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HABERMAS'S RETREAT FROM HERMENEUTICS[1] SYSTEMS INTEGRATION, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMATION

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A. Introduction

Theories endeavouring to articulate what a society is and why and how people are organized in social forms cannot merely proceed, as if the very questions raised by them had never been articulated in the society itself. Societal members enjoy and deplore the associations they have with others. They regard them as impositions, fearsome encumbrances and threats, or as provocative and stimulating possibilities to further their projects.

"What the society is" as a multiplicity of associations between humans is constantly dealt with in such terms. The question is dealt with in other ways as well: planners in government, industry or the universities may speak of and "analyse" possibilities for development, risks of crisis, the failure and promise of social intervention. Depending on where one is located in these various kinds of discourses, one will find one or the other way to address society plausible. Among them the sense of being free to articulate what the society is stands out as an interesting sense: for it echoes the belief present in many societies that a society, i.e., an arrangement of living with others, is not worth much if it does not at least give everyone the right, in principle, to speak about what the society is by addressing modes of association with others as desirable or undesirable, oppressive or supportive. Discourses in which the society is addressed in these ways are thoroughly practical. "Society" is the topic to which we express our approval or disapproval. This sense is one of the elementary meanings of living socially, of inhabiting a world held in common. Interpretations which originate in and play back into practical orientation as the way in which human affairs become social provide these senses; they always display a recognition of the kind of social membership at issue, be it familial, personal, or public.

Questions as to what the society is are mostly posed in the framework of everyday life, and the cultural traditions present both in it and through it. They are the subject matter, in one way or another, of our conversations and deliberations. These conversations do not seem to proceed as if we could ever raise the issue as to "what the society is" as a purely theoretical issue. How society works, what it is, are questions which arise most forcefully on those occasions when we want to determine the kind of life the society provides for us or we can claim from and in it. Here the issue of articulation, one's right to

question the society and what it is with respect to what one wants and needs, arises most forcefully.

Consider the case of the women's movement.[2] Its questions to the society do not arise from considering "what the society is" as a topic of theoretical discourse. There was no concern, especially in the initial phase of the movement, with determining the features of social rules and conventions, as if they were permanent objects (how society has often proceeded since Durkheim). The concern was and is with questions about the society by inquiring into what and who it allows or prevents from being. There are definite experiences which give rise to the questions: the experience of domestic confinement, being left out from public discourse, of economic dependency, etc. An analysis seeking practical answers of how the society is accounted for in and by these practically motivated questions would be a *hermeneutics of the social life-world*, relying on the sense or lack of sense the society has for its members. It would seek out the strongest questions put to the society as the most revealing ones. Rather than *describing* the social life-world the inquirer pursuing hermeneutic lines would want to appear as a partner in discourse about these questions. He or she could only do so by revealing his or her own preoccupations to the society and putting them to a test in relation to all those views, which are not the ones he or she finds naturally acceptable. Here argument and critique would begin. Questions as to what the society is, what methods to employ in its academic and intellectual study, would be grounded in the recognition that one has already taken a position when faced with particular claims, even if one cannot derive them from or regard them as sanctioned in general by a set of norms elaborated in explicit argumentational discourse. But the discourse and argument have also been surpassed by events, activities, further discourse. All this is to say, with Gadamer, that unavoidably "being" reaches beyond consciousness.[3] To put it differently: explicit argument, distinguishing for example, between "the subjectivity of opinion, on the one hand" and the "utterances and norms that appear with a claim to generality,"[4] while often needed, cannot be the basis of life lived in common. One would become confused, lose one's grip on every day events, were one to orient to this idea of argument for agreement on what needs doing and may be done as the only means for establishing a life together. While the women's movement has in fact made problematical much that once passed as normal in the relation between men and women, it also attempts to establish once again ways in which women can take something for granted about themselves. Even the study of women's situation in the past does not merely sever the interest of emancipating women from this past for the sake of identities as yet to be shaped. It also requires the assimilation and productive continuation of this past.[5] All this is to show how questions addressed to the society are first and foremost practical. This is especially the case if these questions arise from within social movements.

I realize, of course, that I may be sidestepping the relationship between theory and practice as the issue for emancipatory social movements at least since the time of Marx. And undeniably the Marxist tradition has been deeply conerned to show that the practice of the struggle for emancipation it recommended is rational. I cannot properly address this issue in this paper. What I say will be in preparation for a fuller treatment.

I have chosen to discuss some aspects of Habermas's social theory, because in it the relation between theory and practice is posed as the problem of the relation between theoretical and practical discourse and as a problem of the relation of two modes of social organization: social integration and systems integration. This approach is represented in Habermas's work from *Legitimation Crisis* to the essays in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. It is foreshadowed in the introduction to *Theory and Practice*. I address all three texts. Addressing the recent work of Habermas in these terms is also important because there are tasks for inquiry which follow from it. Society ("what the society is"), for him, is addressed in systems-theoretical concepts as well as in terms of a life-world perspective. In fact, the argument of *"Legitimation Crisis"* is intended to bring both together. My argument is that the life-world perspective is never fully developed. Habermas's theory puts the society together as taking a course of development which suggests the possibility (for a theorist) of practically and politically consequential discourses in accordance with its level of development. There is never any serious attempt to find out what the society is to those who already question it. In one sense, everyone questions. In another sense, the society is most practically in question for those who find it difficult to live in it. Not everyone is included here. Social theory should address those groups in society who are in this position and have already begun to articulate their situation. This position would be the one taken by politically and existentially radicalized hermeneutics. It would *express* the estrangement from traditional culture for which Habermas argues theoretically when he inquires into how rational contemporary society is (and is not). This radicalized hermeneutics would also express the impossibility of inhabiting traditional culture as confidently as Gadamer's hermeneutics recommends. But it would share the latter's sense that no culture worth speaking about can be thought of as *grounded* in the explicit weighing of arguments and in only one process of deliberation (a discourse of a theoretical kind debating "claims"). If estrangement from traditional culture is not *lived*, it cannot merely be produced by the cognitively pure form of argument Habermas singles out.

