of the person who I would like to be and would like others to acknowledge me to be. The same maxim may also be *unjust* if its general observance is not equally good for all. A mode of examining maxims or a heuristic for generating maxims guided by the question of how I want to live involves a *different* exercise of practical reason from reflection on whether from my perspective a generally observed maxim is suitable to regulate our communal existence. In the first case, what is being asked is whether a maxim is good for me and is appropriate in the given situation, and in the second, whether I can will that a maxim should be followed by everyone as a general law.

The former is a matter for ethical deliberation, the latter for moral deliberation, though still in a restricted sense, for the outcome of this deliberation remains bound to the personal perspective of a particular individual. My perspective is structured by my self-understanding, and a casual attitude toward deception may be compatible with my preferred way of life if others behave similarly in comparable situations and occasionally make me the victim of their manipulations. Even Hobbes recognizes a golden rule with reference to which such a maxim could be justified under appropriate circumstances. For him it is a "natural law" that each should accord everyone else the rights he demands for himself.[6] But an egocentrically conceived universalizability test does not yet imply that a maxim would be accepted by all as the moral yardstick of their actions. This would follow only if my perspective necessarily cohered with that of everyone else. Only

if my identity and my life project reflected a universally valid form of life would what from my perspective is equally good for all in fact be equally in the interest of all.[7]

A categorical imperative that specifies that a maxim is just only if *all* could will that it should be adhered to by everyone in comparable situations first signals a break with the egocentric character of the golden rule ("Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you"). *Everyone* must be able to will that the maxims of our action should become a universal law.[8] Only a maxim that can be generalized from the perspective of all affected counts as a norm that can command general assent and to that extent is worthy of recognition or, in other words, is morally binding. The question "What should I do?" is answered morally with reference to what *one* ought to do. Moral commands are categorical or unconditional imperatives that express valid norms or make implicit reference to them. The imperative meaning of these commands alone can be understood as an "ought" that is dependent on neither subjective goals and preferences nor on what is for me the absolute goal of a good, successful, or not-failed life. Rather, what one "should" or "must" do has here the sense that to act thus is just and therefore a duty.

## II

Thus, the question "What should I do?" takes on a pragmatic, an ethical, or a moral meaning depending on how the problem is conceived. In each case it is a matter of justifying choices among alternative available courses of action, but pragmatic tasks call for a different *kind of action,* and the corresponding question, a different *kind of answer,* from ethical or moral ones. Value-oriented assessments of ends and purposive assessments of available means facilitate rational decisions concerning how we must intervene in the objective world in order to bring about a desired state of affairs. This is essentially a matter of settling empirical questions and questions of rational choice, and the *terminus ad quem* of a corresponding pragmatic discourse is a recommendation concerning a suitable technology or a realizable program of action. The rational consideration of an important value decision that affects the whole course of one's life is quite a different matter. This latter involves hermeneutical clarifi-

cation of an individual's self-understanding and clinical questions of a happy or not-failed life. The *terminus ad quem* of a corresponding ethical-existential discourse is advice concerning the correct conduct of life and the realization of a personal life project. Moral judgment of actions and maxims is again something different. It serves to clarify legitimate behavioral expectations in response to interpersonal conflicts resulting from the disruption of our orderly coexistence by conflicts of interests. Here we are concerned with the justification and application of norms that stipulate reciprocal rights and duties, and the *terminus ad quem* of a corresponding moral-practical discourse is an agreement concerning the just resolution of a conflict in the realm of norm-regulated action.

Thus, the pragmatic, ethical, and moral employments of practical reason have as their respective goals technical and strategic directions for action, clinical advice, and moral judgments. Practical reason is the ability to justify corresponding imperatives, where not just the illocutionary meaning of "must" or "ought" changes with the practical relation and the kind of decision impending but also the *concept of the will* that is supposed to be open to determination by rationally grounded imperatives in each instance. The "ought" of pragmatic recommendations relativized to subjective ends and values is tailored to the *arbitrary choice* (*Willkür*) of a subject who makes intelligent decisions on the basis of contingent attitudes and preferences that form his point of departure; the faculty of rational choice does not extend to the interests and value orientations themselves but presupposes them as given. The "ought" of clinical advice relativized to the telos of the good life is addressed to the striving for self-realization and thus to the *resoluteness* (*Entschlußkraft*) of an individual who has committed himself to an authentic life; the capacity for existential decisions or radical choice of self always operates within the horizon of a life history, in whose traces the individual can discern who he is and who he would like to become. The categorical "ought" of moral injunctions, finally, is directed to the *free will* (*freien Willen*), emphatically construed, of a person who acts in accordance with self-given laws; this will alone is autonomous in the sense that it is completely open to determination by moral insights. In the sphere of validity of the moral law, neither contingent dispositions nor life histories and personal identities set limits to the determination of the will by prac-

tical reason. Only a will that is guided by moral insight, and hence is completely rational, can be called autonomous. All heteronomous elements of mere choice or of commitment to an idiosyncratic way of life, however authentic it may be, have been expunged from such a will. Kant confused the autonomous will with an omnipotent will and had to transpose it into the intelligible realm in order to conceive of it as absolutely determinative. But in the world as we experience it, the autonomous will is efficacious only to the extent that it can ensure that the motivational force of good reasons outweighs the power of other motives. Thus, in the plain language of everyday life, we call a correctly informed but weak will a "good will."

To summarize, practical reason, according to whether it takes its orientation from the purposive, the good, or the just, directs itself in turn to the choice of the purposively acting subject, to the resoluteness of the authentic, self-realizing subject, or to the free will of the subject capable of moral judgment. In each instance, the constellation of reason and volition and the concept of practical reason itself undergo alteration. Not only the addressee, the will of the agent who seeks an answer, changes its status with the meaning of the question "What should I do?" but also the addresser, the capacity of practical deliberation itself. According to the aspect chosen, there result three different though complementary interpretations of practical reason. But in each of the three major philosophical traditions, just one of these interpretations has been thematized. For Kant practical reason is coextensive with morality; only in autonomy do reason (*Vernunft*) and the will attain unity. Empiricism assimilates practical reason to its pragmatic use; in Kantian terminology, it is reduced to the purposive exercise of the understanding (*Verstand*). And in the Aristotelian tradition, practical reason assumes the role of a faculty of judgment (*Urteilskraft*) that illuminates the life historical horizon of a customary *ethos*. In each case a *different* exercise is attributed to practical reason, as will become apparent when we consider the respective discourses in which they operate.

## III

Pragmatic discourses in which we justify technical and strategic recommendations have a certain affinity with empirical discourses. They

serve to relate empirical knowledge to hypothetical goal determinations and preferences and to assess the consequences of (imperfectly informed) choices in the light of underlying maxims. Technical or strategic recommendations ultimately derive their validity from the empirical knowledge on which they rest. Their validity does not depend on whether an addressee decides to adopt their directives. Pragmatic discourses take their orientation from *possible contexts* of application. They are related to the actual volitions of agents only though subjective goal determinations and preferences. There is no *internal* relation between reason and the will. In ethical-existential discourses, this constellation is altered in such a way that justifications become rational motives for changes of attitude.

The roles of agent and participant in discourse overlap in such processes of self-clarification. Someone who wishes to attain clarity about his life as a whole—to justify important value decisions and to gain assurance concerning his identity—cannot allow himself to be represented by someone else in ethical-existential discourse, whether in his capacity as the one involved or as the one who must weigh competing claims. Nevertheless, there is room here for discourse because here too the steps in argumentation should not be idiosyncratic but must be comprehensible in intersubjective terms. The individual attains reflective distance from his own life history only within the horizon of forms of life that he shares with others and that themselves constitute the context for different individual life projects. Those who belong to a shared lifeworld are potential participants who can assume the catalyzing role of impartial critics in processes of self-clarification. This role can be refined into the therapeutic role of an analyst once generalizable clinical knowledge comes into play. Clinical knowledge of this sort is first generated in such discourses.[9]

Self-clarification draws on the context of a specific life history and leads to evaluative statements about what is good for a particular person. Such evaluations, which rest on the reconstruction of a consciously appropriated life history, have a peculiar semantic status, for "reconstruction" here signifies not just the descriptive delineation of a developmental process through which one has become the individual one finds oneself to be; it signifies at the same time a critical sifting and rearrangement of the elements integrated in such a way

that one's own past can be accepted in the light of existing possibilities of action as the developmental history of the person one would like to be and continue to be in the future. The existential figure of the "thrown projection" (*geworfener Entwurf*) illuminates the Janus-faced character of the strong evaluations justified by way of a critical appropriation of one's own life history. Here genesis and validity can no longer be separated as they can in the case of technical and strategic recommendations. Insofar as I recognize what is good for me, I also already in a certain sense make the advice my own; that is what it means to make a conscious decision. To the extent that I have become convinced of the soundness of clinical advice, I have also already made up my mind to transform my life in the manner suggested. On the other hand, my identity is only responsive to—even at the mercy of—the reflexive pressure of an altered self-understanding when it observes the same standards of authenticity as ethical-existential discourse itself. Such a discourse already presupposes, on the part of the addressee, a striving to live an authentic life or the suffering of a patient who has become conscious of the "sickness unto death." In this respect, ethical-existential discourse remains contingent on the *prior* telos of a *consciously* pursued way of life.

## IV

In ethical-existential discourses, reason and the will condition one another reciprocally, though the latter remains embedded in the life-historical context thematized. Participants in processes of self-clarification cannot distance themselves from the life histories and forms of life in which they actually find themselves. Moral-practical discourses, by contrast, require a break with all of the unquestioned truths of an established, concrete ethical life, in addition to distancing oneself from the contexts of life with which one's identity is inextricably interwoven. The higher-level intersubjectivity characterized by an intermeshing of the perspective of each with the perspectives of all is constituted only under the communicative presuppositions of a universal discourse in which all those possibly affected could take part and could adopt a hypothetical, argumentative stance toward the validity claims of norms and modes of action that have become problematic. This impartial standpoint overcomes the subjectivity of

the individual participant's perspective without becoming disconnected from the performative attitude of the participants. The objectivity of the so-called ideal observer would impede access to the intuitive knowledge of the lifeworld. Moral-practical discourse represents the ideal extension of each individual communication community from within.[10] In this forum, only those norms proposed that express a common interest of all affected can win justified assent. To this extent, discursively justified norms bring to expression simultaneously both insight into what is equally in the interest of all and a general will that has absorbed into itself, *without repression,* the will of all. Understood in this way, the will determined by moral grounds does not remain external to argumentative reason; the autonomous will is completely internal to reason.

Hence, Kant believed that practical reason first completely comes into its own and becomes coextensive with morality in its role as a norm-testing court of appeal. Yet the discourse-ethical interpretation of the categorical imperative we have offered reveals the one-sidedness of a theory that concentrates exclusively on questions of justification. Once moral justifications rest on a principle of universalization constraining participants in discourse to examine whether disputed norms could command the well-considered assent of all concerned, detached from practical situations and without regard to current motives or existing institutions, the problem of how norms, thus grounded, could ever be *applied* becomes more acute.[11] Valid norms owe their abstract universality to the fact that they withstand the universalization test only in a decontextualized form. But in this abstract formulation, they can be applied without qualification only to standard situations whose salient features have been integrated from the outset into the conditional components of the rule as conditions of application. Moreover, every justification of a norm is necessarily subject to the normal limitations of a finite, historically situated outlook that is provincial in regard to the future. Hence *a forteriori* it cannot already explicitly allow for all of the salient features that at some time in the future will characterize the constellations of unforeseen individual cases. For this reason, the *application* of norms calls for argumentative clarification in its own right. In this case, the impartiality of judgment cannot again be secured through a principle of universalization; rather, in addressing questions of context-sensi-

tive application, practical reason must be informed by a principle of appropriateness (*Angemessenheit*). What must be determined here is which of the norms already accepted as valid is appropriate in a given case in the light of all the relevant features of the situation conceived as exhaustively as possible.

Of course, discourses of application, like justificatory discourses, are a purely cognitive undertaking and as such cannot compensate for the uncoupling of moral judgment from the concrete motives that inform actions. Moral commands are valid regardless of whether the addressee can also summon the resolve to do what is judged to be right. The autonomy of his will is a function of whether he is capable of acting from moral insight, but moral insights do not of themselves lead to autonomous actions. The validity claim we associate with normative propositions certainly has obligatory force, and duty, to borrow Kant's terminology, is the affection of the will by the validity claim of moral commands. That the reasons underlying such validity claims are not completely ineffectual is shown by the pangs of conscience that plague us when we act against our better judgment. Guilt feelings are a palpable indicator of transgressions of duty, but then they express only the recognition that we lack good reasons to act *otherwise*. Thus, feelings of guilt reflect a split within the will itself.

## V

The empirical will that has split off from the autonomous will plays an important role in the dynamics of our moral learning processes.[12] The division of the will is a symptom of weakness of will only when the moral demands against which it transgresses are in fact legitimate and it is *reasonable* (*zumutbar*) to expect adherence to them under the given circumstances. In the revolt of a dissident will, there all too often also come to expression, as we know, the voice of the other who is excluded by rigid moral principles, the violated integrity of human dignity, recognition refused, interests neglected, and differences denied.

Because the principles of a will that has attained autonomy embody a claim analogous to that associated with knowledge, validity and genesis once again diverge here as they do in pragmatic discourse. Thus, behind the facade of categorical validity may lurk a hidden,

entrenched interest that is susceptible only of being pushed through. This facade can be erected all the more easily because the rightness of moral commands, unlike the truth of technical or strategic recommendations, does not stand in a contingent relation to the will of the addressee but is intended to bind the will rationally from within. Liberating ourselves from the merely presumptive generality of selectively employed universalistic principles applied in a context-insensitive manner has always required, and today still requires, social movements and political struggles; we have to learn from the painful experiences and the irreparable suffering of those who have been humiliated, insulted, injured, and brutalized that nobody may be excluded in the name of moral universalism—neither underprivileged classes nor exploited nations, neither domesticated women nor marginalized minorities. Someone who in the name of universalism excludes another who has the right to *remain* alien or other betrays his own guiding idea. The universalism of equal respect for all and of solidarity with everything that bears the mark of humanity is first put to the test by radical freedom in the choice of individual life histories and particular forms of life.

This reflection already oversteps the boundaries of individual will formation. Thus far we have examined the pragmatic, ethical, and moral employments of practical reason, taking as a guide the traditional question, "What should *I* do?" But with the shift in horizon of our questions from the first-person singular to the first-person plural, more changes than just the forum of reflection. Individual will formation by its very nature is already guided by public argumentation, which it simply reproduces *in foro interno*. Thus, where moral life runs up against the boundaries of morality, it is not a matter of a shift in perspective from internal monological thought to public discourse but of a transformation in the problem at issue; what changes is the role in which other subjects are encountered.

Moral-practical discourse detaches itself from the orientation to personal success and one's own life to which both pragmatic and ethical reflection remain tied. But norm-testing reason still encounters the other as an opponent in an *imaginary*—because counterfactually extended and virtually enacted—process of argumentation. Once the other appears as a *real* individual with his own unsubstitut-

able will, new problems arise. *This* reality of the alien will belongs to the primary conditions of collective will formation.

The fact of the plurality of agents and the twofold contingency under which the reality of one will confronts that of another generate the additional problem of the communal pursuit of collective goals, and the problem of the regulation of communal existence under the pressure of social complexity also takes on a new form. Pragmatic discourses point to the necessity of compromise as soon as one's own interests have to be brought into harmony with those of others. Ethical-political discourses have as their goal the clarification of a collective identity that must leave room for the pursuit of diverse individual life projects. The problem of the conditions under which moral commands are reasonable motivates the transition from morality to law. And, finally, the implementation of goals and programs gives rise to questions of the transfer and neutral exercise of power.

Modern rational natural law responded to this constellation of problems, but it failed to do justice to the intersubjective nature of collective will formation, which cannot be correctly construed as individual will formation writ large. Hence, we must renounce the premises of the philosophy of the subject on which rational natural law is based. From the perspective of a theory of discourse, the problem of agreement among parties whose wills and interests clash is shifted to the plane of institutionalized procedures and communicative presuppositions of processes of argumentation and negotiation that must be actually carried out.[13]

It is only at the level of a discourse theory of law and politics that we can also expect an answer to the question invited by our analyses: Can we still speak of practical reason in the singular after it has dissolved into three different forms of argumentation under the aspects of the purposive, the good, and the right? All of these forms of argument are indeed related to the wills of possible agents, but as we have seen, concepts of the will change with the type of question and answer entertained. The unity of practical reason can no longer be grounded in the unity of moral argumentation in accordance with the Kantian model of the unity of transcendental consciousness, for there is no metadiscourse on which we could fall back to justify the choice between different forms of argumentation.[14] Is the issue of whether we wish to address a given problem under the standpoint

of the purposive, the good, or the just not then left to the arbitrary choice, or at best the prediscursive judgment, of the individual? Recourse to a faculty of judgment that "grasps" whether a problem is aesthetic rather than economic, theoretical rather than practical, ethical rather than moral, political rather than legal, must remain suspect for anyone who agrees that Kant had good grounds for abandoning the Aristotelian concept of judgment. In any case, it is not the faculty of reflective judgment, which subsumes particular cases under general rules, that is relevant here but an aptitude for discriminating problems into different kinds.

As Peirce and the pragmatists correctly emphasize, real problems are always rooted in something objective. The problems we confront thrust themselves upon us; they have a situation-defining power and engage our minds with their own logics. Nevertheless, if each problem followed a unique logic of its own that had nothing to do with the logic of the next problem, our minds would be led in a new direction by every new kind of problem. A practical reason that saw its unity only in the blind spot of such a reactive faculty of judgment would remain an opaque construction comprehensible only in phenomenological terms.

Moral theory must bequeath this question unanswered to the philosophy of law; the unity of practical reason can be realized in an unequivocal manner only within a network of public forms of communication and practices in which the conditions of rational collective will formation have taken on concrete institutional form.

*CHAPTER SIX*

# Technology and Science as "Ideology"

*For Herbert Marcuse on his seventieth birthday, July 19, 1968*

Max Weber introduced the concept of "rationality" in order to define the form of capitalist economic activity, bourgeois private law, and bureaucratic authority. Rationalization means, first of all, the extension of the areas of society subject to the criteria of rational decision. Second, social labor is industrialized, with the result that criteria of instrumental action also penetrate into other areas of life (urbanization of the mode of life, technification of transport and communication). Both trends exemplify the type of purposive-rational action, which refers to either the organization of means or choice between alternatives. Planning can be regarded as purposive-rational action of the second order. It aims at the establishment, improvement, or expansion of systems of purposive-rational action themselves.

The progressive "rationalization" of society is linked to the institutionalization of scientific and technical development. To the extent that technology and science permeate social institutions and thus transform them, old legitimations are destroyed. The secularization and "disenchantment" of action-orienting worldviews, of cultural tradition as a whole, is the obverse of the growing "rationality" of social action.

Herbert Marcuse has taken these analyses as a point of departure in order to demonstrate that the formal concept of rationality—which Weber derived from the purposive-rational action of the capitalist entrepreneur, the industrial wage laborer, the abstract legal person, and the modern administrative official

and based on the criteria of science as well as technology—has specific substantive implications. Marcuse is convinced that what Weber called "rationalization" realizes not rationality as such but rather, in the name of rationality, a specific form of unacknowledged political domination. Because this sort of rationality extends to the correct choice among strategies, the appropriate application of technologies, and the efficient establishment of systems (with *presupposed* aims in *given* situations), it removes the total social framework of interests in which strategies are chosen, technologies applied, and systems established, from the scope of reflection and rational reconstruction. Moreover, this rationality extends only to relations of possible technical control and therefore requires a type of action that implies domination, whether of nature or of society. By virtue of its structure, purposive-rational action is the exercise of control. That is why, in accordance with this rationality, the "rationalization" of the conditions of life is synonymous with the institutionalization of a form of domination whose political character becomes unrecognizable: the technical reason of a social system of purposive-rational action does not lose its political content. Marcuse's critique of Weber comes to the conclusion that

> the very concept of technical reason is perhaps ideological. Not only the application of technology but technology itself is domination (of nature and men)—methodical, scientific, calculated, calculating control. Specific purposes and interests of domination are not foisted upon technology "subsequently" and from the outside; they enter the very construction of the technical apparatus. Technology is always a historical-social *project:* in it is projected what a society and its ruling interests intend to do with men and things. Such a "purpose" of domination is "substantive" and to this extent belongs to the very form of technical reason.[1]

As early as 1956 Marcuse referred in a quite different context to the peculiar phenomenon that in industrially

advanced capitalist societies domination tends to lose its exploitative and oppressive character and become "rational," without political domination thereby disappearing: "domination is dependent only on the capacity and drive to maintain and extend the apparatus as a whole."[2] Domination is rational in that a system can be maintained which can allow itself to make the growth of the forces of production, coupled with scientific and technical progress, the basis of its legitimation although, at the same time, the level of the productive forces constitutes a potential in relation to which "the renunciations and burdens placed on individuals seem more and more unnecessary and irrational."[3] In Marcuse's judgment, the objectively superfluous repression can be recognized in the "intensified subjection of individuals to the enormous apparatus of production and distribution, in the deprivatization of free time, in the almost indistinguishable fusion of constructive and destructive social labor."[4] Paradoxically, however, this repression can disappear from the consciousness of the population because the legitimation of domination has assumed a new character: it refers to the "constantly increasing productivity and domination of nature which keeps individuals . . . living in increasing comfort."[5]

The institutionalized growth of the forces of production following from scientific and technical progress surpasses all historical proportions. From it the institutional framework draws its opportunity for legitimation. The thought that relations of production can be measured against the potential of developed productive forces is prevented because the existing relations of production present themselves as the technically necessary organizational form of a rationalized society. Here "rationality," in Weber's sense, shows its Janus face. It is no longer only a critical standard for the developmental level of the forces of production in relation to which the objectively superfluous, repressive character of historically obsolete relations of production can be exposed. It is also an apologetic standard through which these same relations of production can be justified as a functional institutional framework. Indeed, in relation to its apologetic serviceability, "rationality" is weakened as a critical standard and degraded to a corrective *within* the sys-

tem: what can still be said is at best that society is "poorly programmed." At the stage of their scientific-technical development, then, the forces of production appear to enter a new constellation with the relations of production. Now they no longer function as the basis of a critique of prevailing legitimations in the interest of political enlightenment, but become instead the basis of legitimation. *This* is what Marcuse conceives of as world-historically new.

But if this is the case, must not the rationality embodied in systems of purposive-rational action be understood as specifically limited? Must not the rationality of science and technology, instead of being reducible to unvarying rules of logic and method have absorbed a substantive, historically derived, and therefore transitory a priori structure? Marcuse answers in the affirmative:

> The principles of modern science were *a priori* structured in such a way that they could serve as conceptual instruments for a universe of self-propelling, productive control; theoretical operationalism came to correspond to practical operationalism. The scientific method which led to the ever-more-effective domination of nature thus came to provide the pure concepts as well as the instrumentalities for the ever-more-effective domination of man by man *through* the domination of nature . . . Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but *as* technology, and the latter provides the great legitimation of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture.
>
> In this universe, technology also provides the great rationalization of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the "technical" impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one's own life. For this unfreedom appears neither as irrational nor as political, but rather as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the

> productivity of labor. Technological rationality thus protects rather than cancels the legitimacy of domination and the instrumentalist horizon of reason opens on a rationally totalitarian society.[6]

Weber's "rationalization" is not only a long-term process of the transformation of social structures but simultaneously "rationalization" in Freud's sense: the true motive, the perpetuation of objectively obsolete domination, is concealed through the invocation of purposive-rational imperatives. This invocation is possible only because the rationality of science and technology is immanently one of control: the rationality of domination.