I mentioned earlier that "planners" speak of the society with reference to development, social intervention and the like. We may now add, they also understand it as a system. This understanding leads into an important additional consideration. The social sciences often appear to be sciences of

planning. The systems-theory of society Habermas discusses critically and which he incorporates in *Legitimation Crisis* in particular, oftens reads as if written for purposes of social planning. In fact, it endorses this perspective as its own. Gains in rationality in the society have their "feedback" on the theory which describes these gains. The theory becomes their instrument and mouthpiece. This concept makes Luhmann's work so distinctive.[6] In this paper I am implicitly raising the issue of whether countering systems theory by incorporating it is the right way to proceed. Such incorportion is what Habermas does. His theory may have suffered for embracing it too strongly. While systems theory may describe something like the logic of rational administration in "advanced" capitalist society, Habermas may have developed a different logic, not of use to and for rational administrations, but for theoreticians who analyse the relation between those systems and the life-world. This logic leaves out of the picture those who want and must begin with the world of daily life as the place in which "what the society is" arises as an issue. As thoroughly administered as this "world" may be, it is *in it*, that one can see what *being* administered comes to. This involvement creates a different perspective from that analysed in terms of models and idealizations. Explicating communication in "the life-world" by reference to models and idealizations is not an explication of the lives lived in that world nor of the ways in which those lives are expressed. Could no power of resistance be found in them, however?

Rather than instructing us on how to identify these powers by pointing to the possibility that social norms can be called in question in terms of an ideal and hypothetical model (as Habermas does, cf. the discussion of "the advocacy model of critical theory" in this paper and the discussion of stimulation), we could choose examples of resistance as it occurs. We would have to begin with what is lived and practised — no matter if it can already be justified universally. We would have to begin with lives as lived as already raising a claim. Whoever cannot respond, for example, to women's perception of exclusion and dependence as matters detrimental to them, will not learn to respond very deeply by acknowledging that women's interests are generalizable, despite their having thus far been suppressed. One would neither understand *what* women wish to articulate as their interest nor their need for articulation. Examining whether their interests are justified because they are generalizable, would do violence to women's own view that their interests must be recognized because they are theirs first. Feminism would not have got off the ground had it not defied universalizing procedures in the first place in order to get a hearing for itself.[7] This example points to the significance of articulation as a phenomenon in its own right, over against the rational appraisal of what *is* already articulated. Hermeneutics understands this. Since the early Heidegger hermeneutics has focussed on what it means to

bring matters to speech. It has acknowledged that bringing to speech means adopting a view of the world or, in other words, a practical position. In this sense, we may say that Gadamer may be vindicated over Habermas, without having to endorse Gadamer's traditionalism.

Indirectly, the working out of radical hermeneutics is at issue in this paper. For the most part, however, I shall address some of Habermas's work in the form of an immanent analysis and critique. I will begin with the attempts of McCarthy and Bernstein to protect Habermas's programme against the argument that there is no longer room in it for "hermeneutics" or "pre-theoretical fore-knowledge of the society."

B. Social Integration, Systems Integration and Rational Reconstruction

T. McCarthy and R. Bernstein, two recent commentators on Habermas's sustained effort to reconcile a *Sinnverstehen* approach with the reconstruction of the basic elements of social systems, have argued that in spite of the increasing emphasis in Habermas's work on the reconstruction of developmental processes, individual and social, he still manages to retain a hermeneutic orientation.

Thomas McCarthy has attempted to make the case in the following way: Habermas attempts to do justice to 'subjectivistic' approaches in social inquiry by arguing:

> If and in so far as the pre-theoretical knowledge of members is constitutive for the social life context, basic categories and research techniques must be chosen in such a way that a reconstruction of this fore-knowledge is possible.[8]

"Objectivistic" approaches that attempt to neutralize this fore-knowledge as prescientific, culture-bound, and often misleading are plausible as well on Habermas's own grounds.[9] "If and in so far as the pre-theoretical knowledge of members expresses illusions concerning a social reality that can be grasped only counter-intuitively, these basic concepts and research techniques must be chosen in such a way that the fore-knowledge rooted in the interests of the life-world remains harmless."[10]

A fundamental motive for developing a general theory of communication (as a theory of socialisation based on the delineation of universal competences such as cognitive, communicative and interactive competences) therefore arises out of the need to overcome the "particularistic, situation-bound character of traditional hermeneutics,"[11] which is not in a position, for

Habermas, to furnish the concepts and techniques needed for the neutralisation and/or criticism of prejudices, illusions, and ideologies implicit in the pre-theoretical knowledge of societal members. For the hermeneutical interpreter is affected by these as long as he accounts for his own activities of interpretation as situation-bound, since he shares the fundamentally practical nature of the pre-theoretical knowledge of societal members.[12]

If one follows McCarthy in this characterisation of hermeneutics, a general theory of communication would provide theoretical grounding for the hermeneutic interpreter who remains situation-bound. It would do so by fixing "the underlying universal-pragmatic structures"[13] both 'horizontally' and 'vertically' i.e., in terms of a formal conceptual characterisation of cognitive, linguistic, and interactive competence, and in terms of the developmental logic of world-views.

For developments in both dimensions exhibit "rationally reconstructible patterns": they are said to be analysable as "directional learning processes that work through discursively redeemable validity claims. The development of productive forces and the alteration of normative structures follow, respectively, logics of growing theoretical and practical insight."[14]

Richard Bernstein as well has recently argued that "understanding human action with reference to the meaning that action has for agents" is compatible with a programme for social and political theory, which also attempts to "exhibit regularities and correlations" of social and political practices.[15] An explanation of these regularities is needed in order to determine "whether these are systematic distortions or ideological mystifications in the agent's understanding of what they are doing. We must investigate the causes of these distortions and mystifications."[16] Thus, even allowing for various kinds of qualifications applying to a causal-analytic or empirical approach in the study of the relation between the self-understanding of agents and what underlies, produces, and/or distorts this self-understanding, Bernstein, McCarthy, and, most of all, Habermas, emphatically assert the need for the construction of a theory of society which sets out to discover "rationally reconstructible patterns" as much in what agents say and do as what makes the saying and doing possible. In effect, among his works published to date, Habermas has taken a resolute step toward this position. The work, *Legitimation Crisis,* contains an argument "to the effect that the basic contradiction of contemporary capitalism issues in crisis tendencies that can be empirically ascertained."[17] In the more recent essays "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures" as well as "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism,"[18] Habermas attempts to lay the foundations for such theorems by examining various approaches toward a theory of the social and historical development of the human species in terms of a theory of "universals of societal development" or "highly abstract principles of social

organization."[19] He says: "By principles of organization I understand innovations that become possible through developmental-logically reconstructible stages of learning, and which institutionalize new levels of societal learning."[20] In accordance with the research strategy proposed by Habermas, which requires the integration of findings from a historically oriented social anthropology[21] and analyses of the origin of the state,[22] social integration is reconceptualized in terms of changes in its forms, such as the replacement of kinship systems with the state.[23] Habermas here returns to an initial distinction between practical knowledge and technical or instrumental (as well as strategic) knowledge[24] in claiming that only reference to "knowledge of a moral-practical sort"[25] can explain the change of one form of social integration to another.

Yet "knowledge of a moral-practical sort" is in turn to be analysed in terms of the abstract organisational principles of the society mentioned earlier, among which "developmental-logical recontructions of action competences" belong.[26] Individuals acquire their competences by growing into the symbolic structures of their life-worlds, a process of development which passes through levels of communication (three of which Habermas distinguishes). These formulations resume the discussion in *Legitimation Crisis* in which the concept of organizational principles of societies had been introduced and already connected with the conception of a developmental logic, taking up the comparison of an ontogenetic theory of development (e.g., Piaget and Kohlberg) with a theory of the logic of social development on the level of systems-structures (systems-integration).[27] In "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," however, problems of systems integration are no longer merely analysed in terms of threats to and capacities of societal steering mechanisms, such as the interlocking functions of state (a democratically, even if marginally, legitimated form of government) and public administration but in terms of a reformulation of the Marxian concept of modes of production.[28] Marxian analysis is defended against various rival theories and described as superior to the neo-evolutionism inherent in a theory of social systems which regards the increase in internal complexity of social systems, the corresponding reduction of external complexity, and the interaction of both as criteria sufficient for the appraisal of social progress[29] (e.g., in modernization theories).[30] Critical discussions focus, of course, on the teleological conception of history inherent in historical materialism. Not just the reconstruction but even the *rehabilitation* of historical materialism is possible for Habermas, if one considers that "Marx judged social development not by increases in complexity but by the stage of the development of productive forces and by the maturity of the forms of social intercourse."[31] From here Habermas proceeds to reformulate the stages of development of productive forces as "progress of learning ability" in the

dimension of objectivating knowledge, to be kept distinct from progress in moral-practical insight. Apparently, Habermas joins his earlier position regarding the distinction between the objectivating methods of natural science and the development of moral and practical consciousness integral to the hermeneutical sciences[32] with the distinction between social integration and systems integration.

But neither "The Development of Normative Structures" and "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism" nor *Legitimation Crisis* take up the full set of intriguing as well as puzzling arguments contained in the introduction to *Theory and Practice,*[33] which cannot be avoided by any student of Habermas's work who is interested in the complex interaction of the various components of his theory. These arguments are of particular importance because here, under the title "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," Habermas introduces the central problem of all of his substantive as well as methodologically oriented writings: how can a theory of society and of politics, which endorses and subscribes to stringent criteria for theory formation, be practically enlightening as well, especially if it is an essential requirement of processes of enlightenment, that they be so practically accomplished that in the end there be no superiority of those possessing theoretical knowledge over those who do not — "In a process of enlightenment there can only be participants?"[34]

In this paper I claim that the application of stringent criteria for theory formation in some systematic way is *not compatible* with the requirement for theories to be practically enlightening. In fact, I shall argue implicitly, in accordance with the hermeneutical position adopted, that theories of society, if understood in the rigorous sense of being correctives (prior to their application) to the ordinary (or extraordinary) practical knowledge members of the society have usually acquired of that society's affairs, cannot, in principle, be practically enlightening. It follows that the asymmetry between those pursuing the 'enlightening' and those to be enlightened (the practically oriented members of the society) can never be removed, in spite of Habermas's claim that it only requires self-correlation. These questions will be raised with respect to the introduction to *Theory and Practice* in conjunction with an analysis of some of the arguments contained in *Legitimation Crisis.*

Primarily I select issues surrounding the introduction of the concepts of systems integration and social integration from the latter work. The discussion is largely oriented toward raising questions concerning the employment of these concepts and the stringency they may possess as well as the distorting effect they may have in the context of a theory which intends to be practically enlightening — to make reference to Habermas's avowed intention.

Implicitly an answer will be given to the questions raised by Habermas (and

McCarthy) about the validity of a hermeneutical position in social theory. I will attempt to give this answer in political terms rather than just methodological ones. This attempt will also clearly point to concerns which are not significantly present in the texts most representative of hermeneutics.

I argue that a radical hermeneutical position is closer to a notion of praxis than Habermas's recommendations for the reconstruction of the pre-theoretical knowledge of societal members. For, in my conception, critical reflection will be placed within the context of social situations for which we interpretively account while attempting to transform them. Action orienting knowledge is made radically dependent upon situationally generated knowledge, such that any general knowledge of the society, be it of rationally reconstructible patterns of underlying patterns or a procedure for assessing the validity of social norms in general, comes to no more than practically generated fore-knowledge ("pre-understanding," to use Gadamer's phrase) when one is faced with the exigencies of situations which make determinate claims on practical orientation. To put the case differently: when one acts practically, any theoretical foreknowledge will be appraised in terms of criteria which apply to 'any' knowledge (e.g., the knowledge of situations generated practically in previous situations of action) once it enters into the context of practical orientation. It is like the case of the interpreter of cultural documents: his understanding of cultural documents in general amounts to little when he is overwhelmed by the significance of what a particular document tells him, such that the very nature of what a cultural document *is*, is revealed to him anew. Similarly, a general knowledge of the society, gained by suspending "the compulsion to act" (Habermas) will not remain what it was when the necessity to act prevails once again, when once again actors cannot but recognize themselves as beings hopelessly yet, also, characteristically bound by the circumstances of their lives which, in practical situations, seem to be all that matters.

Theories attempting to explain these practical circumstances in terms of what is happening behind our backs, in terms of what underlies our competent performance of whatever reasoning we do when we are required to reason, or in terms of theories of ideal norms of discourse, looked at from the radicalized hermemeutical perspective which I propose, become merely an additional element in what matters, practically speaking.[35] They do not bring 'what matters practically' and what these concerns are before our view for comprehensive and detailed inspection, before we have even begun to act and as if beginning to act could be postponed till we possess the comprehensive view.