Marcuse owes this concept, according to which modern science is a historical formation, equally to Husserl's treatise on the crisis of European science and Heidegger's destruction of Western metaphysics. From the materialist position Ernst Bloch has developed the viewpoint that the rationality of modern science is, in its roots, distorted by capitalism in such a way as to rob modern technology of the innocence of a pure productive force. But Marcuse is the first to make the "political content of technical reason" the analytical point of departure for a theory of advanced capitalist society. Because he not only develops this viewpoint philosophically but also attempts to corroborate it through sociological analysis, the difficulties inherent in this conception become visible. I shall refer here to but one ambiguity contained in Marcuse's own conception.

If the phenomenon on which Marcuse bases his social analysis, i.e. the peculiar *fusion of technology and domination*, rationality and oppression, could not be interpreted otherwise than as a world "project," as Marcuse says in the language of Sartre's phenomenology, contained in the material a priori of the logic of science and technology and determined by class interest and historical situation, then social emancipation could not be conceived without a complementary revolutionary transformation of science and technology themselves. In several passages Marcuse is tempted to pursue this idea of a New

Science in connection with the promise, familiar in Jewish and Protestant mysticism, of the "resurrection of fallen nature." This theme, well-known for having penetrated into Schelling's (and Baader's) philosophy via Swabian Pietism, returns in Marx's *Paris Manuscripts*, today constitutes the central thought of Bloch's philosophy, and, in reflected forms, also directs the more secret hopes of Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno. It is also present in Marcuse's thought:

> The point which I am trying to make is that science, *by virtue of its own method* and concepts, has projected and promoted a universe in which the domination of nature has remained linked to the domination of man—a link which tends to be fatal to this universe as a whole. Nature, scientifically comprehended and mastered, reappears in the technical apparatus of production and destruction which sustains and improves the life of the individuals while subordinating them to the masters of the apparatus. Thus the rational hierarchy merges with the social one. If this is the case, then the change in the direction of progress, which might sever this fatal link, would also affect the very structure of science—the scientific project. Its hypotheses, without losing their rational character, would develop in an essentially different experimental context (that of a pacified world); consequently, science would arrive at essentially different concepts of nature and establish essentially different facts.[7]

In a logical fashion Marcuse envisages not only different modes of theory formation but a different scientific methodology in general. The transcendental framework within which nature would be made the object of a new experience would then no longer be the functional system of instrumental action. The viewpoint of possible technical control would be replaced by one of preserving, fostering, and releasing the potentialities of nature: "there are two kinds of mastery: a

repressive and a liberating one."[8] To this view it must be objected that modern science can be interpreted as a historically unique project only if at least one alternative project is thinkable. And, in addition, an alternative New Science would have to include the definition of a New Technology. This is a sobering consideration because technology, if based at all on a project, can only be traced back to a "project" of the human species *as a whole*, and not to one that could be historically surpassed.

Arnold Gehlen has pointed out in what seems to me conclusive fashion that there is an immanent connection between the technology known to us and the structure of purposive-rational action. If we comprehend the behavioral system of action regulated by its own results as the conjunction of rational decision and instrumental action, then we can reconstruct the history of technology from the point of view of the step-by-step objectivation of the elements of that very system. In any case technological development lends itself to being interpreted as though the human species had taken the elementary components of the behavioral system of purposive-rational action, which is primarily rooted in the human organism, and projected them one after another onto the plane of technical instruments, thereby unburdening itself of the corresponding functions.[9] At first the functions of the motor apparatus (hands and legs) were augmented and replaced, followed by energy production (of the human body), the functions of the sensory apparatus (eyes, ears, and skin), and finally by the functions of the governing center (the brain). Technological development thus follows a logic that corresponds to the structure of purposive-rational action regulated by its own results, which is in fact the structure of *work*. Realizing this, it is impossible to envisage how, as long as the organization of human nature does not change and as long therefore as we have to achieve self-preservation through social labor and with the aid of means that substitute for work, we could renounce technology, more particularly *our* technology, in favor of a qualitatively different one.

Marcuse has in mind an alternative *attitude* to nature,

but it does not admit of the idea of a New Technology. Instead of treating nature as the object of possible technical control, we can encounter her as an opposing partner in a possible interaction. We can seek out a fraternal rather than an exploited nature. At the level of an as yet incomplete intersubjectivity we can impute subjectivity to animals and plants, even to minerals, and try to communicate with nature instead of merely processing her under conditions of severed communication. And the idea that a still enchained subjectivity of nature cannot be unbound until men's communication among themselves is free from domination has retained, to say the least, a singular attraction. Only if men could communicate without compulsion and each could recognize himself in the other, could mankind possibly recognize nature as another subject: not, as idealism would have it, as its Other, but as a subject of which mankind itself is the Other.

Be that as it may, the achievements of technology, which are indispensable as such, could surely not be substituted for by an awakened nature. The alternative to existing technology, the project of nature as opposing partner instead of object, refers to an alternative structure of action: to symbolic interaction in distinction to purposive-rational action. This means, however, that the two projects are projections of work and of language, i.e. projects of the human species as a whole, and not of an individual epoch, a specific class, or a surpassable situation. The idea of a New Science will not stand up to logical scrutiny any more than that of a New Technology, if indeed science is to retain the meaning of modern science inherently oriented to possible technical control. For this function, as for scientific-technical progress in general, there is no more "humane" substitute.

Marcuse himself seems to doubt whether it is meaningful to relativize as a "project" the rationality of science and technology. In many passages of *One-Dimensional Man*, revolutionizing technological rationality means only a transformation of the institutional framework which would leave untouched the forces of production as such. The structure of scientific-technical progress would be conserved, and only the governing

values would be changed. New values would be translated into technically solvable tasks. The *direction* of this progress would be new, but the standard of rationality itself would remain unchanged:

> Technics, as a universe of instrumentalities, may increase the weakness as well as the power of man. At the present stage, he is perhaps more powerless over his own apparatus than he ever was before.[10]

This sentence reinstates the political innocence of the forces of production. Here Marcuse is only renewing the classical definition of the relationship between the productive forces and the production relations. But in so doing, he is as far from coming to grips with the new constellation at which he is aiming as he was with the assertion that the productive forces are thoroughly corrupted in their political implications. What is singular about the "rationality" of science and technology is that it characterizes the growing potential of self-surpassing productive forces which continually threaten the institutional framework *and at the same time*, set the standard of legitimation for the production relations that restrict this potential. The dichotomy of this rationality cannot be adequately represented either by historicizing the concept or by returning to the orthodox view: neither the model of the original sin of scientific-technical progress nor that of its innocence do it justice. The most sensible formulation of the matter in question seems to me to be the following:

> The technological *a priori* is a political *a priori* inasmuch as the transformation of nature involves that of man, and inasmuch as the "man-made creations" issue from and reenter a societal ensemble. One may still insist that the machinery of the technological universe is "as such" indifferent towards political ends—it can revolutionize or retard a society. An electronic computer can serve equally in capitalist or socialist administrations; a cyclotron can be an

> equally efficient tool for a war party or a peace party. . . . However, when technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture; it projects a historical totality—a "world."[11]

The difficulty, which Marcuse has only obscured with the notion of the political content of technical reason, is to determine in a categorially precise manner the meaning of the expansion of the rational form of science and technology, i.e. the rationality embodied in systems of purposive-rational action, to the proportions of a life form, of the "historical totality" of a life-world. This is the same process that Weber meant to designate and explain as the rationalization of society. I believe that neither Weber nor Marcuse has satisfactorily accounted for it. Therefore I should like to attempt to reformulate Weber's concept of rationalization in another frame of reference in order to discuss on this new basis Marcuse's critique of Weber, as well as his thesis of the double function of scientific-technical progress (as productive force and as ideology). I am proposing an interpretative scheme that, in the format of an essay, can be introduced but not seriously validated with regard to its utility. The historical generalizations thus serve only to clarify this scheme and are no substitute for its scientific substantiation.

By means of the concept of "rationalization" Weber attempted to grasp the repercussions of scientific-technical progress on the institutional framework of societies engaged in "modernization." He shared this interest with the classical sociological tradition in general, whose pairs of polar concepts all revolve about the same problem: how to construct a conceptual model of the institutional change brought about by the extension of subsystems of purposive-rational action. Status and contract, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, mechanical and organic solidarity, informal and formal groups, primary and secondary groups, culture and civilization, traditional and bureaucratic authority, sacral and secular associations, military and industrial

society, status group and class—all of these pairs of concepts represent as many attempts to grasp the structural change of the institutional framework of a traditional society on the way to becoming a modern one. Even Parsons' catalog of possible alternatives of value-orientations belongs in the list of these attempts, although he would not admit it. Parsons claims that his list systematically represents the decisions between alternative value-orientations that must be made by the subject of any action whatsoever, regardless of the particular or historical context. But if one examines the list, one can scarcely overlook the historical situation of the inquiry on which it is based. The four pairs of alternative value-orientations,

*affectivity* versus *affective neutrality*,
*particularism* versus *universalism*,
*ascription* versus *achievement*,
*diffuseness* versus *specificity*,

which are supposed to take into account *all* possible fundamental decisions, are tailored to an analysis of *one* historical process. In fact they define the relative dimensions of the modification of dominant attitudes in the transition from traditional to modern society. Subsystems of purposive-rational action do indeed demand orientation to the postponement of gratification, universal norms, individual achievement and active mastery, and specific and analytic relationships, rather than to the opposite orientations.

In order to reformulate what Weber called "rationalization," I should like to go beyond the subjective approach that Parsons shares with Weber and propose another categorial framework. I shall take as my starting point the fundamental distinction between *work* and *interaction*.[12]

By "work" or *purposive-rational action* I understand either instrumental action or rational choice or their conjunction. Instrumental action is governed by *technical rules* based

on empirical knowledge. In every case they imply conditional predictions about observable events, physical or social. These predictions can prove correct or incorrect. The conduct of rational choice is governed by *strategies* based on analytic knowledge. They imply deductions from preference rules (value systems) and decision procedures; these propositions are either correctly or incorrectly deduced. Purposive-rational action realizes defined goals under given conditions. But while instrumental action organizes means that are appropriate or inappropriate according to criteria of an effective control of reality, strategic action depends only on the correct evaluation of possible alternative choices, which results from calculation supplemented by values and maxims.

By "interaction," on the other hand, I understand *communicative action*, symbolic interaction. It is governed by binding *consensual norms*, which define reciprocal expectations about behavior and which must be understood and recognized by at least two acting subjects. Social norms are enforced through sanctions. Their meaning is objectified in ordinary language communication. While the validity of technical rules and strategies depends on that of empirically true or analytically correct propositions, the validity of social norms is grounded only in the intersubjectivity of the mutual understanding of intentions and secured by the general recognition of obligations. Violation of a rule has a different consequence according to type. *Incompetent* behavior, which violates valid technical rules or strategies, is condemned per se to failure through lack of success; the "punishment" is built, so to speak, into its rebuff by reality. *Deviant* behavior, which violates consensual norms, provokes sanctions that are connected with the rules only externally, that is by convention. Learned rules of purposive-rational action supply us with *skills*, internalized norms with *personality structures*. Skills put us in a position to solve problems; motivations allow us to follow norms. The diagram below summarizes these definitions. They demand a more precise explanation, which I cannot give here. It is above all the bottom column which I am neglecting here, and it refers to the very

problem for whose solution I am introducing the distinction between work and interaction.

| | Institutional framework: symbolic interaction | Systems of purposive-rational (instrumental and strategic) action |
|---|---|---|
| action-orienting rules | social norms | technical rules |
| level of definition | intersubjectively shared ordinary language | context-free language |
| type of definition | reciprocal expectations about behavior | conditional predictions conditional imperatives |
| mechanisms of acquisition | role internalization | learning of skills and qualifications |
| function of action type | maintenance of institutions (conformity to norms on the basis of reciprocal enforcement) | problem-solving (goal attainment, defined in means-ends relations) |
| sanctions against violation of rules | punishment on the basis of conventional sanctions: failure against authority | inefficacy: failure in reality |
| "rationalization" | emancipation, individuation; extension of communication free of domination | growth of productive forces; extension of power of technical control |

In terms of the two types of action we can distinguish between social systems according to whether purposive-rational action or interaction predominates. The institutional framework of a society consists of norms that guide symbolic interaction. But there are subsystems such as (to keep to Weber's examples) the economic system or the state apparatus, in which primarily sets of purposive-rational action are institutionalized. These contrast with subsystems such as family and kinship structures, which, although linked to a number of tasks and skills, are primarily based on moral rules of interaction. So I shall dis-

tinguish generally at the analytic level between (1) the *institutional framework* of a society or the sociocultural life-world and (2) the *subsystems of purposive-rational action* that are "embedded" in it. Insofar as actions are determined by the institutional framework they are both guided and enforced by norms. Insofar as they are determined by subsystems of purposive-rational action, they conform to patterns of instrumental or strategic action. Of course, only institutionalization can guarantee that such action will in fact follow definite technical rules and expected strategies with adequate probability.

With the help of these distinctions we can reformulate Weber's concept of "rationalization."

The term "traditional society" has come to denote all social systems that generally meet the criteria of civilizations. The latter represent a specific stage in the evolution of the human species. They differ in several traits from more primitive social forms: (1) A centralized ruling power (state organization of political power in contrast to tribal organization); (2) The division of society into socioeconomic classes (distribution to individuals of social obligations and rewards according to class membership and not according to kinship status); (3) The prevalence of a central worldview (myth, complex religion) to the end of legitimating political power (thus converting power into authority). Civilizations are established on the basis of a relatively developed technology and of division of labor in the social process of production, which make possible a surplus product, i.e. a quantity of goods exceeding that needed for the satisfaction of immediate and elementary needs. They owe their existence to the solution of the problem that first arises with the production of a surplus product, namely, how to distribute wealth and labor both unequally and yet legitimately according to criteria other than those generated by a kinship system.[13]

In our context it is relevant that despite considerable differences in their level of development, civilizations, based on an economy dependent on agriculture and craft production, have tolerated technical innovation and organizational improve-

ment only within definite limits. One indicator of the traditional limits to the development of the forces of production is that until about three hundred years ago no major social system had produced more than the equivalent of a maximum of two hundred dollars per capita per annum. The stable pattern of a precapitalist mode of production, preindustrial technology, and premodern science makes possible a typical relation of the institutional framework to subsystems of purposive-rational action. For despite considerable progress, these subsystems, developing out of the system of social labor and its stock of accumulated technically exploitable knowledge, never reached that measure of extension after which their "rationality" would have become an open threat to the authority of the cultural traditions that legitimate political power. The expression "traditional society" refers to the circumstance that the institutional framework is grounded in the unquestionable underpinning of legitimation constituted by mythical, religious or metaphysical interpretations of reality—cosmic as well as social—as a whole. "Traditional" societies exist as long as the development of subsystems of purposive-rational action keep within the limits of the legitimating efficacy of cultural traditions.[14] This is the basis for the "superiority" of the institutional framework, which does not preclude structural changes adapted to a potential surplus generated in the economic system but does preclude critically challenging the traditional form of legitimation. This immunity is a meaningful criterion for the delimitation of traditional societies from those which have crossed the threshold to modernization.

The "superiority criterion," consequently, is applicable to all forms of class society organized as a state in which principles of universally valid rationality (whether of technical or strategic means-ends relations) have not explicitly and successfully called into question the cultural validity of intersubjectively shared traditions, which function as legitimations of the political system. It is only since the capitalist mode of production has equipped the economic system with a self-propelling mechanism that ensures long-term continuous growth (despite crises) in the productivity of labor that the introduction of

new technologies and strategies, i.e. innovation as such, has been institutionalized. As Marx and Schumpeter have proposed in their respective theories, the capitalist mode of production can be comprehended as a mechanism that guarantees the *permanent* expansion of subsystems of purposive-rational action and thereby overturns the traditionalist "superiority" of the institutional framework to the forces of production. Capitalism is the first mode of production in world history to institutionalize self-sustaining economic growth. It has generated an industrial system that could be freed from the institutional framework of capitalism and connected to mechanisms other than that of the utilization of capital in private form.

What characterizes the passage from traditional society to society commencing the process of modernization is *not* that structural modification of the institutional framework is necessitated under the pressure of relatively developed productive forces, for that is the mechanism of the evolution of the species from the very beginning. What is new is a level of development of the productive forces that makes permanent the extension of subsystems of purposive-rational action and thereby calls into question the traditional form of the legitimation of power. The older mythic, religious, and metaphysical worldviews obey the logic of interaction contexts. They answer the central questions of men's collective existence and of individual life history. Their themes are justice and freedom, violence and oppression, happiness and gratification, poverty, illness, and death. Their categories are victory and defeat, love and hate, salvation and damnation. Their logic accords with the grammar of systematically distorted communication and with the fateful causality of dissociated symbols and suppressed motives.[15] The rationality of language games, associated with communicative action, is confronted at the threshold of the modern period with the rationality of means-ends relations, associated with instrumental and strategic action. As soon as this confrontation can arise, the end of traditional society is in sight: the traditional form of legitimation breaks down.

Capitalism is defined by a mode of production that not only poses this problem but also solves it. It provides a legitima-

tion of domination which is no longer called down from the lofty heights of cultural tradition but instead summoned up from the base of social labor. The institution of the market, in which private property owners exchange commodities—including the market on which propertyless private individuals exchange their labor power as their only commodity—promises that exchange relations will be and are just owing to equivalence. Even this bourgeois ideology of justice, by adopting the category of reciprocity, still employs a relation of communicative action as the basis of legitimation. But the principle of reciprocity is now the organizing principle of the sphere of production and reproduction itself. Thus on the base of a market economy, political domination can be legitimated henceforth "from below" rather than "from above" (through invocation of cultural tradition).

If we suppose that the division of society into socioeconomic classes derives from the differential distribution among social groups of the relevant means of production, and that this distribution itself is based on the institutionalization of relations of social force, then we may assume that in all civilizations this institutional framework has been identical with the system of political domination: traditional authority was political authority. Only with the emergence of the capitalist mode of production can the legitimation of the institutional framework be linked immediately with the system of social labor. Only then can the property order change from a *political relation* to a *production relation*, because it legitimates itself through the rationality of the market, the ideology of exchange society, and no longer through a legitimate power structure. It is now the political system which is justified in terms of the legitimate relations of production: this is the real meaning and function of rationalist natural law from Locke to Kant.[16] The institutional framework of society is only mediately political and immediately economic (the bourgeois constitutional state as "superstructure").

The superiority of the capitalist mode of production to its predecessors has these two roots: the establishment of an economic mechanism that renders permanent the expansion of

subsystems of purposive-rational action, and the creation of an economic legitimation by means of which the political system can be adapted to the new requisites of rationality brought about by these developing subsystems. It is this process of adaptation that Weber comprehends as "rationalization." Within it we can distinguish between two tendencies: rationalization "from below" and rationalization "from above."

A permanent pressure for adaptation arises from below as soon as the new mode of production becomes fully operative through the institutionalization of a domestic market for goods and labor power and of the capitalist enterprise. In the system of social labor this institutionalization ensures cumulative progress in the forces of production and an ensuing horizontal extension of subsystems of purposive-rational action—at the cost of economic crises, to be sure. In this way traditional structures are increasingly subordinated to conditions of instrumental or strategic rationality: the organization of labor and of trade, the network of transportation, information, and communication, the institutions of private law, and, starting with financial administration, the state bureaucracy. Thus arises the substructure of a society under the compulsion of modernization. The latter eventually widens to take in all areas of life: the army, the school system, health services, and even the family. Whether in city or country, it induces an urbanization of the *form* of life. That is, it generates subcultures that train the individual to be able to "switch over" at any moment from an interaction context to purposive-rational action.

This pressure for rationalization coming from below is met by a compulsion to rationalize coming from above. For, measured against the new standards of purposive rationality, the power-legitimating and action-orienting traditions—especially mythological interpretations and religious worldviews—lose their cogency. On this level of generalization, what Weber termed "secularization" has two aspects. First, traditional worldviews and objectivations lose their power and validity *as* myth, *as* public religion, *as* customary ritual, *as* justifying metaphysics, *as* unquestionable tradition. Instead, they are reshaped into sub-

jective belief systems and ethics which ensure the private cogency of modern value-orientations (the "Protestant ethic"). Second, they are transformed into constructions that do both at once: criticize tradition and reorganize the released material of tradition according to the principles of formal law and the exchange of equivalents (rationalist natural law). Having become fragile, existing legitimations are replaced by new ones. The latter emerge from the critique of the dogmatism of traditional interpretations of the world and claim a scientific character. Yet they retain legitimating functions, thereby keeping actual power relations inaccessible to analysis and to public consciousness. It is in this way that ideologies in the restricted sense first came into being. They replace traditional legitimations of power by appearing in the mantle of modern science and by deriving their justification from the critique of ideology. Ideologies are coeval with the critique of ideology. In this sense there can be no prebourgeois "ideologies."

In this connection modern science assumes a singular function. In distinction from the philosophical sciences of the older sort, the empirical sciences have developed since Galileo's time within a methodological frame of reference that reflects the transcendental viewpoint of possible technical control. Hence the modern sciences produce knowledge which through its *form* (and not through the subjective intention of scientists) is technically exploitable knowledge, although the possible applications generally are realized afterwards. Science and technology were not interdependent until late into the nineteenth century. Until then modern science did not contribute to the acceleration of technical development nor, consequently, to the pressure toward rationalization from below. Rather, its contribution to the modernization process was indirect. Modern physics gave rise to a philosophical approach that interpreted nature and society according to a model borrowed from the natural sciences and induced, so to speak, the mechanistic worldview of the seventeenth century. The reconstruction of classical natural law was carried out in this framework. This modern natural law was the basis of the bourgeois revolutions of the

seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, through which the old legitimations of the power structure were finally destroyed.[17]

By the middle of the nineteenth century the capitalist mode of production had developed so fully in England and France that Marx was able to identify the locus of the institutional framework of society in the relations of production and at the same time criticize the legitimating basis constituted by the exchange of equivalents. He carried out the critique of bourgeois ideology in the form of *political economy*. His labor theory of value destroyed the semblance of freedom, by means of which the legal institution of the free labor contract had made unrecognizable the relationship of social force that underlay the wage-labor relationship. Marcuse's criticism of Weber is that the latter, disregarding this Marxian insight, upholds an abstract concept of rationalization, which not merely fails to express the specific class content of the adaptation of the institutional framework to the developing systems of purposive-rational action, but conceals it. Marcuse knows that the Marxian analysis can no longer be applied as it stands to advanced capitalist society, with which Weber was already confronted. But he wants to show through the example of Weber that the evolution of modern society in the framework of state-regulated capitalism cannot be conceptualized if liberal capitalism has not been analyzed adequately.

Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century two developmental tendencies have become noticeable in the most advanced capitalist countries: an increase in state intervention in order to secure the system's stability, and a growing interdependence of research and technology, which has turned the sciences into the leading productive force. Both tendencies have destroyed the particular constellation of institutional framework and subsystems of purposive-rational action which characterized liberal capitalism, thereby eliminating the conditions relevant for the application of political economy in the version correctly formulated by Marx for liberal capitalism. I believe that Marcuse's basic thesis, according to which technology and science

today also take on the function of legitimating political power, is the key to analyzing the changed constellation.

The permanent regulation of the economic process by means of state intervention arose as a defense mechanism against the dysfunctional tendencies, which threaten the system, that capitalism generates when left to itself. Capitalism's actual development manifestly contradicted the capitalist idea of a bourgeois society, emancipated from domination, in which power is neutralized. The root ideology of just exchange, which Marx unmasked in theory, collapsed in practice. The form of capital utilization through private ownership could only be maintained by the governmental corrective of a social and economic policy that stabilized the business cycle. The institutional framework of society was repoliticized. It no longer coincides immediately with the relations of production, i.e. with an order of private law that secures capitalist economic activity and the corresponding general guarantees of order provided by the bourgeois state. But this means a change in the relation of the economy to the political system: politics is no longer *only* a phenomenon of the superstructure. If society no longer "autonomously" perpetuates itself through self-regulation as a sphere preceding and lying at the basis of the state—and its ability to do so was the really novel feature of the capitalist mode of production—then society and the state are no longer in the relationship that Marxian theory had defined as that of base and superstructure. Then, however, a critical theory of society can no longer be constructed in the exclusive form of a critique of political economy. A point of view that methodically isolates the economic laws of motion of society can claim to grasp the overall structure of social life in its essential categories only as long as politics depends on the economic base. It becomes inapplicable when the "base" has to be comprehended as in itself a function of governmental activity and political conflicts. According to Marx, the critique of political economy was the theory of bourgeois society only as *critique of ideology*. If, however, the ideology of just exchange disintegrates, then the power structure can no longer be criticized *immediately* at the level of the relations of production.