Richard Bernstein, at the end of his *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, states programmatically that "an adequate social and political theory must be empirical, interpretative and critical."[36] We hope to

know, according to Bernstein, how clear action-orienting understandings can emerge, which are based on the secure knowledge of a) what conditions our actions, b) how we interpretively generate self-understanding, and c) how we can employ both practically in order to transcend the present conditions of our lives and the understandings in terms of which we explicate them. Knowing all this would amount to having a comprehensive view. But pursuing it entails the neglect of all that which we already know about what we do and how we do it, a knowledge which is regularly and persistently part of our actions. The knowledge Habermas and Bernstein wish to gain is to free us from illusions. But this freedom could occur only at the cost of losing sight of the action orienting understandings we already possess and which are subject to constant re-evaluation in the course of encountering circumstances which require corrections to our self-understandings in the light of changing conditions. A theory which does not make these practical understandings thematic right from the start will no longer be able to encompass them once that theory is deemed complete enough to be applied to these understandings. A theory which is to possess action orienting force must locate itself in modes of explication in which the need or "compulsion" to act is recognized from the start. It would not be a theory which is only to be applied once it has brought everything before its view which might be thought of as needed, on *theoretical* grounds alone, for theory to have an action orienting force. A theory of society intended to be practically enlightening must locate itself in processes of the practical explication of social situations which themselves already point toward enlightenment as a practical task. A theory interested in the removal of distortions, illusions and misconceptions, must place itself within the context in which they arise and recognize their force in order to be able to cope with them in some practical way. There cannot be a general knowledge of distortions and the like which is intended to be practically effective but which does not expose itself to the *practical* force of illusions, distortions and misconceptions.

Bernstein's recommendations can lead to no more than the expression of the hope that, in the end, we must be able to solve, once and for all, the riddle of how social life is organized. Hermeneutics argues, however, that we are subject to self-deception when we believe that we can separate the knowledge we hope to attain of our practical affairs from the need to prove that knowledge in how we take up our practical affairs. It recognized the priority of practice — and seeks a characterization of knowledge in which knowledge is understood, from the beginning, as the knowledge one has of one's historical situation. The latter arises from the conduct of life itself.

Thomas McCarthy, the second reviewer of Habermas's position considered in the first part of this paper, also endorses Habermas's belief that hermeneutical intuitions are respected, when a theory critical of society

(Habermas's critical theory) combines strictly theoretical elements with a reflection on interpretive processes of social life. He claims:

> that a theory of communicative competence, while introducing theoretical elements into the interpretive process and thus mitigating its radically situational character, does not entail replacing the hermeneutical orientation of the partner in dialogue with a purely theoretical or observational attitude.[37]

There is to be no monopoly on truth on the side of the critical theorist. There remains the interest, the need, the obligation (which of these?), possibly the theoretic requirement for the sake of the completeness of the theory "to come to an understanding with others."

In making this claim, McCarthy ignores the fact that the action orienting force of critical theory, qua *theory*, cannot be assessed by its addressees, *unless* they assess it on its own grounds, in terms of *its* criteria of validity. The theory, however, claims to have anticipated the criteria in terms of which it could become available to societal members who themselves are not engaged in the enterprise of developing a theory. It has, in short, anticipated the need for the continuous discursive examination of action orienting norms as what *all* societal members should be able to orient to *as an outcome* of the theory. However, if one was serious about the radical situational character of *any* understanding of our social situation which we might achieve, one would have to recognise the possibility of *failing* to achieve it as well. A theory could not compensate for or render avoidable such a failure by "introducing theoretical elements into the interpretive process." There is, then, no theoretical guarantee possible for the need to engage in the continuous discursive examination of action orienting norms. The validity, indeed, even the sense of the idea would have to be shown in practical ways to be itself practical.

In what follows, I shall attempt to show how some of Habermas's theorising seems to consist of a systematic avoidance of the radically situation-dependent nature of social inquiry. It is part of the analysis that Habermas characteristically invites the reaffirmation of a hermeneutical position precisely because his own theorising makes it visible as the location toward which all his efforts of systematic theorising are orientated. The reaffirmation of a hermeneutical position, which Habermas both illuminates and occludes, will therefore attempt to come to terms with the political intent implicit in his successive efforts to redesign critical theory. I have indicated in the introduction how hermeneutical reflection can become political. This politicization would be a significant departure from the sense given it so far by, for example, Gadamer and Ricoeur.

C. The Objectivating Use of Reflexive Theories

I shall begin with the introduction to *Theory and Practice.*[38] Here, Habermas addresses the peculiar status of reflexive theories of society. These are theories "designed for enlightenment," where claim to truth is to be tested on various levels. One of those levels is that of scientific discourse, the other is that of successful processes of enlightenment "which lead to the acceptance by those concerned, free of any compulsion, of the theoretically desirable interpretations."[39] Those concerned are all those potentially involved (in terms of what the theory addresses as relevant issues). The objectivating use of such theories, which mean to initiate processes of self-reflection (Hegelian model) is such that the critique of ideology (temporarily) assumes someone to be incapable of dialogue and, thus, a superiority of insight is claimed on the part of those doing ideology-critical work.

Habermas says of this superiority that it requires self-correction because those critical of ideology, observing that others are bound by 'particular' interests, must ultimately put their own critique to the test of universal validation in discourse. This discourse is to be held among all of those whom one can assume should be participants ("all participants")[40] in terms of its own universal norms.

Ultimately, in other words, a critique of ideology is only valid when those who are believed to be subject to ideological delusion themselves agree that they are. For example, in the case of those who are not sufficiently class-conscious, somebody else must speak on their behalf and must, furthermore, speak to them so that they become enlightened as to what they are. Thus, the claim to truth of reflexive theories can only tentatively be confirmed.

We must interpret this view of the limits to claims to truth formulated in reflexive theories (or in theories intending enlightenment, intending the development of a rational identity in the course of becoming conscious of something formerly repressed) as a variation of Habermas's central themes:

1) That a liberated society is one in which there is communication free from domination (i.e., in which social consensus is achieved in an utterly uncoercive manner).
2) That under present conditions this ideal is not a utopian one because its pursuit is the only alternative to a technocratic mode of social control.
3) That it is an ideal the possibility of which all of us have learned to understand implicitly once we have mastered a natural language.
4) That it is also an ideal which we can understand better when we notice that in the course of the evolution of world views toward the discursive validation of social norms there are only two possible directions of development:
   a) the acknowledgement of the idea that the extension of

communication processes beyond all barriers is the only possibility for an uncoercive consensus about social norms; and of the idea that, if there is to be rational consensus in the future, this is the only way of getting it.

or b) the reorientation of all past modes of socialization which have relied on the internalisation of norms and the acquisition of reflective potential, so that these processes can be dispensed with and 'consciousness,' reflective awareness, would atrophy.[41]

Much of what Habermas says about the objectivating use of reflexive theories is of immediate importance only for the first and third points, communication free from domination as a social ideal. For this freedom requires that the theorist formulating the social ideal be aware that his own conceptualisation is the conceptualisation of something non-theoreticians cannot only understand, but also something they have implicitly mastered themselves. This understanding would ultimately require that (a) they themselves can show (not *be* shown) that they themselves, as non-critical-theorists, share it; or, if that is not possible, that (b) the theoretician must be able to show that they could master it once ideological obstacles were removed.

Thus a theory intending enlightenment must avoid a new class division — that between the theorist and those theorised about. From the point of view of critical theory the members of both groups are all members of society, and ultimately equal participants in discourses. Habermas, I believe, has only addressed the matter in terms of (b). In other words, he has acknowledged the right of all societal members to be judges of his theory (the theory of an ideal situation of discourse as a social ideal) such that societal members are regarded as capable of recognising the ideal if they free themselves from ideological deceptions. However, he never permits doubts about the basic principle of a theory intending universal emancipation, the principle that enlightenment must be self-accomplished by all those who can take an interest in it. Therefore, he has not really reflected on the following issue: can those of whom it is said that they have implicitly mastered the notion of an ideal situation of discourse, of communication free from domination, ever become critics of the theory? They ought to be able to do so, for it would seem that the principle explicated by the theory should be applicable to itself and should indicate the method of its generation. But if this point is so, then an ideal situation of discourse is itself recognised in an ideal speech situation, validated in such discourse. Given, however, that many members of society have not overtly subscribed to it or cannot be assumed to have done so, as long as they have not participated in the validation process of the theory itself, what point is there suggesting that it is true, that from it critical theory can take its beginning? Critical theory, appropriately self-critical, could never go beyond its beginning without a reification of its notion of truth.

What critical theory can do, before the members of society can be judges of its validity, and what it can only do tentatively, prior to their explicit agreement that what it says is true, is this:

a) Critical theory can abstractly anticipate the content of enlightenment and emancipation, or at least one aspect of it; namely, the requirement that emancipation is only achieved when there is freedom from domination in the sense of unrestricted discourse.

b) Critical theory can indicate which groups in society are the ones whose social position must first be altered, such that they can expand their ability to render problematic those social norms which keep them in a state wherein they have to accept them in a more or less unquestioning way.

Thus the only criterion in addition to the traditional ones which Habermas has taken as his focus, i.e., the indication of the existence of a class-structured society — is the one which points out that there is unequal access to social power by showing the existence of varying capacities to make social norms problematic. Capacity would vary between those who see no need for making social norms problematic but who assume their general capacity to do so, the "ruling class," and those who as the victims of class rule, cannot question norms because they lack the ability.

All these formulations are formulations ensuing from the objectivating use of a reflexive theory. Thus, what I am saying, in a sense, is that Habermas's stringent restrictions upon the objectivating use of reflexive theories apply to his own theory's formulations of such restrictions. If Habermas says that praxis engaging in the strategic action of class strugle is bound to lack theoretical justification, either by reifying a reflexive theory of emancipation or by ignoring questions of justifications, then these restrictions apply to his own theory, only from the opposite point of view. His theory takes the risk of being self-validating and thus suppresses any internal dependence of its own validity upon praxis. It is not so different from the psychoanalyst's theory which, even for Habermas, remains intact in terms of its most general features no matter how little or how much a patient (client) participates in the process of its validation. The only aspect of the theory open to correction, by either acceptance or rejection by the patient, are the conjectures which are interpretations derived from the theory presented by the analyst. But the theory itself is not in question.

Thus, the formulations about class structure to which I alluded above are made when critical theory places itself in a position analogous to that of the psychoanalyst (role-identity with social critic). The latter anticipates patterns of self-development in their typical constellations of conflict and of conflict resolution from the point of view of a general theory of early childhood socialisation processes. As for the analyst in Habermas's accounts, these anticipations are tentative, however strongly evidenced inductively, until the

patient accepts and makes his or her own the interpretive suggestions made by the analyst.

Thus, the elaboration of the genesis and logic of world views and the impossibility of not-learning[42] as considered in *Legitimation Crisis* and "The Reconstruction of Historical Material"[43] are anticipatory formulations on a general theoretical level whose truth ultimately depends upon the consent of those about whom they are formulated. That is, their truth depends upon members' recognition of themselves in the projection of an evolutionary history which they are willing to acknowledge as their own.

I interpret Habermas's distinction between social integration and systems integration in *Legitimation Crisis* as a further variation upon this theme, first made fully thematic in *Knowledge and Human Interest.*[44] I also view it as Habermas's arduous and belaboured effort to arrive at a clarification of the relation of theory and praxis — a relation which, on the one hand, is to avoid the consequences of an instrumental use of Marxian theory; and, on the other hand, is to retain the capability of theorizing so as to give a comprehensive theory of a society as Marx intended it, while also addressing a specific historical situation and actors in it who can make the theory their own in order to direct their action.

My view is that this theoretical program contains *incompatible elements and that something will have to give.* If the theory remains comprehensive, then a situation-specific understanding of a liberating praxis will disappear from its purview. The theory would, therefore, invite instrumental use and lose its self-reflective, critical character; if, instead, the theory recognises the priority of practice, then it must give up any claim to the possibility of enlightening that practice by bringing before it a complete set of objective conditions, the knowledge of which could then orient practice in the most definite way. In other words, I deny that Habermas can fit the non-objectivating, hermeneutical intentions of the theory, which bring it closer to practice than its other elements, into one framework with the objectivating elements aiming at a theory of social evolution.

I shall attempt to provide some illustrations for these critical considerations by briefly examining Habermas's distinction between social and systems integration in *Legitimation Crisis* and what he says about the advocacy role of critical theory.