With the collapse of this ideology, political power requires a new legitimation. Now since the power indirectly exercised over the exchange process is itself operating under political control and state regulation, legitimation can no longer be derived from the unpolitical order constituted by the relations of production. To this extent the requirement for direct legitimation, which exists in precapitalist societies, reappears. On the other hand, the resuscitation of immediate political domination (in the traditional form of legitimation on the basis of cosmological worldviews) has become impossible. For traditions have already been disempowered. Moreover, in industrially developed societies the results of bourgeois emancipation from immediate political domination (civil and political rights and the mechanism of general elections) can be fully ignored only in periods of reaction. Formally democratic government in systems of state-regulated capitalism is subject to a need for legitimation which cannot be met by a return to a prebourgeois form. Hence the ideology of free exchange is replaced by a substitute program. The latter is oriented not to the social results of the institution of the market but to those of government action designed to compensate for the dysfunctions of free exchange. This policy combines the element of the bourgeois ideology of achievement (which, however, displaces assignment of status according to the standard of individual achievement from the market to the school system) with a guaranteed minimum level of welfare, which offers secure employment and a stable income. This substitute program obliges the political system to maintain stabilizing conditions for an economy that guards against risks to growth and guarantees social security and the chance for individual upward mobility. What is needed to this end is latitude for manipulation by state interventions that, at the cost of limiting the institutions of private law, secure the private form of capital utilization *and bind the masses' loyalty to this form.*

Insofar as government action is directed toward the economic system's stability and growth, politics now takes on a peculiarly negative character. For it is oriented toward the elimination of dysfunctions and the avoidance of risks that

threaten the system: not, in other words, toward the *realization of practical goals* but toward the *solution of technical problems.* Claus Offe pointed this out in his paper at the 1968 Frankfurt Sociological Conference:

> In this structure of the relation of economy and the state, "politics" degenerates into action that follows numerous and continually emerging "avoidance imperatives": the mass of differentiated social-scientific information that flows into the political system allows both the early identification of risk zones and the treatment of actual dangers. What is new about this structure is . . . that the risks to stability built into the mechanism of private capital utilization in highly organized markets, risks that can be manipulated, prescribe preventive actions and measures that *must* be accepted as long as they are to accord with the existing legitimation resources (i.e., substitute program).[18]

Offe perceives that through these preventive action-orientations, government activity is restricted to administratively soluble technical problems, so that practical questions evaporate, so to speak. *Practical substance is eliminated.*

Old-style politics was forced, merely through its traditional form of legitimation, to define itself in relation to practical goals: the "good life" was interpreted in a context defined by interaction relations. The same still held for the ideology of bourgeois society. The substitute program prevailing today, in contrast, is aimed exclusively at the functioning of a manipulated system. It eliminates practical questions and therewith precludes discussion about the adoption of standards; the latter could emerge only from a democratic decision-making process. The solution of technical problems is not dependent on public discussion. Rather, public discussions could render problematic the framework within which the tasks of government action present themselves as technical ones. Therefore the new politics of state interventionism requires a depoliticization of the mass

of the population. To the extent that practical questions are eliminated, the public realm also loses its political function. At the same time, the institutional framework of society is still distinct from the systems of purposive-rational action themselves. Its organization continues to be a problem of *practice* linked to communication, not one of *technology*, no matter how scientifically guided. Hence, the bracketing out of practice associated with the new kind of politics is not automatic. The substitute program, which legitimates power today, leaves unfilled a vital need for legitimation: how will the depoliticization of the masses be made plausible to them? Marcuse would be able to answer: by having technology and science *also* take on the role of an ideology.

Since the end of the nineteenth century the other developmental tendency characteristic of advanced capitalism has become increasingly momentous: the scientization of technology. The institutional pressure to augment the productivity of labor through the introduction of new technology has always existed under capitalism. But innovations depended on sporadic inventions, which, while economically motivated, were still fortuitous in character. This changed as technical development entered into a feedback relation with the progress of the modern sciences. With the advent of large-scale industrial research, science, technology, and industrial utilization were fused into a system. Since then, industrial research has been linked up with research under government contract, which primarily promotes scientific and technical progress in the military sector. From there information flows back into the sectors of civilian production. Thus technology and science become a leading productive force, rendering inoperative the conditions for Marx's labor theory of value. It is no longer meaningful to calculate the amount of capital investment in research and development on the basis of the value of unskilled (simple) labor power, when scientific-technical progress has become an independent source of surplus value, in relation to which the only source of surplus value considered by Marx, namely the labor power of the immediate producers, plays an ever smaller role.[19]

As long as the productive forces were visibly linked to the rational decisions and instrumental action of men engaged in social production, they could be understood as the potential for a growing power of technical control and not be confused with the institutional framework in which they are embedded. However, with the institutionalization of scientific-technical progress, the potential of the productive forces has assumed a form owing to which men lose consciousness of the dualism of work and interaction.

It is true that social interests still determine the direction, functions, and pace of technical progress. But these interests define the social system so much as a whole that they coincide with the interest in maintaining the system. *As such* the private form of capital utilization and a distribution mechanism for social rewards that guarantees the loyalty of the masses are removed from discussion. The quasi-autonomous progress of science and technology then appears as an independent variable on which the most important single system variable, namely economic growth, depends. Thus arises a perspective in which the development of the social system *seems* to be determined by the logic of scientific-technical progress. The immanent law of this progress seems to produce objective exigencies, which must be obeyed by any politics oriented toward functional needs. But when this semblance has taken root effectively, then propaganda can refer to the role of technology and science in order to explain and legitimate why in modern societies the process of democratic decision-making about practical problems loses its function and "must" be replaced by plebiscitary decisions about alternative sets of leaders of administrative personnel. This technocracy thesis has been worked out in several versions on the intellectual level.[20] What seems to me more important is that it can also become a background ideology that penetrates into the consciousness of the depoliticized mass of the population, where it can take on legitimating power.[21] It is a singular achievement of this ideology to detach society's self-understanding from the frame of reference of communicative action and from the concepts of symbolic interaction and replace it with a scientific model. Accordingly the culturally de-

fined self-understanding of a social life-world is replaced by the self-reification of men under categories of purposive-rational action and adaptive behavior.

The model according to which the planned reconstruction of society is to proceed is taken from systems analysis. It is possible in principle to comprehend and analyze individual enterprises and organizations, even political or economic subsystems and social systems as a whole, according to the pattern of self-regulated systems. It makes a difference, of course, whether we use a cybernetic frame of reference for analytic purposes or *organize* a given social system in accordance with this pattern as a man-machine system. But the transferral of the analytic model to the level of social organization is implied by the very approach taken by systems analysis. Carrying out this intention of an instinct-like self-stabilization of social systems yields the peculiar perspective that the structure of one of the two types of action, namely the behavioral system of purposive-rational action, not only predominates over the institutional framework but gradually absorbs communicative action as such. If, with Arnold Gehlen, one were to see the inner logic of technical development as the step-by-step disconnection of the behavioral system of purposive-rational action from the human organism and its transferral to machines, then the technocratic intention could be understood as the last stage of this development. For the first time man can not only, as *homo faber*, completely objectify himself and confront the achievements that have taken on independent life in his products; he can in addition, as *homo fabricatus*, be integrated into his technical apparatus if the structure of purposive-rational action can be successfully reproduced on the level of social systems. According to this idea the institutional framework of society —which previously was rooted in a different type of action— would now, in a fundamental reversal, be *absorbed* by the subsystems of purposive-rational action, which were embedded in it.

Of course this technocratic intention has not been realized anywhere even in its beginnings. But it serves as an ideology for the new politics, which is adapted to technical

problems and brackets out practical questions. Furthermore it does correspond to certain developmental tendencies that could lead to a creeping erosion of what we have called the institutional framework. The manifest domination of the authoritarian state gives way to the manipulative compulsions of technical-operational administration. The moral realization of a normative order is a function of communicative action oriented to shared cultural meaning and presupposing the internalization of values. It is increasingly supplanted by conditioned behavior, while large organizations as such are increasingly patterned after the structure of purposive-rational action. The industrially most advanced societies seem to approximate the model of behavioral control steered by external stimuli rather than guided by norms. Indirect control through fabricated stimuli has increased, especially in areas of putative subjective freedom (such as electoral, consumer, and leisure behavior). Sociopsychologically, the era is typified less by the authoritarian personality than by the destructuring of the superego. The increase in *adaptive behavior* is, however, only the obverse of the dissolution of the sphere of linguistically mediated interaction by the structure of purposive-rational action. This is paralleled subjectively by the disappearance of the difference between purposive-rational action and interaction from the consciousness not only of the sciences of man, but of men themselves. The concealment of this difference proves the ideological power of the technocratic consciousness.

In consequence of the two tendencies that have been discussed, capitalist society has changed to the point where two key categories of Marxian theory, namely class struggle and ideology, can no longer be employed as they stand.

It was on the basis of the capitalist mode of production that the struggle of social classes as such was first constituted, thereby creating an objective situation from which the class structure of traditional society, with its immediately political constitution, could be *recognized* in retrospect. State-regulated capitalism, which emerged from a reaction against the dangers to the system produced by open class antagonism, suspends

class conflict. The system of advanced capitalism is so defined by a policy of securing the loyalty of the wage-earning masses through rewards, that is, by avoiding conflict, that the conflict still built into the structure of society in virtue of the private mode of capital utilization is the very area of conflict which has the greatest probability of remaining latent. It recedes behind others, which, while conditioned by the mode of production, can no longer assume the form of class conflicts. In the paper cited, Claus Offe has analyzed this paradoxical state of affairs, showing that open conflicts about social interests break out with greater probability the less their frustration has dangerous consequences for the system. The needs with the greatest conflict potential are those on the periphery of the area of state intervention. They are far from the central conflict being kept in a state of latency and therefore they are not seen as having priority among dangers to be warded off. Conflicts are set off by these needs to the extent that disproportionately scattered state interventions produce backward areas of development and corresponding disparity tensions:

> The disparity between areas of life grows above all in view of the differential state of development obtaining between the actually institutionalized and the possible level of technical and social progress. The disproportion between the most modern apparatuses for industrial and military purposes and the stagnating organization of the transport, health, and educational systems is just as well known an example of this disparity between areas of life as is the contradiction between rational planning and regulation in taxation and finance policy and the unplanned, haphazard development of cities and regions. Such contradictions can no longer be designated accurately as antagonisms between classes, yet they can still be interpreted as results of the still dominant process of the private utilization of capital and of a specifically capitalist power structure. In this process the prevailing interests are those which,

> without being clearly localizable, are in a position, on the basis of the established mechanism of the capitalist economy, to react to disturbances of the conditions of their stability by producing risks relevant to the system as a whole.[22]

The interests bearing on the maintenance of the mode of production can no longer be "clearly localized" in the social system as class interests. For the power structure, aimed as it is at avoiding dangers to the system, precisely excludes "domination" (as immediate political or economically mediated social force) exercised in such a manner that one class subject *confronts* another as an identifiable group.

This means not that class antagonisms have been abolished but that they have become *latent.* Class distinctions persist in the form of subcultural traditions and corresponding differences not only in the standard of living and life style but also in political attitude. The social structure also makes it probable that the class of wage earners will be hit harder than other groups by social disparities. And finally, the generalized interest in perpetuating the system is still anchored today, on the level of immediate life chances, in a structure of privilege. The concept of an interest that has become *completely* independent of living subjects would cancel itself out. But with the deflection of dangers to the system in state-regulated capitalism, the political system has incorporated an interest—which transcends latent class boundaries—in preserving the compensatory distribution façade.

Furthermore, the displacement of the conflict zone from the class boundary to the underprivileged regions of life does not mean at all that serious conflict potential has been disposed of. As the extreme example of racial conflict in the United States shows, so many consequences of disparity can accumulate in certain areas and groups that explosions resembling civil war can occur. But unless they are connected with protest potential from other sectors of society no conflicts arising from such underprivilege can really overturn the system —they can only provoke it to sharp reactions incompatible with

formal democracy. For underprivileged groups are not social classes, nor do they ever even potentially represent the mass of the population. Their *disfranchisement* and pauperization no longer coincide with *exploitation*, because the system does not live off their labor. They can represent at most a past phase of exploitation. But they cannot through the withdrawal of cooperation attain the demands that they legitimately put forward. That is why these demands retain an appellative character. In the case of long-term nonconsideration of their legitimate demands underprivileged groups can in extreme situations react with desperate destruction and self-destruction. But as long as no coalitions are made with privileged groups, such a civil war lacks the chance of revolutionary success that class struggle possesses.

With a series of restrictions this model seems applicable even to the relations between the industrially advanced nations and the formerly colonial areas of the Third World. Here, too, growing disparity leads to a form of underprivilege that in the future surely will be increasingly less comprehensible through categories of exploitation. Economic interests are replaced on this level, however, with immediately military ones.

Be that as it may, in advanced capitalist society deprived and privileged groups no longer confront each other *as* socio-economic classes—and to some extent the boundaries of underprivilege are no longer even specific to groups and instead run across population categories. Thus the fundamental relation that existed in all traditional societies and that came to the fore under liberal capitalism is mediatized, namely the class antagonism between partners who stand in an institutionalized relationship of force, economic exploitation, and political oppression to one another, and in which communication is so distorted and restricted that the legitimations serving as an ideological veil cannot be called into question. Hegel's concept of the ethical totality of a living relationship which is sundered because one subject does not reciprocally satisfy the needs of the other is no longer an appropriate model for the mediatized class structure of organized, advanced capitalism. The suspended dialectic of the ethical generates the peculiar semblance of *post-histoire*. The

reason is that relative growth of the productive forces no longer represents *eo ipso* a potential that points beyond the existing framework with emancipatory consequences, in view of which legitimations of an existing power structure become enfeebled. For the leading productive force—controlled scientific-technical progress itself—has now become the basis of legitimation. Yet this new form of legitimation has cast off the old shape of *ideology.*

Technocratic consciousness is, on the one hand, "less ideological" than all previous ideologies. For it does not have the opaque force of a delusion that only transfigures the implementation of interests. On the other hand today's dominant, rather glassy background ideology, which makes a fetish of science, is more irresistible and farther-reaching than ideologies of the old type. For with the veiling of practical problems it not only justifies a *particular class's* interest in domination and represses *another class's* partial need for emancipation, but affects the human race's emancipatory interest as such.

Technocratic consciousness is not a rationalized, wish-fulfilling fantasy, not an "illusion" in Freud's sense, in which a system of interaction is either represented or interpreted and grounded. Even bourgeois ideologies could be traced back to a basic pattern of just interactions, free of domination and mutually satisfactory. It was these ideologies which met the criteria of wish-fulfillment and substitute gratification; the communication on which they were based was so limited by repressions that the relation of force once institutionalized as the capital-labor relation could not even be called by name. But the technocratic consciousness is not based in the same way on the causality of dissociated symbols and unconscious motives, which generates both false consciousness and the power of reflection to which the critique of ideology is indebted. It is less vulnerable to reflection, because it is no longer *only* ideology. For it does not, in the manner of ideology, express a projection of the "good life" (which even if not identifiable with a bad reality, can at least be brought into virtually satisfactory accord with it). Of course the new ideology, like the old, serves to impede making the foundations of society the object of

thought and reflection. Previously, social force lay at the basis of the relation between capitalist and wage-laborers. Today the basis is provided by structural conditions which predefine the tasks of system maintenance: the private form of capital utilization and a political form of distributing social rewards that guarantees mass loyalty. However, the old and new ideology differ in two ways.

First, the capital-labor relation today, because of its linkage to a loyalty-ensuring political distribution mechanism, no longer engenders uncorrected exploitation and oppression. The process through which the persisting class antagonism has been made virtual presupposes that the repression on which the latter is based first came to consciousness in history and *only then* was stabilized in a modified form as a property of the system. Technocratic consciousness, therefore, cannot rest in the same way on collective repression as did earlier ideologies. Second, mass loyalty today is created only with the aid of rewards for *privatized needs*. The achievements in virtue of which the system justifies itself may not in principle be interpreted politically. The acceptable interpretation is immediately in terms of allocations of money and leisure time (neutral with regard to their use), and mediately in terms of the technocratic justification of the occlusion of practical questions. Hence the new ideology is distinguished from its predecessor in that it severs the criteria for justifying the organization of social life from any normative regulation of interaction, thus depoliticizing them. It anchors them instead in functions of a putative system of purposive-rational action.

Technocratic consciousness reflects not the sundering of an ethical situation but the repression of "ethics" as such as a category of life. The common, positivist way of thinking renders inert the frame of reference of interaction in ordinary language, in which domination and ideology both arise under conditions of distorted communication and can be reflectively detected and broken down. The depoliticization of the mass of the population, which is legitimated through technocratic consciousness, is at the same time men's self-objectification in cate-

gories equally of both purposive-rational action and adaptive behavior. The reified models of the sciences migrate into the sociocultural life-world and gain objective power over the latter's self-understanding. The ideological nucleus of this consciousness is *the elimination of the distinction between the practical and the technical.* It reflects, but does not objectively account for, the new constellation of a disempowered institutional framework and systems of purposive-rational action that have taken on a life of their own.

The new ideology consequently violates an interest grounded in one of the two fundamental conditions of our cultural existence: in language, or more precisely, in the form of socialization and individuation determined by communication in ordinary language. This interest extends to the maintenance of intersubjectivity of mutual understanding as well as to the creation of communication without domination. Technocratic consciousness makes this practical interest disappear behind the interest in the expansion of our power of technical control. Thus the reflection that the new ideology calls for must penetrate beyond the level of particular historical class interests to disclose the fundamental interests of mankind as such, engaged in the process of self-constitution.[23]

If the relativization of the field of application of the concept of ideology and the theory of class be confirmed, then the category framework developed by Marx in the basic assumptions of historical materialism requires a new formulation. The model of forces of production and relations of production would have to be replaced by the more abstract one of work and interaction. The relations of production designate a level on which the institutional framework was anchored only during the phase of the development of liberal capitalism, and not either before or after. To be sure, the productive forces, in which the learning processes organized in the subsystems of purposive-rational action accumulate, have been from the very beginning the motive force of social evolution. But, they do not appear, as Marx supposed, *under all circumstances* to be a po-

tential for liberation and to set off emancipatory movements—at least not once the continual growth of the productive forces has become dependent on scientific-technical progress that has *also* taken on functions of *legitimating political power*. I suspect that the frame of reference developed in terms of the analogous, but more general relation of institutional framework (interaction) and subsystems of purposive-rational action ("work" in the broad sense of instrumental and strategic action) is more suited to reconstructing the sociocultural phases of the history of mankind.

There are several indications that during the long initial phase until the end of the Mesolithic period, purposive-rational actions could only be motivated at all through ritual attachment to interactions. A profane realm of subsystems of purposive-rational action seems to have separated out from the institutional framework of symbolic interaction in the first settled cultures, based on the domestication of animals and cultivation of plants. But it was probably only in civilizations, that is under the conditions of a class society organized as a state that the differentiation of work and interaction went far enough for the subsystems to yield technically exploitable knowledge that could be stored and expanded relatively independently of mythical and religious interpretations of the world. At the same time social norms became separated from power-legitimating traditions, so that "culture" attained a certain independence from "institutions." The threshold of the modern period would then be characterized by that process of rationalization which commenced with loss of the "superiority" of the institutional framework to the subsystems of purposive-rational action. Traditional legitimations could now be criticized against the standards of rationality of means-ends relations. Concurrently, information from the area of technically exploitable knowledge infiltrated tradition and compelled a reconstruction of traditional world interpretations along the lines of scientific standards.

We have followed this process of "rationalization from above" up to the point where technology and science themselves in the form of a common positivistic way of thinking, articulated as technocratic consciousness, began to take the role of a

substitute ideology for the demolished bourgeois ideologies. This point was reached with the critique of bourgeois ideologies. It introduced ambiguity into the concept of rationalization. This ambiguity was deciphered by Horkheimer and Adorno as the dialectic of enlightenment, which has been refined by Marcuse as the thesis that technology and science themselves become ideological.

From the very beginning the pattern of human sociocultural development has been determined by a growing power of technical control over the external conditions of existence on the one hand, and a more or less passive adaptation of the institutional framework to the expanded subsystems of purposive-rational action on the other. Purposive-rational action represents the form of *active* adaptation, which distinguishes the collective *self*-preservation of societal subjects from the preservation of the species characteristic of other animals. We know how to bring the relevant conditions of life under control, that is, we know how to adapt the environment to our needs culturally rather than adapting ourselves to external nature. In contrast, changes of the institutional framework, to the extent that they are derived immediately or mediately from new technologies or improved strategies (in the areas of production, transportation, weaponry, etc.) have not taken the same form of active adaptation. In general such modifications follow the pattern of *passive* adaptation. They are not the result of planned purposive-rational action geared to its own consequences, but the product of fortuitous, undirected development. Yet it was impossible to become conscious of this disproportion between active and passive adaptation as long as the dynamics of capitalist development remained concealed by bourgeois ideologies. Only with the critique of bourgeois ideologies did this disproportion enter public consciousness.

The most impressive witness to this experience is still the *Communist Manifesto*. In rapturous words Marx eulogizes the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie:

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and

> thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.

In another passage he writes:

> The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground . . .

Marx also perceives the reaction of this development back upon the institutional framework:

> All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.

It is with regard to the disproportion between the passive adaptation of the institutional framework and the "active subjection of nature" that the assertion that men make their history, but not with will or consciousness, was formulated. It was the aim of Marx's critique to transform the secondary adaptation of the institutional framework as well into an active one, and to bring under control the structural change of society itself. This would overcome a fundamental condition of all previous history and complete the self-constitution of mankind: the end of prehistory. But this idea was ambiguous.

Marx, to be sure, viewed the problem of making history

with will and consciousness as one of the *practical* mastery of previously ungoverned processes of social development. Others, however, have understood it as a *technical* problem. They want to bring society under control in the same way as nature by reconstructing it according to the pattern of self-regulated systems of purposive-rational action and adaptive behavior. This intention is to be found not only among technocrats of capitalist planning but also among those of bureaucratic socialism. Only the technocratic consciousness obscures the fact that this reconstruction could be achieved at no less a cost than closing off the only dimension that is essential, because it is susceptible to humanization, *as* a structure of interactions mediated by ordinary language. In the future the repertoire of control techniques will be considerably expanded. On Herman Kahn's list of the most probable technical innovations of the next thirty years I observe among the first fifty items a large number of techniques of behavioral and personality change:

> *30.* new and possibly pervasive techniques for surveillance, monitoring and control of individuals and organizations;
> *33.* new and more reliable "educational" and propaganda techniques affecting human behavior—public and private;
> *34.* practical use of direct electronic communication with and stimulation of the brain;
> *37.* new and relatively effective counterinsurgency techniques;
> *39.* new and more varied drugs for control of fatigue, relaxation, alertness, mood, personality, perceptions, and fantasies;
> *41.* improved capability to "change" sex;
> *42.* other genetic control or influence over the basic constitution of an individual.[24]

A prediction of this sort is extremely controversial. Nevertheless, it points to an area of future possibilities of detaching human behavior from a normative system linked to the grammar of

language-games and integrating it instead into self-regulated subsystems of the man-machine type by means of immediate physical or psychological control. Today the psychotechnic manipulation of behavior can already liquidate the old fashioned detour through norms that are internalized but capable of reflection. Behavioral control could be instituted at an even deeper level tomorrow through biotechnic intervention in the endocrine regulating system, not to mention the even greater consequences of intervening in the genetic transmission of inherited information. If this occurred, old regions of consciousness developed in ordinary-language communication would of necessity completely dry up. At this stage of human engineering, if the end of psychological manipulation could be spoken of in the same sense as the end of ideology is today, the spontaneous alienation derived from the uncontrolled lag of the institutional framework would be overcome. But the self-objectivation of man would have fulfilled itself in planned alienation —men would make their history with will, but without consciousness.

I am not asserting that this cybernetic dream of the instinct-like self-stabilization of societies is being fulfilled or that it is even realizable. I do think, however, that it follows through certain vague but basic assumptions of technocratic consciousness to their conclusion as a negative utopia and thus denotes an evolutionary trend that is taking shape under the slick domination of technology and science as ideology. Above all, it becomes clear against this background that *two concepts of rationalization* must be distinguished. At the level of subsystems of purposive-rational action, scientific-technical progress has already compelled the reorganization of social institutions and sectors, and necessitates it on an even larger scale than heretofore. But this process of the development of the productive forces can be a potential for liberation if and only if it does not replace rationalization on another level. *Rationalization at the level of the institutional framework* can occur only in the medium of symbolic interaction itself, that is, through *removing restrictions on communication.* Public, unrestricted discussion, free from domination, of the suitability and desirability of

action-orienting principles and norms in the light of the socio-cultural repercussions of developing subsystems of purposive-rational action—such communication at all levels of political and repoliticized decision-making processes is the only medium in which anything like "rationalization" is possible.

In such a process of generalized reflection institutions would alter their specific composition, going beyond the limit of a mere change in legitimation. A rationalization of social norms would, in fact, be characterized by a decreasing degree of repressiveness (which at the level of personality structure should increase average tolerance of ambivalence in the face of role conflicts), a decreasing degree of rigidity (which should multiply the chances of an individually stable self-presentation in everyday interactions), and approximation to a type of behavioral control that would allow role distance and the flexible application of norms that, while well-internalized, would be accessible to reflection. Rationalization measured by changes in these three dimensions does not lead, as does the rationalization of purposive-rational subsystems, to an increase in technical control over objectified processes of nature and society. It does not lead per se to the better functioning of social systems, but would furnish the members of society with the opportunity for further emancipation and progressive individuation. The growth of productive forces is not the same as the intention of the "good life." It can at best serve it.

I do not even think that the model of a technologically possible surplus that cannot be used in full measure within a repressively maintained institutional framework (Marx speaks of "fettered" forces of production) is appropriate to state-regulated capitalism. Today, better utilization of an unrealized potential leads to improvement of the economic-industrial apparatus, but no longer *eo ipso* to a transformation of the institutional framework with emancipatory consequences. The question is not whether we completely *utilize* an available or creatable potential, but whether we *choose* what we want for the purpose of the pacification and gratification of existence. But it must be immediately noted that we are only posing this question and cannot answer it in advance. For the solution demands precisely

that unrestricted communication about the goals of life activity and conduct against which advanced capitalism, structurally dependent on a depoliticized public realm, puts up a strong resistance.

A new conflict zone, in place of the virtualized class antagonism and apart from the disparity conflicts at the margins of the system, can only emerge where advanced capitalist society has to immunize itself, by depoliticizing the masses of the population, against the questioning of its technocratic background ideology: in the public sphere administered through the mass media. For only here is it possible to buttress the concealment of the difference between progress in systems of purposive-rational action and emancipatory transformations of the institutional framework, between technical and practical problems. And it is necessary for the system to conceal this difference. Publicly administered definitions extend to *what* we want for our lives, but not to *how* we would like to live if we could find out, with regard to attainable potentials, how we *could* live.

Who will activate this conflict zone is hard to predict. Neither the old class antagonism nor the new type of underprivilege contains a protest potential whose origins make it tend toward the repoliticization of the desiccated public sphere. For the present, the only protest potential that gravitates toward the new conflict zone owing to identifiable interests is arising among certain groups of university, college, and high school students. Here we can make three observations:

1. Protesting students are a privileged group, which advances no interests that proceed immediately from its social situation or that could be satisfied in conformity with the system through an augmentation of social rewards. The first American studies of student activists conclude that they are predominantly not from upwardly mobile sections of the student body, but rather from sections with privileged status recruited from economically advantaged social strata.[25]

2. For plausible reasons the legitimations offered by the political system do not seem convincing to this group. The welfare-state substitute program for decrepit bourgeois ideol-

ogies presupposes a certain status and achievement orientation. According to the studies cited, student activists are less privatistically oriented to professional careers and future families than other students. Their academic achievements, which tend to be above average, and their social origins do not promote a horizon of expectations determined by anticipated exigencies of the labor market. Active students, who relatively frequently are in the social sciences and humanities, tend to be immune to technocratic consciousness because, although for varying motives, their primary experiences in their own intellectual work in neither case accord with the basic technocratic assumptions.

3. Among this group, conflict cannot break out because of the extent of the discipline and burdens imposed, but only because of their quality. Students are not fighting for a larger share of social rewards in the prevalent categories: income and leisure time. Instead, their protest is directed against the very category of reward itself. The few available data confirm the supposition that the protest of youth from bourgeois homes no longer coincides with the pattern of authority conflict typical of previous generations. Student activists tend to have parents who share their critical attitude. They have been brought up relatively frequently with more psychological understanding and according to more liberal educational principles than comparable inactive groups.[26] Their socialization seems to have been achieved in subcultures freed from immediate economic compulsion, in which the traditions of bourgeois morality and their petit-bourgeois derivatives have lost their function. This means that training for switching over to value-orientations of purposive-rational action no longer includes fetishizing this form of action. These educational techniques make possible experiences and favor orientations that clash with the conserved life form of an economy of poverty. What can take shape on this basis is a lack of understanding in principle for the reproduction of virtues and sacrifices that have become superfluous—a lack of understanding why despite the advanced stage of technological development the life of the individual is still determined by the dictates of professional careers, the ethics of status competition, and by values of possessive individualism

and available substitute gratifications: why the institutionalized struggle for existence, the discipline of alienated labor, and the eradication of sensuality and aesthetic gratification are perpetuated. To this sensibility the structural elimination of practical problems from a depoliticized public realm must become unbearable. However, it will give rise to a political force only if this sensibility comes into contact with a problem that the system cannot solve. For the future I see *one* such problem. The amount of social wealth produced by industrially advanced capitalism and the technical and organizational conditions under which this wealth is produced make it ever more difficult to link status assignment in an even subjectively convincing manner to the mechanism for the evaluation of individual achievement.[27] In the long run therefore, student protest could permanently destroy this crumbling achievement-ideology, and thus bring down the already fragile legitimating basis of advanced capitalism, which rests only on depoliticization.

# Notes

## *Chapter 1 The University in a Democracy*

1. See the suggestions for the structure of new universities made by the Council on Education and Culture (*Wissenschaftsrat*) and published in Tübingen in 1962.

2. For issues of university politics within the institution itself, all parties must naturally be granted the opportunity of demonstrating the decisions they have arrived at rationally. The means chosen by students should complement the means of the organization of authority with which they are confronted. This applies with regard to specific goals of university politics that are in principle capable of being realized. In contrast, however, the permanent mobilization of the student body as a self-sufficient activity, independent of such goals, that maintained itself only for the purpose of politicizing consciousness as a Jacobin education process could not be legitimated *on the only basis* being used here to justify politics as an inalienable part of the intrauniversity community. Nevertheless, permanent mobilization of this sort could be rendered comprehensible as a reaction of self-defense in the event of a suspension of public discourse on the intrauniversity level.

3. The most authoritative proposals are the SDS (German Socialist Student Union) memorandum on the universities and a reform proposal worked out by a commission of the Association of German Student Bodies (VDS). See also Wolfgang Nitsch et al., *Hochschule in der Demokratie* (Neuwied, 1965).

## *Chapter 2 Student Protest in the Federal Republic of Germany*

1. See Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation* (Glencoe, 1956), pp. 171 f., as well as Talcott Parsons, "Youth in the Context of American Society," in *Youth: Change and Challenge*, Erik H. Erikson, ed. (New York, 1963), pp. 93 f.

2. Seymour Martin Lipset and Philip G. Altbach, "Student Politics and Higher Education in the U.S.A.," in *Student Politics*, Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. (New York, 1967), p. 243; see also pp. 199 f.

3. See the documents in Hal Draper, *Berkeley, the New Student Revolt* (New York, 1965), and Seymour Martin Lipset and Sheldon S. Wolin, *The Berkeley Student Revolt* (Garden City, 1965).

4. See J. Hager and H. Haüssermann, *Die Rebellen von Berlin* (Cologne, 1967), pp. 26 ff.

5. See Wolfgang Nitsch et al., *Hochschule in der Demokratie*, and the VDS report "Studenten und die neue Universität," 1962.

6. Kurt Sontheimer, "Studenten auf Kollisionkurs," in *Merkur*, No. 233, pp. 701 f.

7. B. Larsson, *Demonstrationen: Ein Berliner Modell* (Berlin, 1967).

8. Joseph Ben-David and Randall Collins, "Academic Freedom and Student Politics," in Lipset, *Student Politics*.

## *Chapter 3 The Movement in Germany: A Critical Analysis*

1. See Claus Offe, "Politische Herrschaft und Klassenstrukturen," in *Politikwissenschaft*, Gisela Kress and Dieter Senghaas, eds. (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).

2. For bibliography see Kenneth Keniston, "The Sources of Student Discontent," in *Journal of Social Issues*, 23:3, pp. 108 ff., and W. A. Watts and D. Wittaker, "Profile of a Non-Conformist Youth Culture," in *Sociology of Education*, 41:1, pp. 178 ff.

3. See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York, 1967) and the essay "Technology and Science as 'Ideology,'" pp. 81–122 below.

## *Chapter 4 Technical Progress and the Social Life-World*

1. Aldous Huxley, *Literature and Science* (New York, 1963), p. 8.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

## *Chapter 5 The Scientization of Politics and Public Opinion*

1. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politischen Schriften*, 2d ed., (Tübingen, 1958), pp. 308 ff.

2. Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1967); Helmut Schelsky, *Der Mensch in der wissenschaftlichen Zivilisation* (Cologne-Opladen, 1961).

3. See Helmut Krauch, "Wider den technischen Staat," in *Atomzeitalter*, 1961, No. 9, pp. 201 ff.

4. Hans P. Bahrdt, "Helmut Schelskys technischer Staat," in *Atomzeitalter*, 1961, No. 9, pp. 195 ff.; Jürgen Habermas, "Vom sozialen Wandel akademischer Bildung," in *Universitätstage 1963* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 165 ff.

5. Hermann Lübbe, "Zur politischen Theorie der Technokratie," in *Der Staat*, 1:7, p. 21.

6. Schelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

7. Hermann Lübbe, "Die Freiheit der Theorie," in *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, 1962, pp. 343 ff.

8. See Helmut Krauch, "Technische Information und öffentliches Bewusstsein," in *Atomzeitalter*, 1963, No. 9, pp. 235 ff.

9. See my study *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 3d ed. (Neuwied, 1968).

10. Derek J. de Solla Price, *Science Since Babylon* (New Haven, 1961) and *Little Science, Big Science* (New York, 1963). See also Hans P. Dreitzel, "Wachstum und Fortschritt der Wissenschaft," in *Atomzeitalter*, 1963, No. 11, p. 289.

11. Krauch, "Technische Information," p. 238.

12. *Strategie heute* (Frankfurt am Main, 1962), especially Chapter XII, pp. 292 ff.

## *Chapter 6 Technology and Science as "Ideology"*

1. Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber," in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, with translations from the German by Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston, 1968), pp. 223 f.

2. Herbert Marcuse, "Freedom and Freud's Theory of the Instincts," in *Five Lectures*, translations by Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shierry M. Weber (Boston, 1970), p. 16.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964).

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 166 f.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

9. "This law expresses an intratechnical occurrence, a process that man has not willed as a whole. Rather, it takes place, as it were, behind his back, instinctively extending through the entire history of human culture. Furthermore, in accordance with this law, technology cannot evolve beyond the stage of the greatest possible automation, for there are no further specifiable regions of human achievement that could be objectified." Arnold Gehlen, "Anthropologische Ansicht der Technik," in *Technik im technischen Zeitalter*, Hans Freyer *et al.*, eds. (Düsseldorf, 1965).

10. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 235.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

12. On the context of these concepts in the history of philosophy, see my contribution to the *Festschrift* for Karl Löwith: "Arbeit und Interaktion: Bemerkungen zu Hegels Jenenser Realphilosophie," in *Natur und Geschichte. Karl Löwith zum 70. Geburtstag*, Hermann Braun and Manfred Riedel, eds. (Stuttgart, 1967). This essay is reprinted in *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie'* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968) and will appear in English in *Theory and Practice*, to be published by Beacon Press.

13. Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York, 1966).

14. See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York, 1967).

15. See my study *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968), to be published by Beacon Press as *Cognition and Human Interests.*

16. See Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1963); C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London, 1962); and Jürgen Habermas, "Die klassische Lehre von der Politik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Sozialphilosophie," in *Theorie und Praxis*, 2d ed. (Neuwied, 1967), to appear in *Theory and Practice.*

17. See Jürgen Habermas, "Naturrecht und Revolution," in *Theorie und Praxis.*

18. Claus Offe, "Politische Herrschaft und Klassenstrukturen," in Gisela Kress and Dieter Senghaas, eds., *Politikwissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969). The quotation in the text is from the original manuscript, which differs in formulation from the published text.

19. The most recent explication of this is Eugen Löbl, *Geistige Arbeit--die wahre Quelle des Reichtums,* translated from the Czech by Leopold Grünwald (Vienna, 1968).

20. See Helmut Schelsky, *Der Mensch in der wissenschaftlichen Zivilisation* (Cologne-Opladen, 1961); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1967); and Arnold Gehlen, "Über kulturelle Kristallisationen," in *Studien zur Anthropologie und Soziologie (Berlin, 1963),* and "Über kulturelle Evolution," in *Die Philosophie und die Frage nach dem Fortschritt,* M. Hahn and F. Wiedmann, eds. (Munich, 1964).

21. To my knowledge there are no empirical studies concerned specifically with the propagation of this background ideology. We are dependent on extrapolations from the findings of other investigations.

22. Offe, op. cit.

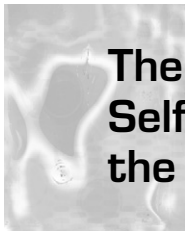
23. See my essay "Erkenntnis und Interesse" in *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie.'* It will appear in English as an appendix to *Cognition and Human Interests.*

24. Herman Kahn and Anthony J. Wiener, "The Next Thirty-Three Years: A Framework for Speculation," in *Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress,* Daniel Bell, ed. (Boston, 1969), pp. 80 f.

25. Seymour Martin Lipset and Philip G. Altbach, "Student Politics and Higher Education in the U.S.A.," in *Student Politics,* Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. (New York, 1967); Richard W. Flacks, "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest," in *Journal of Social Issues,* 23:3, pp. 52–75; and Kenneth Keniston, "The Sources of Student Dissent," *ibid.,* pp. 108 ff.

26. In Flacks' words, "Activists are more radical than their parents; but activists' parents are decidedly more liberal than others of their status. . . . Activism is related to a complex of values, not ostensibly political, shared by both the students and their parents. . . . Activists' parents are more 'permissive' than parents of non-activists."

27. See Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Limits of American Capitalism* (New York, 1966).



# The Debate on the Ethical Self-Understanding of the Species

> If the prospective parents sue for an extensive degree of self-determination, it would be only right and proper for the future child to be also guaranteed the opportunity to lead an autonomous life.
>
> Andreas Kuhlmann, *Politik des Lebens, Politik des Sterbens*

In 1973, scientists succeeded in separating and redesigning elementary components of a genome. Ever since this artificial recombination of genes, genetic engineering has accelerated, especially in the field of reproduction medicine, developments which had set in with the procedures of prenatal diagnosis and, since 1978, in vitro fertilization. With the procedure of in vitro fusion of egg cell and sperm cell, human embryonic stem cells are available for extrauterine experimentation. "Assisted Reproductive Technology," it is true, already gave rise to practices intervening in a spectacular way in intergenerational relations, that is the conventional relationship of social parenthood and biological descent. I am thinking of surrogate mothers and anonymous gamete donation, of postmenopausal pregnancy made possible by egg donation or of the perversely delayed use made of frozen egg cells. But it took the combined efforts of reproduction medicine and

genetic engineering to generate the procedures of preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and open up the prospect of organ breeding and gene-modifying interventions for therapeutic goals. Today, even the general public confronts questions whose moral weight greatly exceeds the substance of ordinary matters of political dispute. What, then, is at stake?

*Preimplantation genetic diagnosis* permits genetic screening to be carried out on embryos at the eight-cell stage. This procedure is recommended, in the first place, to parents wanting to rule out the risk of transmitting a hereditary disease. If found to be deficient, the embryo screened in the test-tube will not be implanted in the mother, thus sparing her an abortion at a later stage as a result of prenatal diagnosis. In the same line, *research on totipotent stem cells* is by now understood in terms of proactive medical care. Hypothesizing on future developments, scientific research, pharma business, and industrial location policy will have us believe that they will soon be able to overcome the bottlenecks of organ procurement for transplantation surgery by breeding organ-specific tissue from embryonic stem cells and, in the long run, to cure severe diseases due to monogenetic causes by intervening in, and correcting, the genome itself. In Germany, pressure to reenact the as yet unrepealed law for the protection of embryos is increasing. The German Science Foundation substantiates its claim to privilege freedom of research over the protection of the life of the embryo and "not to explicitly create, but use early stages of human life for research purposes" by invoking the high-ranking goal and "realistic opportunity" of developing new treatments.

However, the authors themselves appear to be doubtful as to the validity of such reasons derived from the "logic of healing." Otherwise, they would not have given up the participant perspective of normative discourse to take refuge in the observer position. As it is, referring to the long-term preservation of artificially fertilized egg cells, licit use of nidation obstacles (intrauterine devices pre-

venting not conception, but nidation) and existing abortion regulations, they go on to say that "the Rubicon, here, was crossed with the introduction of artificial insemination, and it would be hardly realistic to believe that in a context of existing decisions on the embryo's right to live, our society might return to the *status quo ante*." As a sociological prediction, this may well turn out to be true. But as part of a moral reflection on legal policy, reference to the normative force of established facts will only confirm a skeptical public's fear that science, technology, and economics may create, by their systemic dynamics, *faits accomplis* which can outstrip any normative framework. The half-hearted maneuver of the German Science Foundation disavows the appeasement policy of a research field which already largely relies on the capital market for funding. As biotechnological research is by now bound up with investors' interests as well as with the pressure for success felt by national governments, the development of genetic engineering has acquired a dynamic which threatens to steamroll the inherently slow-paced processes of an ethicopolitical opinion and will formation in the public sphere.[1]

Processes of reaching a political self-understanding, being time-consuming by nature, are most at risk from a lack of perspectives. They have to avoid being tied down to the technological and regulatory needs of the moment, and instead must let themselves be guided by a comprehensive perspective on future developments. The following scenario of medium-range development, for instance, might be far from unlikely. As a first step, the population in general as well as the political public sphere and parliament may come to feel that preimplantation genetic diagnosis *as such* may be morally permitted or legally tolerated if limited to a small number of well-defined cases of severe hereditary diseases which *the persons who are potentially affected by them in the future cannot be reasonably expected to cope with*. With the advances of biotechnology, and with gene therapy meeting with success,

regulations will later be extended to cover genetic intervention in somatic cells (or even in the germ line)[2] for the purpose of preventing such (and similar) hereditary diseases. This second step which, given the choice made in the first place, is not only non-objectionable but consistent, leads to the necessity of drawing a line between these "negative" eugenics (assumed to be justified) and "positive" eugenics (still considered problematic). But since this line is not sharp – both on conceptual and practical grounds – our intention of making genetic interventions *stop* at the threshold of enhancing human beings confronts us with a paradoxical challenge: in the very dimensions where boundaries are fluid, we are supposed to draw and to enforce particularly clear-cut lines. Even now this argument is used in defense of liberal eugenics, which, while refusing to accept the distinction between therapeutic and enhancing interventions, leaves the choice of the goals of gene-modifying interventions to the individual preferences of market participants.[3]

Such may well have been the scenario which the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Johannes Rau, had in mind when he spoke out on May 18 to utter a warning: "Once you start to instrumentalize human life, once you start to distinguish between life worth living and life not worth living, you embark on a course where there is no stopping point."[4] The "floodgates argument" sounds less alarmist if one considers the way in which accidental precedents and inconspicuous practices which (like prenatal diagnosis today) have become ingrained through normalization are retrospectively exploited, by those lobbying for genetic engineering and biotechnology, in order to shrug off moral misgivings as "too late." The correct way, methodologically speaking, of using that argument would imply that we are well advised to control any normative judgment of ongoing developments by referring to issues which, due to the potential developments of genetic engineering and biotechnology (and notwithstanding the experts' assurances of their being as yet quite out of

reach), we may some day be confronted with.[5] It is not dramatization I seek in invoking this maxim. As long as we consider in time the more dramatic borderlines which the day after tomorrow might be crossed, we can approach today's problems with more composure – and all the more readily admit that one may indeed be hard put to it to substantiate alarmist reactions by compelling moral reasons; such reasons, as I see them, being secular ones which in a society with a pluralistic outlook may reasonably be expected to meet with a rather general acceptance.

Application of preimplantation technology is bound up with the normative question of "whether the fact that one was conditionally created and had one's right to existence and development depend on genetic screening is consistent with the dignity of human life."[6] May we feel free to dispose over human life for the purposes of selection? A similar question is raised by the perspective of "using" embryos with the vague prospect of some day being able to breed (from one's own body cells as well) and to implant transplantable tissues (thus forestalling the problem of having to overcome the immune response against alien cells). To the extent that the creation and destruction of embryos for the purposes of medical research are extended and normalized, the cultural perception of antenatal human life will change, too, blunting our moral sensibility for the limits of cost-benefit analyses in general. Today, we are still sensitive to the obscenity of this reifying practice, and wonder whether we want to live in a society which is ready to swap sensitivity regarding the normative and natural foundations of its existence for the narcissistic indulgence of our own preferences.

In the perspective of the self-instrumentalization and self-optimization to which humanity is about to subject the biological foundations of its existence, both issues, PGD and stem cell research, become part of the same context. This sheds a light on the inconspicuous normative interplay between the *inviolability* of the person,

which is imperative on moral grounds and subject to legal guarantees, and the natural mode of the person's physical embodiment, which is something we cannot dispose over.

Even today, preimplantation genetic diagnosis is hard put to it to strictly keep to the line separating the selection of undesirable hereditary factors from the optimization of desirable ones. If there is more than one potentially "spare multicellular organism" to be chosen among, the decision implied is no longer a binary one of yes or no. The conceptual distinction between the prevention of the birth of a severely afflicted child and the optimization of the genetic makeup, that is, a eugenic choice, has become blurred.[7] The practical importance of this will become evident as soon as more far-reaching expectations, namely interventions correcting the human genome, are realized, enabling us to prevent diseases due to monogenetic causes. The conceptual problem of distinguishing between prevention and eugenics will then become a matter of political legislation. If we consider that medical mavericks are already busy working on the reproductive cloning of human organisms, we cannot help but feel that the human species might soon be able to take its biological evolution into its own hands.[8] "Partner in evolution" or even "playing God" are the metaphors for an *auto-transformation of the species* which it seems will soon be within reach.

Of course, this is not the first time that a theory of evolution has sparked proposals and suggestions that intrude into the lifeworld and affect the associative horizon of public discourse. What seems to be returning today, against a background of globalized neoliberalism, is the explosive alliance of Darwinism and free trade ideology, an alliance which flourished at the turn of the twentieth century under the banner of the Pax Britannica. The issue today, of course, is no longer the overgeneralization of biological insights by social Darwinists, but rather the weakening of the "sociomoral restrictions" placed on biotechnological progress for medical as well as economic reasons. This is

the front line where the political convictions of Gerhard Schröder and Johannes Rau, the Liberal Party and the "Green Party" are now in conflict.