But before I do so, I want to look at a further aspect of Habermas's theory program, as formulated in the introduction to *Theory and Practice.* It is the distinction between self-reflection and rational reconstructions.[45] "Self-reflection leads to insights due to the fact that what previously has been unconscious (the ideological determinants of action) is made conscious in a manner rich in practical consequences. Analytic insights intervene in life."[46] "Reconstructions deal with anonymous rule systems, which any subjects can

comply with, insofar as they have acquired the corresponding competence with regard to themselves. Reconstructions thus do not encompass subjectivity, the experience of reflection."[47] "They only contribute to the theoretical development of self-reflection, which has a merely indirect relation to the emancipatory interest of knowledge."[48] *Legitimation Crisis,* I claim, is a book which only contributes to this latter task. In doing so, it is not at all a politics in the search of the political,[49] nor does it achieve a re-politicisation of the relations of production as Schroyer claims.[50] For it only shows that perhaps the relations of production can again be politicized, and, that there are propitious circumstances for it. More the book cannot say, since everything else is a matter of doing, which also involves speaking (but rhetorical and discursive speech in situations of conflict in particular, i.e., the performative use of language). It cannot be a politics in search of the political until it has found an anchorage point for its politics such as may be found in protest and withdrawal potentials among adolescent youths.[51] Yet this anchoring point in praxis is only pointed to from the outside and is, thus, discovered in an objectivating use of the theory. Thus, again, Habermas does not speak from the point of view of a situated praxis of liberation.

Habermas in *Legitimation Crisis* only contributes to the politics of theorizing, making us conscious of theories as ideological, and of reviewing, and designing crisis theorems. In making crises thematic, critical theory tries to show that there is still the objective possibility of crises. It does not prove that there is or will be a crisis. It is important to note, against anyone for whom it is necessary to point to this possibility,a crisis of capitalism. (In its theoretical formulation this possibility would also theoretically justify the applicability of the term 'capitalist' to advanced industrial societies). The possibility of crisis is only actually pointed out to a systems theory denying this possibility. Habermas does so by turning systems theoretical concepts toward topics which systems theory attempts to discredit. For systems theory generates a terminology which allows it to treat society as a whole (as a subject, as an organism, a self-regulating system) — crisis-states of which can always be compensated for with adaptive mechanisms. Critical theory attempts to defeat it on its own grounds. It shows how there are limits to these adaptive capacities of systems integration, and where crisis will emerge from the point of view of an analysis making systems integration thematic. Yet crisis, even the crisis of a society in its totality, cannot be articulated merely from this perspective. It is also to be made thematic in terms of social integration. How does this integration become possible? Habermas makes these claims in *Legitimation Crisis.* Appealing to the pre-scientific use of the concept 'crisis,' he says: in ordinary usage "the crisis cannot be separated from the viewpoint of the one undergoing it," and further "Only when members of a society experience structural alterations as critical for continued existence and feel

their social identity threatened can we speak of crisis."[52] Thus the concept of social integration can only be made thematic by reference to members' knowledge of it. Yet in his 'official' introduction of the concept (suggesting how it would be employed in theoretical context), Habermas glosses over a full explication of the notion of social integration by reference to members' pre-theoretical mastery of it. He says:

> We speak of social integration in relation to the systems of institutions in which speaking and acting subjects are socially related. Social systems are seen here as life worlds which are symbolically structured. What becomes thematic here, are 'normative structures both as values and institutions of society.'[53]

Events then are to be analyzed in terms of "dependency on functions of social integration" while "the non-normative components of the system serve as limiting conditions."[54] Habermas claims that here he is pursuing a life-world perspective. Yet the claim is not so. For nowhere does Habermas introduce as a systematic basis of theorizing the way in which crises of social integration are articulated by non-theoreticians. Yet his own perspective requires that their own articulation be decisive for a statement about the existence of a crisis. Nowhere does he show how subjects in speaking and acting relate themselves to one another in such a way that there can be institutions which relate subjects socially.[55] This weakness is so because Habermas at once focusses on a feature of our speaking (not even our acting) which we do not ordinarily recognize or know about — the fact that social reality consists in recognized, often counter-factual, validity claims.[56] The crucial issue here is what recognition would amount to and why it has to be stated as a feature of social reality. I take it that such recognition must be so stated because it is not unequivocally recognized.

What is the problem?

1. Habermas makes social integration thematic as if one could only speak about crises when there are social members who refer to it as the state they are in — when they say they experience it or indicate they do, such that we can interpret them as saying it. This position could be interpreted as a suggestion to limit the theorist's, any social theorist's, claims to what he can know about crises to the same knowledge about crises which is already possessed by those about whom he theorizes.
2. But given Habermas's qualifications, this is not possible. For (a) he actually makes social integration and its breakdown in the form of crises only thematic in terms of institutional systems, "in which speaking and acting subjects are

socially related."[57] He does not analyse how those organized in institutions actually make them 'things' to be organized into. In this sense, Habermas actually misses the life world perspective. Furthermore, (b) he discusses the normative structures as if, apparently, they can be analysed by the theoretician without reference to how they are held to be valid by those orienting themselves in terms of them. Habermas uses functionalist terms: normative structures function as maintaining social consensus and individual and social identity. Again, the theoretician speaks, drawing upon a vocabulary and mode of analysis which is not grounded in the life-historical experience and articulation of individuals and groups who are faced with a crisis in terms of their own interpretive accounts of it.[58]

3. Thus, Habermas can speedily proceed to look for further and loftier tasks of integration. Here it becomes the task of integrating social integration and systems-integration in order to reconcile the never explicated but merely mentioned life-world perspective with a system perspective, referring to the steering performances of a self-regulated system — this being the other possible formulation of society as an object of theoretical inspection. The possibility of a systems-theoretical and functional-structural analysis of systems structures, sub-systems, control centers, etc., I shall leave aside. It is obvious that, in articulating it by following and adjusting Luhmann's work to his purposes, Habermas does not propose the articulation of a life-world perspective.

What I point to here, however, is the fact that he has made a proper articulation of the life-world perspective almost impossible. He has formulated the issue of the life-world in such a way that nothing but the task of systems integration and social integration and the integration of both in one theory can result.

My review of and my critical comments about Habermas's formulation of social integration as an issue for critical theory beside and in addition to a concern with systems-integration was meant to demonstrate two things:

1. The theoretical articulation of crisis which claims that it itself is dependent upon the articulation of a crisis situation by those undergoing it points to the very close connection between social experience and theoretical reflection at which critical theory must aim. It is another illustration of a point made throughout. Habermas articulates theoretical reflection as work which has merely conjectural claims to truth until those about whom the claims are made consent that what the theory says is true. They both must play the same language game. Yet *it cannot be the language of theory which they both share.*

Habermas's theoretical articulation of crisis also shows that an articulation of systems integration requires an articulation of problems of social integration. What would be entailed by it and should be said about it? I shall come to this question shortly.

2. Habermas has distorted the intentions of his theory. In *Legitimation Crisis* he has analysed social integration as an aspect of systems integration or as a sub-system (in the language of systems-theory) of the controlling social system imperatives. Social integration turns out to be the 'functional' task of the socio-cultural system. It supplies motivations and legitimacy of certain kinds. Thus it becomes more difficult to see critical theory as a reflexive theory, a theory which aims at the experience of reflection as an experience of the suspension and abolition of reification. This difficulty arises because social integration problems are subordinated to a formulation of systems imperatives as organizational principles of the society, which can only themselves be formulated in their abstract character by abstracting from the way in which they are interpretively generated in situations of interaction.

Witness Habermas's latest suggestions[59] that Marx's account of social evolution must be supplemented by analysing the origin of capitalist organisation not only in terms of mode of production structures defined predominantly in categories of the human relation to nature in work, but also in terms of kinship-orders and the evolution of discourse as a systems-learning mechanism. Here the category of interaction, equally original and fundamental as that of labour for him, is presented in its reified version. Habermas does not reflect on his own theory as a mode of interaction with societal actors where both are either subject to and involved in a shared practical context of communal life from the beginning, or trapped in antagonistic structures of experience.

What results is that Habermas actually reformulates critical theory as a whole. It becomes a theory of social evolution, analysing the change of societies over the course of history in terms of the transformation of the organizational principles of these societies (a shorthand or formula-like formulation for complex historical states of affairs). In other words, critical theory as a theory of systems and social integration is a reconstructionist theory. In finding organizational principles it finds anonymous rule systems. And, in Habermas's words, it contributes only indirectly to emancipation. For it contributes only to the theoretical development of self-reflection, not to the formulation of the interdependence of action and reflection in situations of action where we conduct ourselves as doers and speakers, such that both represent our will to bring about something. At this point, critical theory is an objectivating theory, not a reflexive one.

But a definite criticism must be held in abeyance until we have examined Habermas's proposal for critical theory, now no longer interpreting it as a systems theory but as a reflexive theory. This matter is at issue when we analyse the advocacy role of critical theory and the model of the suppression of the interests capable of generalization.

D. The Advocacy Role of Critical Theory

The advocacy role of critical theory consists, Habermas says, in

> ascertaining generalizable, though nevertheless suppressed interests in a representatively simulated discourse between groups that are differentiated from one another by articulated, or at least virtual opposition of interests.[60]

Such a simulated discourse can only have hypothetical results (*vide* my preceding discussion), since political actors, "having to account with their life histories for new interpretations of social needs"[61] are the ones whose confirmation of the results of the above-mentioned discourse is decisive.

Yet, critical theory in assuming its advocacy role does not anticipate the outcome of the discourse. For built into it is the model of the suppression of the generalizable interests. It is guided by the question:

> How would the members of a social system, at a given stage in the development of productive forms, have collectively and bindingly interpreted their needs (and which norms would they have accepted as justified) if they could and would have decided on organization of social intercourse through discursive will-formation, with adequate knowledge of the limiting conditions and functional imperatives of their society?

The crucial phrase in this passage, and the one determining the validity of the "advocacy model" is this: "How *would* the members" have interpreted their needs "if they *could* and *would* have decided . . ." through discursive will-formation. This phrase definitely implies that, so far, they have not formulated their will in this fashion.

Critical theory will do it for them according to the advocacy model. It will do so:

1) by articulating interests which are opposed (sense unspecified),
2) by simulating the discourse representatively (this phrase remains unexplained, but it must mean that everyone's demands can be articulated),
3) by providing adequate knowledge of limiting conditions,
4) by finding suppressed interest and
5) by identifying these suppressed interests as generalizable.

Note that, according to the premise, the interest suppressed is an interest in universal discursive validation of social norms. For, so far, members of social systems have not and may not even have wanted to decide about the organization of social intercourse discursively.

The advocacy role of critical theory is carried out in terms of this premise. It will be retroactively validated, should interests be found which can be generalized and which are suppressed. Yet, since this effort itself has never been made, except in a clearly limited way, the interest which is generalizable and has been suppressed is an interest in the very discourse which will determine, contingent upon its tentative completion, generalizable yet suppressed interests.

In other words, the conclusion states what the premise states — it is not a conclusion. It can simply be stated in the form: "There are generalizable, yet suppressed interests." One can know that these exist because reflection on this principle is not always possible at all times in society. Thus, since this principle itself is suppressed, there are generalizable, yet suppressed interests. This of course, very much sounds like a circular argument, unless we can interpret the terms "not always possible" in a way which would warrant the introduction of the term "suppressed". This term must be defined by reference to what can/ought to be generalized, but is not.

The circularity of reasoning consists in the following: that the principle of a discursive validation of all social norms is suppressed can be seen, according to Habermas, when we note that it cannot be applied whenever and wherever we think it is necessary. Ideally, it should always be possible with respect to all social norms to render them problematic. Yet why should or ought it be possible? This possibility requires the invocation of an ideal situation of discourse as a norm.[62] Therefore, the very principle which is suppressed must also be recognized and thus found not to be suppressed. What is suppressed makes the recognition of suppression possible. This reasoning is not a vicious circle for Habermas, because peculiar to an ideal situation of speech is that it hints at a form of life which, as yet, escapes our conceptual grasp in most respects. Such speech does not escape to the extent that the formal features of language, even though they are dialogue constitutive universals), show the possibility of concealing the principle in their actual use.

What is it that we need in order to fill in what Habermas has left unexplained or undefined? It is knowledge of the concrete empirical and historical conditions under which social norms will usually be determined. This point is not the same as saying that I take the theory of generalizable interests to be valid and am merely looking for a possibility of application. I am saying that its validity itself and *a fortiori* the validity of its outcomes (which Habermas says are hypothetical) are dependent upon an interpretation of such terms as not always possible (as in the phrase: "reflection on this as a

principle is not always possible at all times in society"). For what could they mean? They could mean — "not possible" because there is use of political force or psychological repression, etc. But they could also mean — there are time constraints which obtain as long as human beings exist as temporal beings or as organisms; or which exist as long as people have other interests than an interest in discourse, as they are bound to have.