Nor is there, to be sure, any lack of wild speculation. A handful of freaked-out intellectuals is busy reading the tea leaves of a naturalistic version of posthumanism, only to give, at what they suppose to be a time-wall, one more spin – "hypermodernity" against "hypermorality" – to the all-too-familiar motives of a very German ideology.[9] Fortunately, the elitist dismissals of "the illusion of egalitarianism" and the discourse of justice still lack the power for large-scale infection. Self-styled Nietzscheans, indulging in fantasies of the "battle between large-scale and small-scale man-breeders" as "the fundamental conflict of all future," and encouraging the "main cultural factions" to "exercise the power of selection which they have actually gained," have, so far, succeeded only in staging a media spectacle.[10] As an alternative, I will appeal to the more sober premises of the constitutional state in a pluralistic society,[11] as a way of contributing to some clarification of our confused moral sentiments.[12]

Quite literally, however, this essay is an *attempt*, seeking to attain more transparence for a rather mixed-up set of intuitions. I am personally far from believing that I have succeeded, be it halfway, in this pursuit. But neither do I see any analyses of a more convincing nature.[13] What is so unsettling is the fact that the dividing line between the nature we *are* and the organic equipment we *give* ourselves is being blurred. My perspective in this examination of the current debate over the need to regulate genetic engineering is therefore guided by the question of the meaning, for our own life prospects and for our self-understanding as moral beings, of the proposition that the genetic foundations of our existence should not be disposed over (I). The well-known arguments taken from the abortion debate, I believe, set the wrong course. The right to an unmanipulated genetic heritage is not at all the same issue as the regulation of abortion (II). Gene manipulation

is bound up with issues touching upon the identity of the species, while such an anthropological self-understanding provides the context in which our conceptions of law and of morality are embedded (III). My particular concern is with the question of how the biotechnological dedifferentiation of the habitual distinction between the "grown" and the "made", the subjective and the objective, may change our ethical self-understanding as members of the species (IV) and affect the self-understanding of a genetically programmed person (V). We cannot rule it out that knowledge of one's own hereditary features as programmed may prove to restrict the choice of an individual's way of life, and to undermine the essentially symmetrical relations between free and equal human beings (VI). Research involving the destruction of embryos and preimplantation genetic diagnosis will provoke passionate responses because they are perceived to exemplify the very dangers of liberal eugenics we may soon be confronted with (VII).

## I Moralizing human nature?

Due to the spectacular advances of molecular genetics, more and more of what we are "by nature" is coming within the reach of biotechnological intervention. From the perspective of experimental science, this technological control of human nature is but another manifestation of our tendency to extend continuously the range of what we can control within our natural environment. From a lifeworld perspective, however, our attitude changes as soon as this extension of our technological control crosses the line between "outer" and "inner" nature. In Germany, legislators have banned not only PGD and research involving the destruction of embryos, but also therapeutic cloning, "surrogate motherhood," and "medically assisted suicide" which have been legalized in other countries. Regarding technological interventions in the germ line and the

cloning of human organisms, ostracism is so far still worldwide, and obviously not only because of the risks they involve. In this we may see, with W. van den Daele, an attempt at "moralizing human nature": "That which science made technologically manipulable reacquires, from a normative perspective, its character as something we may not control."[14]

Throughout modern times, new technological developments have created new regulatory needs. To date, however, changes in normative regulations have been produced as adaptations to societal transformations. It has always been social change, resulting from technological innovations in the fields of production and exchange, communication and transport, the military, and medicine, which took the lead. Even the posttraditional conceptions of law and morality have been described by classical social theories as a product of cultural and societal rationalization acting *in the same direction* as the advances of modern science and technology. Institutionalized research was perceived as the driving force behind this progress. From the perspective of the liberal state, the freedom of science and research is entitled to legal guarantees. Any enhancement of the scope and focus of the technological control of nature is bound up with the economic promise of gains in productivity and increasing prosperity, as well as with the political prospect of enlarging the scope for individual choice. And since enlarging the scope of individual choice fosters individual autonomy, science and technology have, to date, formed an evident alliance with the fundamental credo of liberalism, holding that all citizens are entitled to equal opportunities for an autonomous direction of their own lives.

From the sociological perspective, it is unlikely that society's acceptance of this will lessen, as long as the instrumentalization of humanity's inner nature can be medically justified by the prospect of better health and a prolonged lifespan. The wish to be autonomous in the conduct of one's own life is always connected with the col-

lective goals of health and the prolongation of lifespan. The history of medicine, therefore, strongly suggests a skeptical attitude toward any attempt at "moralizing human nature":

> Time and again, from the beginning of vaccination and the first attempts at heart and brain surgery, going on to organ transplantation and the breeding of artificial organs and coming up again, today, with gene therapy, there have been debates over whether or not a limit had been reached, beyond which further extension of the instrumentalization of man cannot be justified even by clinical purposes. None of these debates has stopped technology.[15]

From this sober empirical perspective, legislative interventions restricting the freedom of biological research and banning the advances of genetic engineering seem but a vain attempt to set oneself against the dominant tendency to freedom of modern society.[16] "Moralizing human nature," here, is perceived in terms of a rather dubious sanctification. After science and technology have, at the expense of a desocialization or disenchantment of outer nature, enlarged the scope of our freedom, this irresistible tendency is now to be brought to a standstill, it seems, by erecting artificial barriers in terms of taboos, that is, by a reenchantment of inner nature.

The implicit recommendation in this is obvious: we had better elucidate the archaic remnants of emotions which may linger in our revulsion before the prospect of chimera created by genetic engineering, at bred and cloned human beings, and at embryos being destroyed in the course of experimentation. A quite different scenario, however, emerges if "moralizing human nature" is seen as the assertion of an ethical self-understanding of the species which is crucial for our capacity to see ourselves as the authors of our own life histories, and to recognize one another as autonomous persons. The attempt to rely on legal means to prevent "liberal eugenics" from becoming normalized, and to ensure the contingency or naturalness of procre-

ation, that is, of the fusion of the parents' sets of chromosomes, would then express something quite different from a vague antimodernistic opposition. Rather, seeking to guarantee the *conditions* under which the practical self-understanding of modernity may be *preserved*, this attempt would itself be a political act of self-referential moral action. This conception, to be sure, is more consistent with the sociological concept of *modernity having become reflective*.[17]

The detraditionalization of lifeworlds is an important aspect of societal modernization; it can be seen as a cognitive adaptation to objective conditions of social life which, as a consequence of the implementation of scientific and technological progress, have time and again been revolutionized. But since the buffers of traditions have, in the course of those processes, been nearly exhausted, modern societies have to rely on their own secular resources for regenerating the energies that ensure their own moral cohesion; that is, on the communicative resources of lifeworlds which have become aware of the immanence of their autopoiesis. From this perspective, the moralizing of "inner nature" rather seems to highlight the "rigidity" of completely modernized lifeworlds which, having lost their backing of metasocial guarantees, are no longer able to respond to new threats to their sociomoral cohesion by new secularizing impulses, let alone by yet another moral and cognitive recasting of religious traditions. Genetic manipulation could change the self-understanding of the species in so fundamental a way that the attack on modern conceptions of law and morality might at the same time affect the inalienable normative foundations of societal integration. Because of this changed form of our *perception* of the processes of modernization, the "moralizing" attempt to adapt biotechnological progress to the by now transparent communicative structures of the lifeworld appears in a different light. Rather than a reenchantment of modernity, this intention

now represents the increasing reflexivity of a modernity that realizes its own limits.

This focuses the topic on the question of whether the protection of the integrity of an unmanipulated genetic inheritance can be justified by understanding the biological foundations of personal identity as something not to be disposed of. Legal protection might come to be expressed in a "right to a genetic inheritance immune from artificial intervention." Such a right, which has already been requested by the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, would not preempt a ruling on the admissibility of medically based negative eugenics. Such a ruling might still lead, should such be the outcome of moral deliberation and democratic will formation, to restrictions on a fundamental right to unmanipulated hereditary factors.

To narrow down the subject to gene-modifying interventions is to disregard other biopolitical issues. From a liberal perspective, the new reproductive technologies, like substitute organs or medically assisted suicide, are seen as increasing individual autonomy. Critics frequently do not object to the liberal premises, but rather to specific aspects of collaborative procreation, to dubious practices of determining the point of death in view of organ procurement, and to the undesirable social side-effects of having medically assisted suicide determined by law rather than leaving it to professional discretion guided by deontological standards. Other issues which are with good reason controversial are the institutional use of genetic testing and the ways individuals may act on the knowledge provided by predictive diagnostics.

Important bioethical issues like these are certainly connected with the extension of the diagnostic penetration and therapeutic control of human nature. But only with genetic engineering aiming at selection and at the *modification* of traits, as well as with the research required for such goals and geared to future genetic treatment (making

it all but impossible to distinguish between basic research and medical use[18]), do challenges of a new order arise.[19] They imply the license to control the physical basis which "we are by nature." What for Kant still belonged to the "kingdom of necessity" had, in the perspective of evolutionary theory, changed to become a "kingdom of contingency." Genetic engineering is now shifting the line between this natural basis we cannot dispose over and the "kingdom of ends." This extension of control of our "inner" nature is distinguished from similar expansions of our scope of options by the fact that it "changes the overall structure of our moral experience."

For Ronald Dworkin, the reason for this is the change of perspective which genetic engineering has brought about for conditions of moral judgment and action that we had previously considered unalterable:

> We distinguish between what nature, including evolution, has created . . . and what we, with the help of these genes, do in this world. In any case, this distinction results in a line being drawn between what we are and the way we deal, on our own account, with this heritage. This decisive line between chance and choice is the backbone of our morality . . . We are afraid of the prospect of human beings designing other human beings, because this option implies shifting the line between chance and choice which is the basis of our value system.[20]

To say that genetic modifications that have as their goal the enhancement of a human life are able to change the overall structure of our moral experience is a strong claim. It can be understood to imply that genetic engineering will confront us, in certain respects, with practical questions concerning some *presuppositions* of moral judgment and action. Shifting the "line between chance and choice" affects the self-understanding of persons who act on moral grounds and are concerned about their life *as a whole*. It makes us aware of the interrelations between our self-understanding as moral beings and the anthropological

background of an ethics of the species. Whether or not we may see ourselves as the responsible authors of our own life history and recognize one another as persons of "equal birth", that is of equal dignity, is also dependent on how we see ourselves anthropologically as members of the species. May we consider the genetic self-transformation and self-optimization of the species as a way of increasing the autonomy of the individual? Or will it undermine our normative self-understanding as persons leading their own lives and showing one another equal respect?

If the second alternative is true, we surely don't immediately have a conclusive moral argument, but we do have an orientation relying on an ethics of the species, which urges us to proceed with caution and moderation. But before following this lead, I would like to explain why the detour is necessary. The moral (and controversial constitutional) argument holding that the embryo enjoys full human dignity and is entitled to the absolute protection of its life "from the very beginning" short-circuits the very discussion we cannot bypass if we want, with all the respect we are constitutionally bound to show for the fact of pluralism, to reach a political agreement on these fundamental issues.

## II Human dignity versus the dignity of human life

The philosophical dispute[21] over the admissibility of research involving the destruction of embryos and PGD has, to date, followed the path of the debate over abortion. In Germany, this debate has resulted in a regulation stipulating that up to the twelfth week of pregnancy, induced abortion is a fact contrary to law, but one which goes unpunished. If founded on a medical indication considering the welfare of the mother, it is legal. The German population, like that of other countries, is split into two camps over this issue. Insofar as the current discussion is

determined by the dispute over abortion, the polarization of "pro-life" versus "pro-choice" advocates has focused attention on the moral status of unborn human life. The conservative side, insisting on the absolute protection of the life of the fertilized embryo, hopes to be able to put a stop to the developments they fear will come out of genetic engineering. But the suggested parallels are misleading. Although the basic normative convictions are the same, they do not at all lead to the same positions in the present case as in the case of abortion. Today, the liberal camp of those holding that women's right to self-determination has precedence over the protection of the life of the embryo in its early stages is split. Those who are guided by deontological intuitions refuse to unconditionally endorse utilitarian statements certifying to the unobjectionability of lifting the ban on the instrumental use of embryos.[22]

Recourse to preimplantation genetic diagnosis, which may prevent potential abortion by allowing genetically deficient extracorporeal stem cells to be "rejected," differs from abortion in relevant aspects. In refusing an unwanted pregnancy, the woman's right to self-determination collides with the embryo's need for protection. In the other case, the conflict is between the protection of the life of the unborn child and a weighing of goods by the parents who, while wanting a child, would abstain from implantation if the embryo is found to be deficient with respect to certain health standards. Moreover, the parents do not find themselves *unexpectedly* propelled into this conflict; by having genetic screening carried out on the embryo, they accept it from the start.

This type of deliberate quality control brings in a new aspect – the instrumentalization of conditionally created human life according to the preferences and value orientations of third parties. Selection is guided by the desired composition of the genome. A decision on existence or nonexistence is taken in view of the potential *essence*. The existential choice of interrupting pregnancy has no more

in common with this license to dispose over, or sort out, prenatal life in view of such traits as seem desirable than with the use of prenatal life for research purposes.

Still, in spite of these differences, something can be learned from decades of highly responsible abortion debate. In this controversy, all attempts to describe early human life in terms that are neutral with respect to world-views, that is, not prejudging, and thus acceptable for all citizens of a secular society, have failed.[23] One side will describe the embryo in its early stages of development as a "set of cells" and confront it with the person of the neonate as the first to be accorded human dignity in a strict moral sense. The other side considers the fertilization of the human egg cell to be the relevant beginning of an already individuated, self-regulated evolutionary process. In this perspective, every single specimen of the species that can be *biologically determined* is to be considered a potential person and a subject possessing basic rights. Both sides, it seems, fail to see that something may be "not for us to dispose over" and yet not have the status of a legal person who is a subject of inalienable human rights as defined by the constitution. It does not solely belong to human dignity to qualify as "not to be disposed over" [*"unverfügbar"*]. Something may, for good moral reasons, be not for us to dispose over and still not be "inviolable" [*"unantastbar"*] in the sense of the unrestricted or absolute validity of fundamental rights (which is constitutive for "human dignity" as defined in Article 1 of the Basic Law).

If the dispute over the ascription of "human dignity" as guaranteed by the constitution could be resolved by compelling moral reasons, the deep-rooted anthropological issues of genetic engineering would not extend beyond the ordinary field of moral questions. As it is, the ontological assumptions of a scientistic naturalism, which imply that birth be seen as the relevant caesura, are by no means more trivial or more "scientific" than the metaphysical or religious background assumptions leading to the contrary

conclusion. Both sides refer to the fact that *every* attempt to draw a definite line somewhere between fertilization, or the fusion of nuclei, on the one hand, and birth on the other hand is more or less arbitrary because of the high degree of continuity prevailing in the development from organic origins to, first, life capable of feeling and, then, personal life. This continuity thesis, however, seems to me to speak against both attempts to rely on ontological propositions to fix an "absolute" beginning that would also be binding from a normative point of view.

Isn't it still more arbitrary to try to stipulate in favor of one or the other of these sides as a way of coming to an unambiguous moral commitment, resolving the ambivalence of our gradually changing evaluative sentiments and intuitions toward an embryo in the early and middle stages of its development,[24] as compared to a fetus at the later stages, an ambivalence entirely appropriate to the phenomenon concerned? An unambiguous definition of the moral status – be it in terms of Christian metaphysics or of naturalism – is possible only if facts which a pluralistic society is well advised to *leave to controversy* are submitted to a description impregnated by one worldview or another. Nobody doubts the intrinsic value of human life before birth – whether one calls it "sacred" or refuses to sanctify something that is an end in itself. But neither the objectivating language of empiricism nor the language of religion can express the normative substance of the protection to which prepersonal human life is entitled in a way that is rationally acceptable to all citizens.

In the normative disputes of a democratic public, only moral propositions in the strict sense will ultimately count. Only if they are neutral with respect to various worldviews or comprehensive doctrines can propositions on what is equally good for everybody claim to be, for good reasons, acceptable for all. This claim to rational acceptability is the distinguishing mark of propositions for the "just" solution for conflicts of action, as compared to propositions on what, in the context of a life history or in the context of

a shared form of life, is "good for me" or "good for us" in the long run. This specific sense of questions of justice will, after all, allow us to come to a conclusion as to the "purpose of morality." This attempt to "define" what morality is all about is, I believe, the appropriate key to finding an answer to the question of how to delimit – irrespective of controversial ontological definitions – the universe of the possible subjects of moral rights and duties.

The community of moral beings creating their own laws refers, in the language of rights and duties, to all matters in need of normative regulation; but only the members of this community can place *one another* under moral obligations and expect *one another* to conform to norms in their behavior. Animals benefit *for their own sake* from the moral duties which we are held to respect in our dealings with sentient creatures. Nevertheless, they do not belong to the universe of members who address intersubjectively accepted rules and orders *to one another*. "Human dignity," as I would like to show, is in a strict moral and legal sense connected with this relational symmetry. It is not a property like intelligence or blue eyes, that one might "possess" by nature; it rather indicates the kind of "inviolability" which comes to have a significance only in interpersonal relations of mutual respect, in the egalitarian dealings among persons. I am not using "inviolability" [*"Unantastbarkeit"*] as a synonym for "not to be disposed over" [*"Unverfügbarkeit"*], because a *postmetaphysical* response to the question of how we should deal with prepersonal human life must not be bought at the price of a *reductionist* definition of humanity and of morality.

I conceive of moral behavior as a constructive response to the dependencies rooted in the incompleteness of our organic makeup and in the persistent frailty (most felt in the phases of childhood, illness, and old age) of our bodily existence. Normative regulation of interpersonal relations may be seen as a porous shell protecting a vulnerable body, and the person incorporated in this body, from the contingencies they are exposed to. Moral rules are fragile con-

structions protecting *both* the physis from bodily injuries and the person from inner or symbolical injuries. Subjectivity, being what makes the human body a soul-possessing receptacle of the spirit, is itself constituted through intersubjective relations to others. The individual self will only emerge through the course of social externalization, and can only be *stabilized* within the network of undamaged relations of mutual recognition.

This dependency on the other explains why one can be hurt by the other. The person is most exposed to, and least protected from, injuries in the very relations which she is most dependent on for the development of her identity and for the maintenance of her integrity – for example, when giving herself to a partner in an intimate relationship. In its detranscendentalized version, Kant's "free will" no longer descends from the sky as a property of intelligible beings. Autonomy, rather, is a precarious achievement of finite beings who may attain something like "strength," if at all, only if they are mindful of their physical vulnerability and social dependence.[25] If this is the "purpose" of morality, it also explains its "limits." It is the universe of possible interpersonal relations and interactions that is in need as well as capable of moral regulation. Only within this network of legitimately regulated relations of mutual recognition can human beings develop and – together with their physical integrity – maintain a personal identity.

Since man, biologically speaking, is born "unfinished" and subject to lifelong dependency on the help, care, and respect of his social environment, individuation by DNA sequences is revealed as *incomplete* as soon as the process of social individuation sets in.[26] Individuation, as a part of life history, is an outcome of socialization. For the organism to become, with birth, a person in the full sense of this term, an act of social individuation is required, that is, integration in the *public* context of interaction of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld.[27] It is not until the moment the symbiosis with the mother is resolved that the child enters

a world of persons who can *approach* it, address it and talk to it. As a member of a species, as a specimen of a community of procreation, the genetically individuated child *in utero* is by no means a fully fledged person "from the very beginning." It takes entrance in the public sphere of a linguistic community for a natural creature to develop into both an individual and a person endowed with reason.[28]

In the symbolical network constituted by the relations of mutual recognition of communicatively acting persons, the neonate is identified as "one of us." He gradually learns to identify himself – simultaneously as a person in general, as a part or a member of his social community (or communities), and as an individual who is unmistakably unique and morally nonexchangeable.[29] This tripartite differentiation of self-reference mirrors the structure of linguistic communication. It is only here, in the space of reasons (Sellars) disclosed through discourse, that the innate faculty of reason can, in the difference of the manifold perspectives of the self and the world, unfold its unifying and consensus-creating force.

Human life, as the point of reference for our obligations, even before its entry into the contexts of public interaction, enjoys legal protection without being itself a subject of either duties or human rights. We must take care not to draw the wrong conclusions from this. Parents do not only talk *about* the child growing in the womb, they *in a certain sense* already communicate *with* it. It does not take the visualization of the unmistakably human features of the fetus shown on the screen to transform the child moving in the womb into an addressee of *anticipatory socialization*. Of course we are under moral and legal obligations toward it *for its own sake*. Moreover, prepersonal life that has not yet reached a stage at which it can be addressed in the *ascribed role* of a second person still has an integral value for an *ethically* constituted form of life as a whole. It is in this respect that we feel compelled to distinguish between the dignity of human life and human dignity as guaran-

teed by law to every person – a distinction which, incidentally, is also echoed in the phenomenology of our highly emotional attitude toward the dead.

Recent press reports commented on an amendment to the law regulating funeral procedures in the state of Bremen. Referring to stillborn and prematurely born children, this amendment stipulates that due respect toward dead life be shown also when dealing with fetuses. Fetuses, it reads, should no longer be treated as "ethical garbage," as the officialese wording was, but be buried anonymously in collective graves in a cemetery. The very reaction of the reader to the obscene term – let alone the embarrassing practice – betrays, *in the contre-jour* of the dead embryo, the widespread and deep-rooted awe inspired by the integrity of nascent human life no civilized society may unconditionally touch on. On the other hand, the newspaper's comment on the anonymous collective burial also sheds a light on the intuitive distinction I am driving at here: "The Parliament of Bremen was aware of the fact that it would be an unreasonable demand – and perhaps even tantamount to a pathological collective mourning – to have embryos and fetuses buried on the same footing with the postnatal deceased . . . The respect due to a dead human being may well be expressed in different forms of burial."[30]

There is no twilight zone beyond the boundaries of a rigorously defined community of moral persons where we may act irrespective of normative rules and unscrupulously tamper with things. If, on the other hand, the interpretation of morally saturated legal terms like "human right" and "human dignity" tends to be counterintuitively construed in too broad a sense, they will not only lose their power to provide clear conceptual distinctions, but also their critical potential. Violations of human *rights* must not be reduced to the scale of offences against *values*.[31] The difference between rights, which are exempt from weighing, and goods, which can be weighed and

ranked accordingly as primary or secondary, should not be blurred.[32]

The nature of the inhibitions we feel in dealing with human life before birth and after death, being hard to define, explains our choice of semantically *broad* terms. Even in its anonymous forms, human life possesses "dignity" and commands "respect." The term of "dignity" comes to mind because it covers a broad semantic range only suggestive of the more specific term of "human dignity." The semantics of "dignity" also include the traces of connotations which are much more obvious, due to the history of its premodern use, in the concept of "honor" – connotations, that is, of an ethos determined by social status. The dignity of the king was embodied in styles of thought and behavior belonging to a form of life entirely different from that of the wife or the bachelor, the workman or the executioner. Abstraction from these concrete manifestations of so many specific dignities became possible only with the advent of "human dignity" as something attached to the person as such. Still, we should not let ourselves be inveigled, by this step of abstraction leading to "human dignity" and – to Kant's single – "human right," into forgetting that the moral community of free and equal subjects of human rights does not form a "kingdom of ends" in the noumenal beyond, but remains embedded in concrete forms of life and their ethos.

## III The embedding of morality in an ethics of the species

If morality is situated in a linguistically structured form of life, the current dispute over the admissibility of research involving the destruction of embryos and PGD cannot be resolved by a single argument concluding that the fertilized egg cell possesses, in the strict sense, "human dignity" and has the status of a subject possessing human rights. I indeed understand, and even share, the motive for wanting

to use such an argument. A restrictive concept of human dignity implies that the embryo's need for, and entitlement to, protection is subjected to a weighing of goods which would leave the door open a crack for an instrumentalization of human life and for the erosion of the categorical sense of moral inhibitions. It is, therefore, all the more important to search for a solution which is at once conclusive and neutral with respect to competing worldviews, a neutrality we are anyway committed to by the constitutional principle of tolerance. Even if my own understanding, as proposed here, of the purpose as well as the limit of morality should fail to meet this claim and be found guilty of a metaphysical bias, the consequence would still be the same. If it is democratically constituted and committed to inclusion, the neutral state must refrain from taking sides in an "ethically" controversial reference to Articles 1 and 2 of the German constitution. If the question of how to deal with unborn human life is an ethical one, there is every reason to expect well-founded dissent to arise, as was the case in the debate of the Bundestag on May 31. The philosophical debate, disburdened of sterile polarizations, may then focus on the issue of an appropriate ethical self-understanding of the species.

First, however, a note on linguistic usage. I call "moral" such issues as deal with the just way of living together. Actors who may come into conflict with one another address these issues when they are confronted with social interactions in need of normative regulation. Conflicts of this type may be reasonably expected to be in principle amenable to rational solutions that are in the equal interest of all. No such rational acceptability may be expected, by contrast, if the description of the conflictual situation as well as the justification of pertinent norms are themselves shaped by the preferred way of life and the existential self-understanding of an individual or a group of citizens, that is, by their identity-forming beliefs. Background conflicts of this kind touch upon "ethical" issues.

Persons and communities whose existence may go wrong address questions of a happy or not misspent life with regard to values that direct their life history or form of life. Such ethical questions are tailored to the perspective of persons who, within the context of their life, want to understand who they are and which practices are, on the whole, best for them. Nations differ in their attitudes towards the mass crimes of former regimes. Strategies of forgiving and forgetting or processes of punishment and critical reappraisal will be chosen in accordance with their historical experience and collective self-understanding. Their attitude toward nuclear energy will depend, among other things, on their ranking of security and health as compared to economic prosperity. For ethical-political questions like these, it is "so many cultures, so many customs."

The questions raised, in contrast, by our attitude toward prepersonal human life are of an altogether different caliber. They do not touch on this or that difference in the great variety of cultural forms of life, but on those intuitive self-descriptions that guide our own identification *as human beings* – that is, our self-understanding as members of the species. They concern not culture, which is different everywhere, but the vision different cultures have of "man" who – in his anthropological universality – is everywhere the same. If I am not mistaken in my assessment of the debate over the "use" of embryos for research, or over the conditional creation of embryos, it is disgust at something obscene rather than moral indignation proper that comes to be expressed in our emotional reactions. It is the feeling of vertigo that seizes us when the ground beneath our feet, which we believed to be solid, begins to slip. Symptomatically, it is revulsion we feel when confronted with the chimaera that bear witness to a violation of the species boundaries that we had naively assumed to be unalterable. This "ethical virgin soil," rightly termed such by Otfried Höffe,[33] consists of the very uncertainty that invades the identity of the species. The perceived, and

dreaded, advances of genetic engineering affect the very concept we have of ourselves as cultural members of the species of "humanity" – to which there seems to be no alternative.

Of course, these ideas also are plural. Cultural forms of life are bound up with systems of interpretations that explain the position of humanity in the universe and provide the "thick" anthropological context in which the prevailing moral code is embedded. In pluralistic societies, these metaphysical or religious interpretations of the self and the world are, for good reasons, subordinated to the moral foundations of the constitutional state, which is neutral with respect to competing worldviews and committed to their peaceful coexistence. Under the condition of postmetaphysical thought, the ethical self-understanding of the species, which is inscribed in specific traditions and forms of life, no longer provides the arguments for overruling the claims of a morality presumed to be universally accepted. But this "priority of the just over the good" must not blind us to the fact that the abstract morality of reason proper to subjects of human rights is itself sustained by a prior *ethical self-understanding of the species*, which is shared by all *moral persons*.

Like the great world religions, metaphysical doctrines and humanistic traditions also provide contexts in which the "overall structure of our moral experience" is embedded. They express, in one way or the other, an anthropological self-understanding of the species that is consistent with an autonomous morality. The religious interpretations of the self and the world that were elaborated by highly advanced civilizations during the axial age converge, so to speak, in a minimal ethical self-understanding of the species sustaining this kind of morality. As long as the one and the other are in harmony, the priority of the just over the good is not problematical.

This perspective inevitably gives rise to the question of whether the instrumentalization of human nature changes the ethical self-understanding of the species in such a way

that we may no longer see ourselves as ethically free and morally equal beings guided by norms and reasons. For the self-evident nature of elementary background assumptions to crumble, it takes the unanticipated emergence of surprising alternatives (even though these novel facts – like the artificial "chimaera" of transgenic organisms – have their archaic prefigurations in mythical images). Irritants of this kind are provoked by all the current scenarios that step out of science-fiction literature and invade the scientific feature pages. Thus we are of late confronted, by a strange lot of non-fiction authors, with the vision of humans being improved by chip implants, or ousted by intelligent robots.

To illustrate the technologically assisted life-processes of the human organism, nano-engineers draw up visions of man and machine fused into a production plant subjected to autoregulated processes of supervision and renewal, permanent repair and upgrading. In this vision, self-replicating microrobots circulate in the human body, combining with organic matter in order, for instance, to stop ageing processes or to boost the functions of the cerebrum. Computer engineers, as well, have not been idle, contributing to this genre by drawing up the vision of future robots having become autonomous and evolving into machines which mark flesh-and-blood human beings as a model doomed to extinction. These superior intelligences are supposed to have overcome the flaws of human hardware. As to the software, which is modeled on our brains, they promise not only immortality, but unlimited perfection.

Bodies stuffed with prostheses to boost performance, or the intelligence of angels available on hard drives, are fantastic images. They dissolve boundaries and break connections that in our everyday actions have up to now seemed to be of an almost transcendental necessity. There is fusion of the organically grown with the technologically made, on the one hand, and separation of the productivity of the human mind from live subjectivity, on the other hand.

Whether these speculations are manifestations of a feverish imagination or serious predictions, an expression of displaced eschatological needs or a new variety of science-fiction science, I refer to them only as examples of an instrumentalization of human nature initiating a change in the ethical self-understanding of the species – a self-understanding no longer consistent with the normative self-understanding of persons who live in the mode of self-determination and responsible action.

The provocation inherent in the advances of genetic engineering that have already been realized or are realistically to be expected does as yet not go that far. Still, there is no denying certain analogies.[34] The manipulation of the makeup of the human genome, which is progressively being decoded, and the hopes entertained by certain scientists of soon being able to take evolution in their own hands do, after all, uproot the categorical distinction between the subjective and the objective, the naturally grown and the made, as they extend to regions which, up to now, we could not dispose over. What is at stake is a dedifferentiation, through biotechnology, of deep-rooted categorical distinctions which we have as yet, in the description we give of ourselves, assumed to be invariant. This dedifferentiation might change our ethical self-understanding as a species in a way that could also affect our moral consciousness – the conditions, that is, of nature-like growth which alone allow us to conceive of ourselves as the authors of our own lives and as equal members of the moral community. Knowledge of one's own genome being programmed might prove to be disruptive, I suspect, for our assumption that we exist as a body or, so to speak, "are" our body, and thus may give rise to a novel, curiously asymmetrical type of relationship between persons.

Where have our reflections so far taken us? On the one hand, we cannot, from the premise of pluralism, ascribe to the embryo "from the very beginning" the absolute protection of life enjoyed by persons who are subjects pos-

sessing basic rights. On the other hand, there is the intuition that prepersonal human life must not simply be declared free to be included in the familiar balancing of competing goods. To clarify this intuition, I choose to approach it indirectly, via the – at present purely theoretical – possibility of liberal eugenics, which, in the United States, for example, is already being discussed in some detail. In this anticipatory perspective, the contours of the ongoing controversy about the two current issues will emerge more clearly.

Normative restrictions in dealing with embryonic life cannot be directed against genetic interventions as such. The problem, of course, is not genetic engineering, but the mode and scope of its use. It is, moreover, the *attitude* in which interventions in the genetic makeup of potential members of our moral community are carried out that provides the standards for an assessment of their moral admissibility. Thus, in the case of *therapeutic* gene manipulations, we approach the embryo as the second person he will one day be.[35] This clinical attitude draws its legitimizing force from the well-founded counterfactual assumption of a possible consensus reached with another person who is capable of saying yes or no. The burden of normative proof is thus shifted to the justification of an anticipated consent that at present cannot be sought. In the case of a therapeutic intervention in the embryo it might, in the best of cases, be confirmed later (and, in the case of birth being precluded as a preventive act, not at all). What this requirement may really mean in the context of a practice that – like PGD and embryonic research – is only hypothetically, or not at all, aimed at later birth, is still unclear.

In any case, *assumed* consensus can only be invoked for the goal of avoiding evils which are unquestionably extreme and likely to be rejected by all. Thus, the moral community which in the profane realm of everyday politics takes on the sober form of democratically constituted nations must eventually believe itself capable of working

out, time and again, from the spontaneous proceedings of everyday living, sufficiently convincing criteria for what is to be understood as a sick, or a healthy, bodily existence. Our commitment to the "logic of healing" is based, I would like to show, on the moral point of view that obliges us, in our dealings with second persons, to refrain from instrumentalizing them and, instead, saddles us – in contrast to the extensive scope left to tolerance by liberal eugenicists – with the responsibility of drawing a line between negative eugenics and enhancing eugenics. The program of liberal eugenics blinds itself to this task because it ignores the biotechnological dedifferentiation of the modes of action.

## IV The grown and the made

Our lifeworld is, in a sense, "Aristotelian" in its constitution. In everyday living, we don't think twice before distinguishing between inorganic and organic nature, plants and animals and, again, animal nature and the reasoning and social nature of man. The fact that these categorical divisions are so persistent, even though they are no longer connected with ontological claims, can be explained by referring to perspectives that are closely interlaced with certain modes of dealing with the world. Here again, analysis may proceed along the lines provided by basic Aristotelian principles. Aristotle contrasts the *theoretical* attitude of the disinterested observer of nature with two other attitudes. He distinguishes it, on the one hand, from the *technical* attitude of the actor who is engaged in production and, generally, in purposeful action and who intervenes in nature by employing means and consuming materials. On the other hand, he distinguishes it from the practical attitude of persons who either act with prudence or with an ethical orientation and approach one another in a context of interaction – be it in the objectivating attitude of a strategist anticipating and assessing the decisions

his counterparts will make in light of his own preferences, or in the performative attitude of a subject engaged in communicative action who wants to reach an understanding with a second person in the context of an intersubjectively shared world. Still other attitudes are required for the practices of the peasant who tends his cattle and cultivates his soil, or of the doctor who diagnoses diseases in order to heal them, or of the breeder who selects and improves hereditary traits of a population for his own ends. All these classical practices of cultivating, healing, and breeding share a respect for the inherent dynamics of autoregulated nature. If they are not to fail, the cultivating, therapeutic, or selecting interventions have to abide by these dynamics.

The "logic" of these forms of action which, in Aristotle, were still tailored to corresponding regions of being, has lost the ontological dignity of opening up specific perspectives on the world. In this dedifferentiation, modern experimental sciences played an important role. They combined the objectivating attitude of the disinterested observer with the technical attitude of an intervening actor producing experimental effects. The cosmos was no longer perceived as an object of pure contemplation; and "soulless" nature, as seen by nominalism, was subjected to a different kind of objectivation. This gearing of science to the task of converting an objectivated nature into something we may control by technological means had an important impact on the process of societal modernization. In the course of their redefinition by science, most fields of practice were impregnated and restructured by the "logic" of the application of scientific technologies.

This adjustment of the societal modes of production and interaction to the advances of science and technology certainly caused the imperatives of a single form of action, the instrumental one, to become predominant. Nevertheless, the architecture of the modes of action has itself remained intact. To the present day, morality and law still

function as the normative controls for practical life in complex societies. It is true that, just like the mechanization of agriculture, which was rationalized according to business management principles, the technological equipment and upgrading of a health-care system dependent on pharmaceutical businesses and medical machinery have been prone to crises. But these crises have acted as a reminder of the logic of medical action or of ecological ways of dealing with nature rather than made them disappear. The decrease in social relevance of the "clinical" modes of action in the broadest sense has been counterbalanced by an increase in their legitimacy. Today, genetic research and the advances of genetic engineering are justified by referring to biopolitical goals of improved nutrition, health, and a prolonged lifespan. We therefore tend to forget that the revolution of breeding practices by genetic engineering is itself no longer governed by the clinical mode of *adjustment* to the inherent dynamic of nature. What it suggests, rather, is the *dedifferentiation* of a fundamental distinction which is also constitutive of our self-understanding as species members.

To the degree that the evolution of the species, proceeding by random selection, comes within the reach of the interventions of genetic engineering and, thus, of actions we have to answer for, the categories of what is *manufactured* and what has *come to be by nature*, which in the lifeworld still retain their demarcating power, dedifferentiate. For us, this distinction is self-evident because it refers to familiar modes of action: the technical use made of matter, on the one hand, and the cultivating or therapeutic attitude toward organic nature, on the other hand. The care we take when we deal with self-maintaining systems, whose self-regulation we might disrupt, bears witness not only to a *cognitive* consideration for the inherent dynamic of the process of life. The closer we are to the species dealt with, the more clearly this consideration is intermingled also with a *practical* concern, a kind of respect. The empathy, or "resonant comprehension," we

show for the violability of organic life, acting as a check upon our practical dealings, is obviously grounded in the sensitivity of our own body and in the distinction we make between any kind of subjectivity, however rudimentary, and the world of objects which can merely be manipulated.

Biotechnological intervention, in replacing clinical treatment, intercepts this "correspondence" with other living beings. The biotechnological mode of action, however, differs from the technical intervention of the engineer by a relation of "collaboration" – or "tinkering around"[36] – with the nature we thus dispose over:

> In dealing with dead matter, the producer, confronted with a passive material, is the only one to act. In dealing with organisms, activity is confronted with activity: biotechnology is collaborative with the auto-activity of active material, the biological system in its natural functioning into which a new determinant has to be incorporated . . . The mode of the technological act is intervention, not building.[37]

From this description, Hans Jonas goes on to infer the specific self-referentiality and irreversibility of intervention in a complex, self-regulated process, leading to consequences which we cannot control: "To 'produce,' here, means to commit something to the stream of evolution in which the producer himself is carried along."[38]

Now, the more ruthless the intrusion into the makeup of the *human* genome becomes, the more inextricably the clinical mode of treatment is assimilated to the biotechnological mode of intervention, blurring the intuitive distinction between the grown and the made, the subjective and the objective – with repercussions reaching as far as the self-reference of the person to her bodily existence. The vanishing point of this development is characterized by Jonas as follows: "Technologically mastered nature now again includes man who (up to now) had, in technology, set himself against it as its master." With the genetic pro-

gramming of human beings, domination of nature turns into an act of self-empowering of man, thus changing our self-understanding as members of the species – and *perhaps* touching upon a necessary condition for an autonomous conduct of life and a universalistic understanding of morality. Hans Jonas addresses this concern by asking: "But whose power is this – and over whom or over what? Obviously the power of those living today over those coming after them, who will be the defenseless objects of prior choices made by the planners of today. The other side of the power of today is the future bondage of the living to the dead."

By bringing the issue to this dramatic point, Jonas resituates genetic engineering in the context of a self-destructive dialectics of enlightenment, according to which the species itself reverts from domination of nature to servitude to nature.[39] The "species" as a collective singular is also the point of reference for a debate between a teleology of nature and a philosophy of history, between Jonas and Spaemann on the one hand, Horkheimer and Adorno on the other hand. This debate, however, takes place on too high a level of abstraction. What we need to do is to come to a clear distinction between the authoritarian and the liberal varieties of eugenics. Biopolitics is, as yet, not guided by the goal of an enhancement, however defined, of the gene pool of the species as a whole. The moral reasons that prohibit individual persons from being taken as mere exemplars of the species, and instrumentalized for such a collectivist goal, are still solidly rooted in the principles that underlie our constitution and law.

In liberal societies, eugenic decisions would be transferred, via markets governed by profit orientation and preferential demands, to the individual choice of parents and, on the whole, to the anarchic whims of consumers and clients:

> While old-fashioned authoritarian eugenicists sought to produce citizens out of a single centrally designed mould,

> the distinguishing mark of the new liberal eugenics is state neutrality. Access to information about the full range of genetic therapies will allow prospective parents to look to their own values in selecting improvements for future children. Authoritarian eugenicists would do away with ordinary procreative freedoms. Liberals instead propose radical extension of them.[40]

This program, however, is compatible with political liberalism only if enhancing genetic interventions neither limit the opportunities to lead an autonomous life for the person genetically treated, nor constrain the conditions for her to interact with other persons on an egalitarian basis.

In order to justify the normative admissibility of these interventions, advocates of liberal eugenics compare the genetic modification of hereditary factors to the modification of attitudes and expectations taking place in the course of socialization. They want to show that, from the moral point of view, there is no great difference between eugenics and education: "If special tutors and camps, training programs, even the administration of growth hormones to add a few inches in height are within parental rearing discretion, why should genetic intervention to enhance normal offspring traits be any less legitimate?"[41] This argument is supposed to justify the inclusion of the parents' eugenic freedom to improve the genetic makeup of their children in the scope of parental discretion which is guaranteed anyway. The parents' eugenic freedom, however, is subject to the reservation that it must not enter into collision with the ethical freedom of their children. Advocates reassure themselves by pointing out that genetic dispositions always interact with the environment in a contingent way and are not transposed, in linear fashion, into features of the phenotype. Therefore, they say, genetic programming is no inadmissible intrusion upon the future life-projects of the programmed person:

> The liberal linkage of eugenic freedom with parental discretion in respect of educationally or dietarily assisted

> improvement makes sense in the light of this modern understanding. If gene and environment are of parallel importance in accounting for the traits we currently possess, attempts to modify people by modifying either of them would seem to deserve similar scrutiny . . . We should think of both types of modification in similar ways.[42]

The argument rests entirely on a dubious parallel, which itself presupposes a leveling out of the difference between the grown and the made, the subjective and the objective.

As we saw, manipulation extending to the hereditary factors of humans rescinds the distinction between clinical action and technical fabrication with respect to our own inner nature. Someone who performs treatment on an embryo approaches the quasi-subjective nature of this embryo in the same perspective as he would approach objective nature. This perspective suggests that acting on the composition of a human genome does not essentially differ from acting on the environment of a person growing up: her own nature is ascribed to this person as constituting an "inner environment." But isn't there a collision between this ascription, which is carried out from the perspective of the intervening person, and the self-perception of the person concerned?

A person "has" or "possesses" her body only through "being" this body in proceeding with her life. It is from this phenomenon of being a body and, at the same time, having a body [*Leibsein und Körperhaben*] that Helmut Plessner set out to describe and analyze the "excentric position" of man.[43] Cognitive developmental psychology has shown that having a body is the result of the capacity of assuming an objectivating attitude toward the prior fact of being a body, a capacity we do not acquire until youth. The primary mode of experience, and also the one "by" which the subjectivity of the human person lives, is that of being a body.[44]

To the extent that his body is revealed to the adolescent who was eugenically manipulated as something

which is also made, the participant perspective of the actual experience of living one's own life collides with the reifying perspective of a producer or a bricoleur. The parents' choice of a genetic program for their child is associated with intentions which later take on the form of expectations addressed to the child, without, however, providing the addressee with an opportunity to take a *revisionist* stand. The programming intentions of parents who are ambitious and given to experimentation, or of parents who are merely concerned, have the peculiar status of a one-sided and unchallengeable expectation. In the life history of the person concerned, the transformed expectations turn up as a normal element of interactions, and yet elude the conditions of reciprocity required for communication proper. In making their choice, the parents were only looking to their own preferences, as if disposing over an object. But since the object evolves to be a person, the egocentric intervention takes on the meaning of a communicative action which *might* have existential consequences for the adolescent. But genetically fixed "demands" cannot, strictly speaking, be responded to. In their role as programmers, the parents are barred from entering the dimension of the life history where they might confront their child as the authors of demands they address to him. Liberal eugenicists, in likening fate dependent on nature to fate resulting from socialization, have settled for too easy a solution.

The assimilation of clinical action to manipulating intervention also makes it easy for them to take the next step of leveling out the substantial distinction between negative and positive eugenics. Highly generalized goals, for instance strengthening the immunosystem or prolonging the lifespan, are of course positive and, nevertheless, consistent with clinical goals. However hard it may be to distinguish in the individual case between therapeutic interventions – the prevention of evils – and enhancing interventions, the regulative idea that governs the intended delimitation is simple.[45] As long as medical inter-

vention is guided by the clinical goal of healing a disease or of making provisions for a healthy life, the person carrying out the treatment may assume that he has the consent of the patient preventively treated.[46] The presumption of informed consent transforms egocentric action into communicative action. As long as the geneticist intervening in a human being conceives of himself as a doctor, there is no need for him to approach the embryo in the objectivating attitude of the technician, that is, as an object which is manufactured or repaired or channeled into a desired direction. He may, in the performative attitude of a participant in interaction, anticipate the future person's consent to an essentially contestable goal of the treatment. I would like to stress the point that what solely matters here is not the ontological status of the embryo, but the clinical attitude of the first person toward another person – however virtual – who, some time in the future, may encounter him in the role of a second person.

A preventively "healed" patient may later, as a person, assume a different attitude toward this type of prenatal intervention than someone who learns that his genetic makeup was programmed without his virtual consent, so to speak, according to the sole preferences of a third person. Only in the latter case does genetic intervention take on the form of an instrumentalization of human nature. In contrast to clinical intervention, the genetic material is, in this case, manipulated from the perspective of a person engaging in instrumental action in order to "collaboratively" induce, in the realm of objects, a state that is desirable according to her own goals. Genetic interventions involving the manipulation of traits constitute positive eugenics if they cross the line defined by the logic of healing, that is, the prevention of evils which one may assume to be subject to general consent.

Liberal eugenics needs to face the question of whether the *perceived* dedifferentiation of the grown and the made, the subjective and the objective, is likely to affect the autonomous conduct of life and moral self-understanding

of the programmed person. In any case, normative evaluation is not possible unless we ourselves adopt the perspective of the persons concerned.

## V Natality, the capacity of being oneself, and the ban on instrumentalization

What is so disconcerting for our moral feelings in the idea of eugenic programming is succinctly and soberly put by Andreas Kuhlmann: "Of course, parents have always been given to wishful thinking as to what is going to become of their offspring. Still, this is different from children being confronted with prefabricated visions which, all in all, they owe their existence to."[47] To associate this intuition with genetic determinism would be to misconstrue it.[48] Irrespective of how far genetic programming could actually go in fixing properties, dispositions, and skills, as well as in determining the behavior of the future person, *post factum* knowledge of this circumstance may intervene in the self-relation of the person, the relation to her bodily or mental existence. The change would take place in the mind. Awareness would shift, as a consequence of this change of perspective, from the performative attitude of a first person living her own life to the observer perspective which governed the intervention one's own body was subjected to before birth. When the adolescent learns about the design drawn up by another person for intervening in her genetic features in order to modify certain traits, the perspective of being a grown body may be superseded – in her objectivating self-perception – by the perspective of being something made. In this way, the dedifferentiation of the distinction between the grown and the made intrudes upon one's subjective mode of existence. It might usher in the vertiginous awareness that, as a consequence of a genetic intervention carried out before we were born, the subjective nature we experience as being something we cannot dispose over is actually the result of an instru-

mentalization of a part of our nature. The realization that our hereditary factors were, in a past before our past, subjected to programming, confronts us on an existential level, so to speak, with the expectation that we subordinate our being a body to our having a body.

We should, however, remain skeptical about this imaginary dramatization of anticipated facts. Who knows, after all, whether knowledge of the fact that the makeup of my genome was designed by someone else need be of any significance at all for my life? It is rather unlikely that the perspective of being a body will lose its primacy over that of having a genetically tailored body. The participating perspective implied in the experience of being a body can only intermittently be *transposed* to the external perspective of a (self-)observer. Knowledge of the temporal *prius* of being made does not necessarily result in self-alienation. Why should people not get used to this, too, and shrug it off by saying "so what?"? Why shouldn't we, after the narcissistic insult suffered through the disruption of our geocentric and our anthropocentric worldviews by Copernicus and Darwin, respectively, approach this third decentration of our worldview – the subjugation of our body and our life to biotechnology – with more composure?

A human being who has been eugenically programmed has to live with the awareness that his hereditary features were manipulated in order to act purposefully on his phenotypic molding. But before coming to a conclusion as to the normative assessment of this possibility, we have to clarify the standards by which such an instrumentalization might be judged a transgression. Moral convictions and norms are, as I said, situated in forms of life which are reproduced through the members' communicative actions. Since individuation is achieved through the socializing medium of thick linguistic communication, the integrity of individuals is particularly dependent on the respect underlying their dealings with one another. This, in any case, is how we may understand the first two phras-

ings Kant gives of the moral principle. The "formula of ends" of the categorical imperative expresses the claim that every person is to be regarded "always at the same time as an end in himself" and "never" to be treated "simply as a means." Even in cases of conflict, the persons involved are to go on interacting in an attitude of communicative action. They are to attune themselves, from the participant perspective of a first person, to the other as a second person, with the intention of reaching an understanding with him instead of reifying and instrumentalizing him, in the observer perspective of a third person, for their own ends. The morally relevant limit to instrumentalization is set by what, in the second person, will be out of my reach as long as the communicative relationship, that is, the possibility of assuming a yes- or no-position remains unimpaired. The limit is set by the very things with which and by which a person is himself in acting and in standing up to critics. The "self" of this end in itself we are obliged to respect in the other person is primarily expressed in the authorship of a life guided by his own aspirations. Everybody interprets the world from his point of view, acts according to his own motives, is the source of authentic aspirations.

It is not sufficient, however, for the acting subjects to conform to the ban on instrumentalization by monitoring (in Harry Frankfurt's sense) their choice of primary ends in the light of their own higher ends; that is, generalized goals or values. The categorical imperative requires every single person to give up the perspective of a first person in order to join an intersubjectively shared "we"-perspective which enables all of them together to attain value orientations *which can be generalized*. Kant's "formula of ends" already provides the bridge to the "formula of laws". The idea that a valid norm must be of a kind that can be generally accepted is suggested by the remarkable provision enjoining us to respect "humanity" in every single person by treating her as an end in itself: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own

person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end." The concept of humanity obliges us to take up the "we"-perspective from which we perceive one another as members of an *inclusive* community no person is excluded from.

The way in which normative agreement may be reached in cases of conflict is then expressed by the other formula of the categorical imperative, which enjoins us to subject our own will to the very maxims which everybody may want to see as a universal law. It follows from this that, every time a dissensus over underlying value orientations arises, subjects who act autonomously must engage in discourse in a joint effort to discover or to work out the norms which in view of a matter in need of regulation *deserve* the well-founded consent of all. Both phrasings explain the same intuition from a different angle. On the one hand, there is the nature of the person "being an end in itself" who as an inexchangeable individual is supposed to be capable of leading a life of his own; on the other hand, there is the equal respect which every person in his quality as a person is entitled to. Therefore, the universality of moral norms ensuring equal treatment for all cannot be an abstract one; it has to be sensitive to the individual situations and life-projects of every single person.

This is accounted for by a concept of morality where individuation and generalization interpenetrate. The authority of the first person, as expressed in specific experiences, authentic aspirations, and the initiative for responsible actions, that is, all in all, in the authorship for one's own life conduct, must not be violated even by the self-legislation of the moral community. Morality will ensure the freedom of the individual to lead his own life only if the application of generalized norms does not unreasonably lace in the scope for choosing and developing one's life-project. In the very universality of valid norms, a nonassimilative, noncoercive intersubjective communality gets expressed in view of the whole range of a reasonable variety of interests and interpretive perspectives, neither

leveling out nor suppressing nor marginalizing nor excluding the voices of the others – the strangers, the dissidents, and the powerless.

Such are the requirements which must be met by the rationally motivated consent of independent subjects who are capable of saying no. Any agreement reached by rational discourse relies for its validity on the double negation of objections that were rejected for good reasons. But the only way for this agreement reached through practical discourse to avoid being an *overpowering* consensus is to integrate the entire complexity of the objections *reasonably refuted* as well as the unrestricted variety of interests and interpretive perspectives that were *taken into account*. For the person expressing a moral judgment, therefore, her own capacity of being herself is as important as is the fact for the person engaging in moral action that the other is being herself. In the yes or no of participants in discourse, the spontaneous self- and world-understanding of individuals *who are irreplaceable* must find its appropriate expression.

What is true for action is true for discourse: Her yes and no counts because and inasmuch as it is the person *herself* who is behind her intentions, initiatives, and aspirations. If we see ourselves as moral persons, we intuitively assume that since we are inexchangeable, we act and judge *in propria persona* – that it is our own voice speaking and no other. It is for this "capacity of being oneself" that the "intention of another person" intruding upon our life history through the genetic program might primarily turn out to be disruptive. The capacity of being oneself requires that the person be at home, so to speak, in her own body. The body is the medium for incarnating the personal mode of existence in such a way that any kind of self-reference, as for instance first person sentences, is not only unnecessary, but meaningless.[49] It is the body that our sense of direction refers to, denoting center and periphery, the own and the alien. It is the person's incarnation in the body that not only enables us to distinguish between active and passive,

causing to happen and happening, making and finding; it also compels us to differentiate between actions we ascribe to ourselves and actions we ascribe to others. But bodily existence enables the person to distinguish between these perspectives only on condition that she identifies with her body. And for the person to feel one with her body, it seems that this body has to be experienced as something natural – as a continuation of the organic, self-regenerative life from which the person was born.

We experience our own freedom with reference to something which, by its very nature, is not at our disposal. The person, irrespective of her finiteness, knows herself to be the irreducible origin of her own actions and aspirations. But in order to know this, is it really necessary for this person to be able to ascribe her own origin to a beginning which eludes human disposal, to a beginning, that is, which is sure not to prejudge her freedom only if it may be seen as something – like God or nature – that is not at the disposal of some *other* person? Birth as well, being a natural fact, meets the conceptual requirement of constituting a beginning we cannot control. Philosophy has but rarely addressed this matter. One of the exceptions is Hannah Arendt, who in the context of her theory of action introduces the concept of "natality."

She starts out from the observation that each time a child is born, it is not only another life history which begins, but a new one. She then connects this emphatic beginning of human life with the self-understanding of acting subjects as being able, of their own free will, to "make a new beginning." For Arendt, every single birth, being invested with the hope for something entirely other to come and break the chain of eternal recurrence, is to be seen in the eschatological light of the biblical promise: "a child has been born unto us." The "expectation of the unexpected" is betrayed by the emotion in the eyes of the curious bystanders who witness the arrival of the newborn child. On this indeterminate hope of something new, the power of the past over the future is shattered. For Arendt,

the concept of natality is the bridge which connects the natural beginning with the awareness of the adult subject:

> the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities. Moreover, since action is the political activity par excellence, natality, and not mortality, may be the central category of political, as distinguished from metaphysical, thought.[50]

In acting, human beings feel free to begin something new because birth itself, as a divide between nature and culture, marks a new beginning.[51] What is suggested by this is, I believe, the onset, with birth, of a differentiation between the socialization fate of a person and the natural fate of her organism. It is only by referring to this difference between nature and culture, between beginnings not at our disposal, and the plasticity of historical practices that the acting subject may proceed to the self-ascriptions without which he could not perceive himself as the initiator of his actions and aspirations. For a person to be himself, a point of reference is required which goes back beyond the lines of tradition and the contexts of interaction which constitute the process of formation through which personal identity is molded in the course of a life history.

Of course, the person can only see himself as the author of ascribable actions and as the source of authentic aspirations if he assumes continuity for a self, remaining self-identical in the course of a life history. Failing this assumption, we would be capable neither of assuming a reflective attitude toward our socialization fate, nor of developing a revisionary self-understanding. The actual awareness of being the author of one's actions and aspirations is interwoven with the intuition that we are called upon to be the authors of a critically appropriated life history. A person, however, who would be the sole product

of a suffered socialization fate would see his "self" slip away in the stream of constellations, relations, and relevancies imposed upon the formation process. We can achieve continuity in the vicissitudes of a life history only because we may refer, for establishing the difference between what *we* are and what happens *to us*, to a bodily existence which is itself the continuation of a natural fate going back beyond the socialization process. The fact that this natural fate, this past before our past, so to speak, is not at our human disposal seems to be essential for our awareness of freedom – but is it also essential for the capacity, as such, of being oneself?

From Hannah Arendt's suggestive description, it does not actually follow that the anonymous chains of action cutting across the genetically manipulated body will necessarily lead to this body losing its worth, the basis on which to ascribe the feeling of being oneself. Are we to suppose, once a discernable intrusion of the intentions of third persons upon a genetic program has occurred, that birth no longer constitutes a beginning that could give the acting subject an awareness of being able to make a new beginning, any time? Of course, being confronted with the sedimented intention of a third person in one's hereditary factors requires the subject concerned to come to terms with this fact. The programmed person cannot see the programmer's intention, reaching through the genome, as a contingent circumstance restricting her scope of action. With his intention, the programmer rather intervenes as a co-player in an interaction without turning up as an opponent *within* the field of action of the programmed person. But what, in this peculiar unassailability of another *peer's* intention is questionable in a moral sense?

## VI The moral limits of eugenics

In liberal societies, every citizen has an equal right to pursue his individual life projects "as best he can." This

ethical scope of the freedom to make the best of a life which may go wrong is *also* determined by genetically conditioned abilities, dispositions, and properties. With regard to the ethical freedom to lead a life of one's own while being subject to organic conditions not of our own choice, the situation of the programmed person does not initially differ from that of a person naturally begotten. Eugenic programming of desirable traits and dispositions, however, gives rise to moral misgivings as soon as it commits the person concerned to a specific life-project or, in any case, puts specific restrictions on his freedom to choose a life of his own. Of course, the adolescent may assimilate the "alien" intention which caring parents long before his birth associated with the disposition to certain skills much in the same way as might be the case, for instance, for certain vocational traditions running in a family. For the adolescent confronted with the expectations of ambitious parents to make something out of, for instance, his mathematical or musical talents, it makes no fundamental difference whether this confrontation takes place in terms of the dense fabric of domestic socialization, or in dealing with a genetic program, provided he appropriates these expectations as aspirations of his own and sees the indicated talents as an opportunity as well as an obligation to engage in efforts of his own.

If an intention is "appropriated" in this way, no effect of alienation from one's own existence as a body and a soul will occur, nor will the corresponding restrictions of the ethical freedom to live a life of one's own be felt. On the other hand, as long as we cannot be sure that this harmony between one's own intentions and those of a third party will inevitably be produced, we cannot rule out the possibility of *dissonant* cases. Cases of dissonant intentions illuminate the fact that natural fate and socialization fate differ in a morally relevant aspect.[52] Socialization processes proceed only by communicative action, wielding their formative power in the medium of propositional attitudes and decisions which, for the adult persons to

whom the child relates, are connected with internal reasons even if, at a given stage of its cognitive development, the "space of reasons" is not yet widely open to the child itself. Due to the interactive structure of the formation processes in which the child always has the role of a second person, expectations underlying the parents' efforts at character building are essentially "contestable." Since even a psychically binding "delegation" of children can only be brought about in the medium of reasons, the adolescents in principle still have the opportunity to respond to and retroactively break away from it.[53] They can retrospectively compensate for the asymmetry of filial dependency by liberating themselves through a critical reappraisal of the genesis of such restrictive socialization processes. Even neurotic fixations may be resolved analytically, through an elaboration of self-reflexive insights.

But in the case of a genetic determination carried out according to the parents' own preferences, there is no such opportunity. With genetic enhancement, there is no communicative scope for the projected child to be addressed as a second person and to be involved in a communication process. From the adolescent's perspective, an instrumental determination cannot, like a pathogenic socialization process, be revised by "critical reappraisal." It does not permit the adolescent looking back on the prenatal intervention to engage in a *revisionary* learning process. *Being at odds with* the genetically fixed intention of a third person is hopeless. The genetic program is a mute and, in a sense, unanswerable fact; for unlike persons born naturally, someone who is at odds with genetically fixed intentions is barred from developing, in the course of a reflectively appropriated and deliberately continued life history, an attitude toward her talents (and handicaps) which implies a revised self-understanding and allows for a *productive* response to the initial situation. This situation, by the way, is not unlike that of a clone who, by being modeled on the person and the life history of a "twin"

chronologically out of phase, is deprived of an unobstructed future of his own.[54]

Eugenic interventions aiming at enhancement reduce ethical freedom insofar as they tie down the person concerned to rejected, but irreversible intentions of third parties, barring him from the spontaneous self-perception of being the undivided author of his own life. Abilities and skills may be easier to identify with than dispositions, let alone properties, but the only thing that counts for the psychical resonance of the person concerned is the intention associated with the programming enterprise. Only in the negative case of the prevention of extreme and highly generalized evils may we have good reasons to assume that the person concerned would consent to the eugenic goal.

Liberal eugenics would not only affect the capacity of "being oneself." It would at the same time create an interpersonal relationship for which there is no precedent. The irreversible choice a person makes for the desired makeup of the genome of another person initiates a type of relationship between these two which jeopardizes a precondition for the moral self-understanding of autonomous actors. A universalistic understanding of law and morality rests on the assumption that there is no definite obstacle to egalitarian interpersonal relations. Of course, our societies are marked by manifest as well as structural violence. They are impregnated by the micropower of silent repression, disfigured by despotic suppression, deprivation of political rights, social disempowerment, and economic exploitation. However, we could not be scandalized by this if we did not know that these shameful conditions might *also* be *different*. The conviction that all actors, as persons, obtain the same normative status and are held to deal with one another in mutual and symmetrical recognition rests on the assumption that there is, in principle, a reversibility to interpersonal relationships. No dependence on another person must be irreversible. With genetic programming, however, a relationship emerges that is

asymmetrical in more than one respect – a specific type of paternalism.

Unlike the social dependence inherent in the parent–child relationship, which will, as the generations succeed one another, be resolved with the children growing up, the children's *genealogical* dependence on their parents is, of course, also irreversible. Parents beget their children, children do not beget their parents. But this dependence only engages the children's existence, which as such lends itself only to a curiously abstract form of reproach, not their essence – no qualitative determination of any kind of their future life. In contrast to social dependence, genetic dependence of the person programmed on her designer is concentrated, it is true, in a single attributable act. But in the context of eugenic practice, acts of this type – by omission as well as by execution – lay the grounds for a social relationship in which the usual "reciprocity between persons of equal birth" is revoked.[55] The program designer carries out a one-sided act for which there can be no well-founded assumption of consent, disposing over the genetic factors of another in the paternalistic intention of setting the course, in relevant respects, of the life history of the dependent person. The latter may interpret, but not revise or undo this intention. The consequences are irreversible because the paternalistic intention is laid down in a disarming genetic program instead of being communicatively mediated by a socializing practice which can be subjected to reappraisal by the person "raised."

The irreversible nature of the consequences arising from one-sided acts of genetic manipulation saddles the person who thinks himself capable of making this choice with a problematical responsibility. But must it *per se* act as a restriction on the moral autonomy of the person concerned? All persons, including those born naturally, are in one way or another dependent on their genetic program. There must be a different reason for dependence on a

*deliberately* fixed genetic program to be relevant for the programmed person. He is principally barred from exchanging roles with his designer. The product cannot, to put it bluntly, draw up a design for its designer. Our concern with programming here is not whether it will restrict another person's ethical freedom and capacity of being himself, but whether, and how, it might eventually preclude a symmetrical relationship between the programmer and the product thus "designed". Eugenic programming establishes a permanent dependence between persons who know that one of them is principally barred from changing *social* places with the other. But this kind of social dependence, which is irreversible because it was established by ascription, is foreign to the reciprocal and symmetrical relations of mutual recognition proper to a moral and legal community of free and equal persons.

Up to now, only persons born, not persons made, have participated in social interaction. In the biopolitical future prophesied by liberal eugenicists, this horizontal connection would be superseded by an intergenerational stream of action and communication cutting vertically across the deliberately modified genome of future generations.

Now, one might be tempted to think that the democratic constitutional state is, after all, best equipped to provide the framework as well as the means for compensating for this lack of intergenerational reciprocity, by institutionalizing procedures to reestablish the disrupted symmetry on the level of generalized norms. Wouldn't legal norms, if they were established on the broad basis of ethical and political will formation, relieve parents from the dubious responsibility for an individual choice made solely according to their own preferences? Wouldn't legitimacy based on a generalized democratic will remove the stigma of paternalism from parents who mold the genetic fate of their child according to their own preferences, and

restore the persons concerned to their status of equal birth? Once these persons are included as democratic co-authors of a legal ruling in a transgenerational consensus by which the asymmetry, irreparable in the individual case, is redressed on a higher level of the common will, they would no longer need to see themselves as persons confined to dependence.

This thought experiment, however, shows why this attempt at reparation must fail. The political consensus required would be either too strong or too weak. Too strong, because a *binding* commitment to collective goals going beyond the prevention of evils agreed upon would be an unconstitutional intervention in the private autonomy of citizens; too weak, because the mere *permission* to make use of eugenic procedures would not be able to relieve parents of their moral responsibility for their highly personal choice of eugenic goals, since the problematic consequence of restricting ethical freedom cannot be ruled out. In the context of a democratically constituted pluralistic society where every citizen has an equal right to an autonomous conduct of life, practices of enhancing eugenics cannot be "normalized" in a legitimate way, because the selection of desirable dispositions cannot be *a priori* dissociated from the prejudgment of specific life-projects.

## VII Setting the pace for a self-instrumentalization of the species?

What, then, follows from this analysis for the current debate on stem cell research and PGD? In a first step I have tried, in section II, to explain why the hope of resolving the controversy with one single, compelling argument is an illusion. From a philosophical perspective, extending the argument for human rights to cover human life "from the very beginning" is not at all conclusive. On the other hand, the legal distinction established between the human

dignity of the person, which is unconditionally valid, and the protection of the life of the embryo, which may on principle be weighed against other rights, by no means opens the way to a hopeless controversy over conflicting ethical goals. In evaluating prepersonal human life we are not dealing, as I have shown in section III, with a "good" among other goods. How we deal with human life before birth (or with human beings after death) touches on our self-understanding as members of the species. And this self-understanding as members of the species is closely interwoven with our self-understanding as moral persons. Our conceptions of – and attitude toward – prepersonal human life embed the rational morality of subjects of human rights in the stabilizing context of an ethics of the species. This context must endure if morality itself is not to start slipping.

Against the background of a potential liberal eugenics, this internal relation between the ethics of the protection of life and our self-understanding as autonomous beings having equal rights and abiding by moral reasons comes into clearer focus. The moral reasons that hypothetically speak against such a practice cast a shadow also on the practices which open the way to it. Today, we must ask ourselves whether later generations will eventually come to terms with the fact that they may no longer see themselves as the undivided authors of their life – nor will be called upon as such. Will they accept an interpersonal relationship that is no longer consistent with the egalitarian premises of morality and law? And would not, then, the grammatical form of our moral language game – the self-understanding of speakers and actors as beings for whom normative reasons count – be changed as a whole? The arguments I laid out in sections IV to VI were to make plausible the fact that we have to face these questions today, in anticipation of the further advances of genetic engineering. There is, after all, the alarming prospect of a practice of genetic interventions aiming at the modification of traits which will go beyond the boundaries of the

essentially communicative relationship between doctor and patient, parents and children, and undermine, through eugenic self-transformation, our normatively structured forms of life.

Such are the concerns which may explain the impression we have when analyzing debates on bioethics, including those in the Bundestag. Participants in this discourse whose contributions rely on standard ways of weighing competing goods (as did those of the representatives of the Liberal Democrats) seem to be out of step. It is not that unconditional existential rigor, as set against the weighing of interests, would be *a priori* superior to the balancing of interests. But many of us seem to have the intuition that we should not *weigh* human life, not even in its earliest stages, either against the freedom (and competitiveness) of research, or against the concern with safeguarding an industrial edge, or against the wish for a healthy child, or even against the prospect (assumed *arguendo*) of new treatments for severe genetic diseases. What is it that is indicated by such an intuition, if we assume that human life does not from the very beginning enjoy the same absolute protection of life that holds for the person?

Concerns as to PGD can be justified more directly than the comparatively archaic inhibition we feel toward research involving the destruction of embryos. Our unwillingness to legalize PGD is grounded in consideration of both the conditional creation of embryos and the nature of this condition itself. Bringing about a situation in which we might eventually reject an afflicted embryo is as dubious as selection according to criteria defined by one side only. Selection in this case cannot but be one-sided, and therefore instrumentalizing, because there can be no assumption of an anticipated consent which, as in cases of genetic manipulation for therapeutic ends, may at least be confirmed by later statements of the treated patients: here, no person is created in the first place. In contrast to

embryonic research, moral weighing in this case may, after all, be brought to bear against the degree of severe suffering the future person herself can be expected to face.[56] The advocates of a ruling which might eventually limit the admissibility of the procedure to a few unambiguously extreme cases of monogenetic diseases may primarily[57] argue against the protection of life by pointing out that preventing an unbearably restricted future life is in the best interest, advocationally attended to, of the future person concerned.

But even so, the fact that we make a highly momentous distinction between life worth living and life not worth living *for others* remains disconcerting. Do parents who decide to rely on embryo selection, in view of their own wish for a child, fail to adopt a clinical attitude, which is oriented toward the goal of healing? Or is their attitude toward the unborn child that of dealing with a second person, albeit uncontrollably fictitious – on the assumption that this person himself would refuse an existence subject to specific restrictions? I am not sure myself; but even so, the opponents would still have strong reasons for pointing out (as the Federal President did recently) the discriminating side-effects and the problematic normalization likely to occur as a corollary to any evaluation, restrictive as it may be, of a form of life presumed to be handicapped.

The situation will be different when the advances of genetic engineering some day allow genetic intervention to be carried out in a therapeutic perspective subsequent to a diagnosis of severe hereditary handicaps and, thus, make selection unnecessary. This would, of course, mean that we have crossed the threshold to negative eugenics. But in this case, the reasons which today, as pointed out above, are invoked in favor of lifting the ban on PGD could be brought to bear on gene-modifying interventions without compelling us to weigh an undesirable handicap against the protection of the life of a "rejected" embryo. A

genetic manipulation (carried out, preferably, on somatic cells) restricted to clearly therapeutic goals can be compared to the combat against epidemics and other widespread diseases. The depth of intervention inherent to the operative means does not justify abstention from treatment.

A more complex explanation is required for the disgust we feel at the notion that research involving the destruction of embryos is instrumentalizing human life in view of the benefits (and profits) to be derived from a scientific progress which is not even predictable with any certainty. What is expressed here is the attitude that "an embryo – even if created in vitro – [is] the future child of future parents, and nothing else. It is not available for other ends" (Margot von Renesse). This attitude, insofar as it exists independently from ontological beliefs about the beginning of personal life, does not seek justification in terms of a metaphysically conceived human dignity. It is, however, no less impervious to the moral argument which I have raised against liberal eugenics, in any case if used directly. The intuition that the embryo must not be instrumentalized for arbitrary *other* ends, it is true, leads to the claim that it be treated in anticipation as a second person who, *were* she to be born, *could* assume an attitude toward this treatment. But the purely experimental or "destructive" use in the research laboratory does not aim at birth at all. In which sense, then, can it "fail to meet" the clinical attitude proper to the dealings with a being whose later consent may at least in principle be presupposed?

Reference to the collective good of treatments likely to be developed obscures the fact that this implies an instrumentalization incompatible with the clinical attitude. Of course, research involving the destruction of embryos cannot be justified from the clinical point of view of healing, because the latter is tailored to therapeutic dealings with second persons. The clinical perspective, rightly understood, individualizes. But why should the standard

of a virtual doctor–patient relationship apply to research conducted in the laboratory at all? If this counterquestion does not take us back to the essentialist controversy over the "real" destiny of embryonic life, there indeed seems to be no alternative to an open-ended weighing of goods. The only way for this controversial issue not to end up in an ordinary process of weighing is to accord prepersonal life, as I have tried to explain in section III, a *specific* weight of its own.

This, now, is where the long-prepared argument comes in that the advances of genetic engineering tend to blur the deeply rooted categorical distinctions between the subjective and the objective, the grown and the made. What is at stake, therefore, with the instrumentalization of prepersonal life is the ethical self-understanding of the species, which is crucial for whether or not we may go on to see ourselves as beings committed to moral judgment and action. Where we lack compelling *moral* reasons, we have to let ourselves be guided by the signposts set up by the *ethics* of the species.[58]

Let us suppose that, with research involving the destruction of embryos, a practice will come to prevail for which the protection of prepersonal human life is secondary to "other ends", even if these ends consisted in nothing more than the prospect of developing high-ranking collective goods (such as new medical treatments). The desensitization of the way we look at human nature, going hand in hand with the *normalization* of this practice, would clear the path for liberal eugenics. Here we can already discern the future *fait accompli*, by then a fact of the past, which later apologists will be able to refer to as the Rubicon that was crossed. Looking at a possible future for human nature makes us aware of the present need for regulation. Normative barriers in our dealings with embryos are the result of the point of view taken by a moral community of persons that fends off the pace-makers of a self-instrumentalization of the species in order to safeguard – let us say: out of concern for itself, but in

the broader perspective of the ethics of the species – its communicatively structured form of life.

Embryonic research and PGD stir up our emotions mainly because they *exemplify* a danger which is associated with the perspective of "human breeding." By depriving the fusion of two sets of chromosomes of its contingency, the intergenerational relations lose the naturalness which so far has been a part of the taken-for-granted background of our self-understanding as a species. If we abstain from "moralizing" human nature, we might see the emergence of a dense intergenerational stream of cumulative decisions cutting across the contemporary networks of interaction in a one-directional, vertical way. Whereas the effective history of cultural traditions and formation processes unfolds, as Gadamer has shown, in the medium of questions and answers, genetic programs would give future generations no opportunity to respond in the same way. Getting used to having human life biotechnologically at the disposal of our contingent preferences cannot help but change our normative self-understanding.

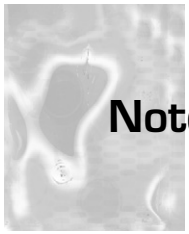
In this perspective, the two controversial innovations, even while still at their initial stage, make us aware of how our lives might be changed if genetic interventions aiming at the modification of traits were to *become normal practice*, emancipating themselves entirely from the context of the therapy of individual persons. It could, then, no longer be ruled out that alien and, in this case, genetically fixed intentions take possession, through enhancing eugenic interventions, of the life history of the programmed person. This is why the question of whether and how an act thus reified affects our capacity of being ourselves, as well as our relation to others, is so disconcerting. Will we still be able to come to a self-understanding as persons who are the undivided authors of their own lives, and approach others, without exception, as persons of equal birth? With this, two presuppositions of our moral self-understanding, spelled out in terms of an ethics of the species, are at stake.

This fact, however, can account for the heat of the current controversy only as long as belonging to a moral community is still a vital interest. It cannot be taken for granted, after all, that we will still *want* this status of a member of a community that requires all its members to show equal respect for every other member and to be responsible in their solidarity with all of them. That we *shall* act morally is inscribed in the very sense of a (deontologically conceived) morality. But why – if biotechnology is subtly undermining our identity as members of the species – should we *want* to be moral? An assessment of morality as a whole is itself not a moral judgment, but an ethical one, a judgment which is part of the ethics of the species.

Without the emotions roused by moral sentiments like obligation and guilt, reproach and forgiveness, without the liberating effect of moral respect, without the happiness felt through solidarity and without the depressing effect of moral failure, without the "friendliness" of a civilized way of dealing with conflict and opposition, we would feel, or so we still think today, that the universe inhabited by men would be unbearable. Life in a moral void, in a form of life empty even of cynicism, would not be worth living. This judgment simply expresses the "impulse" to prefer an existence of human dignity to the coldness of a form of life not informed by moral considerations. The same impulse accounts for the historical transition, which is repeated in ontogenesis, to a posttraditional stage of moral awareness.

When the religious and metaphysical worldviews lost their binding nature and the transition to a tolerated pluralism of worldviews took place, we (or most of us) did not turn out be cool cynics or indifferent relativists, because almost by reflex we held – and *wanted* to hold – to the binary code of moral judgments being right or wrong. We readjusted the practices of the lifeworld and of the political community to the premises of a rational morality and of human rights because they provided the

common ground for a humane existence irrespective of any differences arising from the variety of worldviews.[59] Perhaps the affective opposition raised today against a dreaded change in the identity of the species can be explained – and justified – by similar motives.



# Notes

Where a German-language source is given, quotations have been translated specifically for this edition.

## Are There Postmetaphysical Answers to the Question: What is the "Good Life"?

1 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 15.

2 I would like to recognize the debt I owe to my friend Dick Bernstein for the extraordinary sensitivity of his many constructive critical comments over the last three decades. In the present context compare our exchange on the controversial issue of the priority of the Right over the Good, in *Habermas on Law and Democracy: Critical Exchanges*, ed. M. Rosenfield and A. Arato (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 287–305 and 384–9.

3 A. Mitscherlich, *Freiheit und Unfreiheit in der Krankheit*, *Studien zur psychosomatischen Medizin* 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 128.

4 S. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, part 2, ed. and trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 4 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 260.

5 S. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, ed. and trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 19 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 90.

6 S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, in *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 111.
7 Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto Death*, pp. 52–3.
8 Ibid., p. 14.
9 M. Theunissen, *Das Selbst auf dem Grund der Verzweiflung* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1991), in English as *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Forthcoming).
10 Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 45.
11 H. Plessner, *Laughing and Crying: A Study of the Limits of Human Behavior*, trans. J. S. Churchill and M. Greene (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 27–32.
12 Treaty of Nice, *Official Journal of the European Communities* (2000), C80/1.

## The Debate on the Ethical Self-Understanding of the Species

Epigraph from Andreas Kuhlmann, *Politik des Lebens, Politik des Sterbens* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 2001).

1 R. Kollek, I. Schneider, "Verschwiegene Interessen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 5, 2001. For background information on how political acceptance of embryonic research was solicited, see C. Schwägerl, "Die Geister, die sie riefen," *FAZ*, June 16, 2001.
2 I will not go into the more specific questions of the moral responsibility we would have to take, with respect to a possible modification of the germ line, for the far-reaching intergenerational effects of germ line therapy (banned, as yet), or even for the secondary effects of body cell therapy; cf. M. Lappé, "Ethical Issues in Manipulating the Human Germ Line," in H. Kuhse and P. Singer (eds), *Bioethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 155–64. In the following, I will refer, without further specification, to "genetic interventions" which are carried out before birth.
3 N. Agar, "Liberal Eugenics," in Kuhse and Singer, *Bioethics*, p. 173: "Liberals doubt that the notion of disease is up for

the moral theoretic task the therapeutic/eugenic distinction requires of it."

4 Johannes Rau, "Der Mensch ist jetzt Mitspieler der Evolution geworden," *FAZ*, May 19, 2001.

5 I agree with colleagues who think the biosciences capable of rapid achievements also usable for biotechnology: "Science so often confounds the best predictions, and we should not risk finding ourselves unprepared for the genetic engineer's equivalent of Hiroshima. Better to have principles covering impossible situations than no principles for situations that are suddenly upon us" (Agar, "Liberal Eugenics," p. 172).

6 R. Kollek, *Präimplantationsdiagnostik* (Tübingen: A.Francke, 2000), p. 214.

7 Andreas Kuhlmann, *Politik des Lebens, Politik des Sterbens* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 2001), pp. 104ff.

8 James D. Watson, "Die Ethik des Genoms. Warum wir Gott nicht mehr die Zukunft des Menschen überlassen dürfen," *FAZ*, Sept. 26, 2000.

9 See the illuminating commentary by Thomas Assheuer, "Der Künstliche Mensch," *Die Zeit*, Mar. 15, 2001.

10 See *Zeit-Dokument* 2 (1999), pp. 4–15.

11 J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. W. Rehg (Cambridge: Polity; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996). J. Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, ed. C. Cronin and P. De Greiff (Cambridge: Polity; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

12 As an example, cf. the contributions to the debate among philosophers in *Die Zeit*, nos 4–10 (2001).

13 The intense exchange of ideas with Lutz Wingert and Rainer Forst was very helpful. My thanks also go to Tilman Habermas for his detailed comments. Of course, each of these advisers has specific reservations. My own concern the fact that I address this issue without originally being familiar with the field of bioethics. I therefore regret that I came upon the study by Allen Buchanan, Daniel W. Brock, Norman Daniels and Daniel Wikler, *From Chance to Choice: Genetics and Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), only after having concluded my manuscript. I share their deontological perspective of judgment. As for

the dissensus that nevertheless remains, I can only outline it by resorting to a few additional notes.

14 W. van den Daele, "Die Natürlichkeit des Menschen als Kriterium und Schranke technischer Eingriffe," *Wechsel-Wirkung*, June–Aug. (2000), pp. 24–31.

15 Ibid., p. 25.

16 W. van den Daele, "Die Moralisierung der menschlichen Natur und die Naturbezüge in gesellschaftlichen Institutionen," *Kritische Vierteljahrbuch für Gesetzgebung und Rechtswissenschaft* 2 (1978), pp. 351–66.

17 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society*, trans. M. Ritter (London: Sage, 1992); J. Habermas, "Conceptions of Modernity: A Look Back at Two Traditions," in Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, ed. and trans. Max Pensky (Cambridge: Polity; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).

18 L. Honnefelder, "Die Herausforderung des Menschen durch die Genomforschung Gentechnik," *Forum (Info der Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung)* 1 (2000), p. 49.

19 For the reasons indicated above, I will focus on the fundamental question of whether we may want to take any steps at all toward liberal eugenics. I will not go into questions of the just way of implementing such procedures. The normative problems arising as a consequence of eugenics being principally welcomed are addressed, in the perspective of Rawls's theory of justice, by Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, p. 4: "The primary objective of this book is . . . to answer a single question: What are the most basic moral principles that would guide public policy and individual choice concerning the use of genetic interventions in a just and humane society in which the powers of genetic intervention are much more developed than they are today."

20 R. Dworkin, "Die falsche Angst, Gott zu spielen," *Zeit-Dokument* (1999), p. 39; cf. also "Playing God: Genes, Clones, and Luck," in R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 427–52.

21 I will refrain, in the present context, from going into the juridical dispute over the implications of the present jurisdiction in Germany concerning Article 218 StGB (abortion). There is a decision of the Federal Constitutional Court with regard to the legal protection of prenatal life

from the moment of nidation. Whether this decision can be applied without further qualification, as Herta Däubler-Gmelin and Ernst Benda assume, to human life as being entitled to absolute protection from the moment of fertilization is controversial among legal experts, and seems questionable to me, as well; cf. M. Pawlik, "Der Staat hat dem Embryo alle Trümpfe genommen," *FAZ*, June 27, 2001. As to a comparison of various juridical decisions, see the informative essay by R. Erlinger, "Von welchem Zeitpunkt an ist der Embryo juristisch geschützt?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 4, 2001. Incidentally, interpretation of the constitution is a long-term learning process which, time and again, has induced the supreme courts to correct their own previous decisions. If existing legal positions are confronted, in the light of other historical circumstances, with new moral reasons, the constitutional principles – being themselves morally grounded – require that the law follows moral arguments.

22 Cf. R. Merkel, "Rechte für Embryonen?" *Die Zeit*, Jan. 25, 2001; U. Mueller, "Gebt uns die Lizenz zum Klonen!" *FAZ*, Mar. 9, 2001.

23 R. Dworkin, *Life's Dominion: An Argument about Abortion and Euthanasia* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

24 This is taken into account by the Aristotelian-scholastic doctrine of soul being only successively bestowed, cf. the survey by H. Schmoll, "Wann wird der Mensch ein Mensch?" *FAZ*, May 31, 2001.

25 M. Nussbaum criticizes Kant's distinction between the intelligible and the physical existence of the acting person: "What's wrong with Kant's distinction? . . . It ignores the fact that our dignity is that of a certain sort of animal; it is a dignity that could not be possessed by a being who was not mortal and vulnerable, just as the beauty of a cherry tree in bloom could not be possessed by a diamond." "Disabled Lives: Who Cares?" *New York Review of Books*, Jan. 11, 2001.

26 George Herbert Mead's fundamental insight is shared by Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen.

27 Hannah Arendt has pointed to "plurality" as a fundamental characteristic of human existence. The life of a human being proceeds only on condition that there is interaction

with other human beings: "For human beings, to live means – according to the expression in Latin, the language of the people who are perhaps the most profoundly political we know – 'to be among men' (inter homines esse), and to die, 'to cease to be among men' (desinere inter homines esse)" (H. Arendt, *Vita Activa* (Munich, 1959), p. 15; see Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958).

28 Being *endowed* with reason means that birth, the moment of our entry into the social world, at the same time marks the moment from which the *capacity* of being a person can be realized, no matter in which form. Even a comatose patient participates in this form of life. Cf. M. Seel, *Ethisch-Ästhetische Studien* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), pp. 215ff.: "Therefore morality treats all members of the human species as beings wanting life as a person, irrespective of the degree to which they are actually capable of leading such a life . . . The respect of the integrity of the other, established in the mutual recognition of persons, must apply to all human beings without exception; they all have the same fundamental right to participation in life as a person, irrespective of the degree to which they have (at all or temporarily) the capacity of self-determined participation. The core of morality can only be the most simple one, that is, to treat all human beings as human beings."

29 L. Wingert, *Gemeinsinn und Moral* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993).

30 S. Rixen, "Totenwürde," *FAZ*, Mar. 13, 2001.

31 W. Kersting, "Menschenrechtsverletzung ist nicht Wertverletzung," *FAZ*, Mar. 17, 2001.

32 R. Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (London: Duckworth, 1977); K. Günther, *Der Sinn für Angemessenheit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 335ff.

33 O. Höffe, "Wessen Menschenwürde?" *Die Zeit*, Feb. 1, 2001.

34 For example, Buchanan et al. speak of the uncanny scenario of a "genetic communitarianism" according to which various subcultures will pursue the eugenic self-optimizing of the human species in different directions, thus jeopardizing the unity of human nature as the basis, up to now, for all human beings to understand and to mutually recognize one another: "We can no longer assume that there will be

a single successor to what has been regarded as human nature. We must consider the possibility that at some point in the future, different groups of human beings may follow divergent paths of development through the use of genetic technology. If this occurs, there will be different groups of beings, each with its own 'nature', related to one another only through a common ancestor (the human race), just as there are now different species of animals who evolved through random mutations and natural selection" (*From Chance to Choice*, pp. 177ff.).

35 I owe this decisive idea to a discussion with Lutz Wingert. He is also the author of an instructive proposal for a project to be conducted at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen: "What makes a form of life humane? Our culture between biology and humanism."

36 It does make a difference, however, whether we apply the interpretive model of "tinkering around" to *our own* biotechnological interventions into nature, carried out under laboratory conditions, or, as for instance in F. Jakob (*Das Spiel des Möglichen*, Munich, 1983), to the evolution of nature *itself*. This distinction becomes relevant in a normative sense as soon as both are associated, by way of legitimation, in order to suggest the naturalistic fallacy of seeing biotechnology as natural evolution being continued by its own means. This reflection is based on a manuscript by P. Janich and M. Weingarten, *Verantwortung ohne Verständnis. Wie die Ethikdebatte zur Gentechnik von deren Wissenschaftstheorie abhängt* (Marburg, 2001).

37 H. Jonas, "Lasst uns einen Menschen klonieren," in Jonas, *Technik, Medizin und Eugenik. Zur Praxis des Prinzips Verantwortung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 165.

38 Ibid., p. 168; this uncontrollability increases with interventions into the germ line, see note 2 above.

39 M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 54; in English as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1997).

40 Agar, "Liberal Eugenics," p. 171.

41 John Robertson, cited in ibid., pp. 172ff.

42 Ibid., p. 173. The same parallel in Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, pp. 156ff.

43 H. Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen* (1927), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

44 Tilmann Habermas, "Die Entwicklung sozialen Urteilens bei jugendlichen Magersüchtigen," *Acta Paedo-psychiatrica*, 51 (1988), pp. 147–55.

45 Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, p. 121: "Disease and impairment, both physical and mental, are construed as adverse departure from or impairments of species-typical normal functional organization . . . The line between disease and impairment and normal functioning is thus drawn in the relatively objective and non-speculative context provided by the biomedical sciences, broadly construed." The authors refer, from a normative point of view, to "normal functioning" as a "natural primary good", in an analogy to the social primary goods introduced by Rawls.

46 J. Harris, "Is Gene Therapy a Form of Eugenics," in Kuhse and Singer, *Bioethics*, p. 167: "This is important because we need an account of disability we can use for the potentially self-conscious gametes, embryos, fetuses and neonates, and for the temporarily unconscious, which does not wait on subsequent ratification by the person concerned."

47 Kuhlmann, *Politik des Lebens*, p. 17.

48 Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, pp. 90ff.

49 E. Tugendhat, *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbstbestimmung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), pp. 68ff., in English as *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, trans. P. Stern (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986); B. Mauersberg, *Der lange Abschied von der Bewusstseinsphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000).

50 Arendt, *Vita Activa*, pp. 15ff.; see also Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 8ff.

51 Arendt, *Vita Activa*, p. 243, and see also pp. 164f.

52 Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, pp. 177ff.: "Even if an individual is no more locked in by the effects of a parental choice than he or she would have been by unmodified nature, most of us might feel differently about accepting the results of a natural lottery versus the imposed values of our parents. The force of feeling locked in may well be different." Curiously enough, the authors bring this argu-

ment to bear only against what they term "communitarian eugenics", not against the practice of liberal eugenics in general, of which they approve.

53 Cf. above the references to Kierkegaard as the first modern ethicist.

54 See the argument of Hans Jonas in *Technik, Medizin und Eugenik*, pp. 190–3; and K. Braun, *Menschenwürde und Biomedizin* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000), pp. 162–79. Buchanan et al., *From Chance to Choice*, do take this into account, when referring to the child's "right to an open future" (postulated by Joel Feinberg in a different context: "The Child's Right to an Open Future," in W. Aiken and H. LaFollette (eds), *Whose Child? Children's Rights, Parental Authority, and State Power* (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1980)). But they believe that restriction of this right by the precursor model of a twin chronologically out of phase can only be assumed from the – erroneous – premises of genetic determinism. They fail to see that here, as in the case of enhancing eugenics, it is primarily the intention governing the eugenic intervention that counts. The person concerned knows that the manipulation has been carried out with the sole intention of acting on the phenotypic molding of a specific genetic program, and this of course on condition that the technologies required for this goal have proved to be successful.

55 Cf. my three replies in Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*, pp. 163–72.

56 As long as the advocates of PID model their thought on the current legal conditions of medical indications for abortion, they refuse any change of perspective from what is bad for the mother's health to what is bad for the health of the future child.

57 Disregarding the aspect of deliberately induced selection, this procedure, too, may well involve another relevant aspect which in abortion, being a situation of a different nature, is covered by the woman's right to self-determination: whether or not parents can be reasonably supposed to cope with the situation they have to expect. The parents must believe themselves capable of coping, even under aggravated conditions, with the demanding responsibility for a child who will share their life.

58 Rainer Forst has tried to convince me, with ingenious arguments, that with this step I unnecessarily leave the path of deontological virtue.

59 J. Habermas, "Richtigkeit versus Wahrheit," in Habermas, *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 271–318, here at pp. 313ff.; forthcoming as *Truth and Justification* (Cambridge: Polity; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

**Postscript**

60 The Program in Law, Philosophy, and Social Theory, New York University, Law School, Fall 2001.

61 See the contributions by Dieter Birnbacher, Ludwig Siep and Robert Spaemann in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 50, no. 1 (2002).

62 See Nationaler Ethikrat, Stellungnahme zum Import menschlicher embryonaler Stammzellen, Dezember 2001, 5.1.1: "Rechtsethische Überlegungen zum Status früher embryonaler Lebensphasen" (National Council of Ethics, position paper on the importation of human embryonic stem cells, Dec. 2001, 5.1.1: Legal-ethical reflections on the status of early stages of embryonic life).

63 J. Habermas, *Kommunikatives Handeln und detranscendentalisierte Vernunft* (Stuttgart, 2001); forthcoming in Habermas, *Truth and Justification*.

64 Seen from a religious perspective as well, the necessary beginning presupposition for a life history of one's own is that it is removed from the arbitrary will of a peer.

65 D. Birnbacher, "Habermas' ehrgeiziges Beweisziel – erreicht oder verfehlt?" (Habermas's ambitious evidentiary goal – success or failure?), *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 50, no. 1 (2002).

66 I am not considering the particular problem of selection; my interest here is only the prenatal determination of gender.

67 The objection treated in section 2 above is explicable as the result of neglecting just this difference.

68 See Habermas, *Wahrheit und Rechtfertigung*, Introduction, and the contributions on the topic of "naturalism and

natural history" in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 50 (2002), pp. 857–927.

69 Georg Lohmann ("Die Herausforderung der Ethik durch Lebenswissenschaften und Medizin," MS, 2002, p. 19) characterizes this point in my argument in the following way: "The indirect *moral* connection to his *ethical* argument is able to claim a greater weight than an argument based directly on a worldview."

70 L. Siep, "Moral und Gattungsethik," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 50, no. 1 (2002).

71 R. Spaemann, "Habermas über Bioethik," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 50, no. 1 (2002).

## Faith and Knowledge

1 H. Prantl, "Das Weltgericht," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Sept. 18, 2001.

2 J. Rawls, *Politischer Liberalismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), pp. 132–41, English edition *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); R. Forst, "Toleranz, Gerechtigkeit, Vernunft," in Forst (ed.), *Toleranz* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000), pp. 144–61.

3 W. Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (1963; Altascadero, Calif.: Ridgeview, 1991), p. 38.

4 P. M. Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

5 J. D. Greenwood (ed.), *The Future of Folk Psychology: Intentionality and Cognitive Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Introduction, pp. 1–21.

6 W. Detel, "Teleosemantik. Ein neuer Blick auf den Geist?" *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 49, no. 3 (2001), pp. 465–91. Teleosemantics, based on neo-Darwinian assumptions and conceptual analyses, aims to show how the normative consciousness of living beings who use symbols and represent facts might have developed. According to this approach, the intentional frame of the human mind originates from the selective advantage of certain behaviors (e.g. the bees' dance) which are interpreted as representations by those belonging to the same species. Against the background of normalized copies of this kind, divergent behaviors are, then, supposed to be interpretable as

misrepresentations – which provides a natural explanation for the origins of normativity.

7 W. Detel, "Haben Frösche und Sumpfmenschen Gedanken? Einige Probleme der Teleosemantik," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 49, no. 4 (2001), pp. 601–26.

8 These research strategies account for the complexity of new properties (of organic life or of man) emerging on higher evolutionary stages by abstaining from describing processes of the higher evolutionary stage in concepts which apply to processes of a lower evolutionary stage.

9 A. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, trans. J. Anderson (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

10 The Preface to the first edition of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) begins with the sentence: "So far as morality is based upon the conception of man as a free agent who, just because he is free, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it stands in need neither of the idea of another Being over him, for him to apprehend his duty, nor of an incentive other than the law itself, for him to do his duty" (I. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. and introd. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (La Salle, III.: Open Court, 1934), p. 3).

11 Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

12 G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. W. Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977).

13 T. W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. H. W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 136.

14 T. W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 247.

15 M. Horkheimer, "Kritische Theorie und Theologie" (Dec. 1968), pp. 507–9 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 14, at p. 508.

16 J. Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in J. Derrida and G. Vattimo (eds), *Religion* (Cambridge: Polity; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 18; cf. also J. Derrida, "Den Tod geben," in A. Haverkamp (ed.), *Gewalt und Gerechtigkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 331–445.