But, perhaps one could argue that these objections are all pedantic, since Habermas is only formulating a social ideal. Two things will be said in reply to this objection:

1) What does Habermas mean by a social ideal? He means something which is very similar to the practical organization of enlightenment as a political act, although it is less than political action of the kind which even he deems possible — an experimentation with the limits of late capitalism. The advocacy role of critical theory is, in other words, its mode of being political. Yet it has not come around to speaking politically. For there is so much more to know . . .

2) Habermas's argument could perhaps be remedied if we introduce the concept of a (social) "norm" rather than "interest." Thus we would not speak of generalizable interests, but of generalizable norms. But how would that make sense? For norms, if not universal, are something general like principles. And the interest in the universalization of discourse is itself an interest in a principle. Where would it come from? It would arise in a reflection upon principles, itself subject to the rules in which the interest in the generalization of interests would take an interest, on the basis of a discourse completed or nearly complete. Thus, this argument does not help either. In other words, Habermas's argument treats the model of suppressed yet generalizable interests as one which can be theoretically constructed; as if there were no social groups who already have articulated demands for recognition of their interests and of which they can rightly believe must be recognized at least as morally justifiable. For it is clear, let us say, to the poor or to the disadvantaged, that others, better off, do not want to be in their position.[63]

Thus Habermas's principle is useless unless he addresses concrete demands and shows, in concrete cases, that the principle does in fact apply. But then it would have to be formulated differently. Rather than stating that there are interests which cannot be generalized, the principle would have to say that there are some interests which deserve more recognition than other interests. In the case referred to in the previous paragraph, the principle would have to consider the factual circumstance that the being better off of those better off does not, in fact, increase the welfare of those less well off. Thus Habermas makes the error of addressing a principle in its most abstract form. He does not engage in moral, practical, or political discourse, or even critique. He construes a rule for an ideal society and argues on their own level of

abstraction against theories which refuse to recognize such a rule.

Thus, what is said here is that discourse takes an interest in discourse. The interest rational agents can have, once they recognize an ideal situation of discourse as a norm, is only an interest in the continuation of that situation. Our problem here is that Habermas has formulated a norm which is not applicable to action as such. We can never judge the principle in terms of its consequences for action.

I have already argued that critical theory cannot simply be a reconstructionist theory reconstructing anonymous rule systems. Yet *in the consideration of the advocacy role of critical theory, the model is outlined in terms of the criteria developed for the reconstruction of anonymous rules.* Instead of inspecting cases where social norms are rendered problematic by demands for participation in the determination of those social norms, Habermas invents an abstract formula applicable to all such demands but not reflecting any one of them in particular.

Again, Habermas is trapped in an objectivist form of reflection, the very thing against which he argues, when he argues against strategic action on the basis of a reflexive theory. He does protect himself sufficiently against an objectivist use of his theory in strategic action, I believe. But he does not prevent or, rather, he provokes an objectivist understanding of his theory. Such an understanding can hardly be avoided because Habermas does not provide one instance of actual reflecting on a particular social norm. This objection applies although Habermas does in fact speak of instances where presently operative norms may crumble, e.g., when he refers to a possible breakdown of performance — or achievement — ideology,[64] or when he points to the relation between political-administrative planning and demands for participation.

But all these matters, as well as the issue of a class structure which is kept latent, are approached indirectly, objectivistically — in order to indicate crisis zones, not to justify these demands or breakdowns morally or morally-politically. Thus Habermas does not provide an ethical or a practical-political argument against class structure. This omission is damaging in his case, because his theory creates the expectation of such an argument. Rather, he reformulates some classical Marxist arguments. He refines one or the other criterion for the existence of class and takes classical criteria for granted. But he does not give a critique of class society, although he sounds as if he does. He would be better off, I believe, were he to argue in terms of principles, of an ethical kind on the one hand, or in terms of an historical analysis of crisis tendencies on the other. At the moment, his work is ambiguous and the introduction of the idea of linguistic ethics or communication ethics[65] confuses matters further. The idea gives the illusion of a hermeneutical approach where there is none. For such an approach would require that one

reflect in terms of historically contingent situations which set the context for reflection, while in the context itself these conditions are not objectivistically available.

Habermas hints that this is what is to be done when he says (a) that the model of suppressed generalizable interests shows the functional necessity of ideology and the logical possibility only of its critique,[66] and when he states (b) the injustice of the repression of generalizable interests can be recognized in the categories of the interpretive system obtaining at the time.[67] But he fails to see that a critique of ideologies cannot be made plausible by showing its logical possibility. Such an attempt presupposes what it is to show, that an interest in universal discourse is suppressed.

E. The Problematic Character of Social and Political Theorising in *Legitimation Crisis*

I am therefore challenging the view that arguments for a critique of ideologies can be developed in a theory of crisis (of late capitalism). For the issue is not to show either the historical/political or the logical possibility of this critique, but its moral justifiability and its pragmatic viability. Both are missed when one approaches critique in terms of a crisis analysis although each on different grounds and in different ways. The various aspects of a defense of a critique of ideologies which Habermas attempts to combine cannot be brought together without one element of the justification and/or analysis (historical-political) losing out. This loss becomes, perhaps, even clearer when we look at Habermas's comments about Marx in *Legitimation Crisis* and related writings.

Let us assume that something like the proletariat exists and omit all the difficulties involved in "demonstrating" its existence. For Habermas, identification with the oppressed class's will to free itself is based on "pre-theoretical experiences, that is, on 'partisanship,'[68] unless we have arrived at that commitment on the basis of the reflection discussed so far.

Yet Habermas does not view Marx's commitment to the industrial working class as having come about in just that way, as we notice when we follow his formulations in *Legitimation Crisis*. He says:

> In his ingenious examination of the twofold character of commodities, Marx has constructed the relation of exchange and in it the steering mechanism of the market as a reflexive relationship.[69]

In doing so, Habermas has not only attempted to explain how the economic

process of capitalism works, but having analysed its steering mechanisms; he has also attempted to account for class antagonism as a divided ethical totality, i.e., the society as a divided community. The division is to be explicated in terms of the development and/or disruption of moral practical consciousness.

Speaking in terms of a strategy of research — the labour theory of value for example — permits the depiction of problems of systems integration on the level of social integration. Structures of intersubjectivity, interaction contexts, and the formation of collective and individual identities are reached through the analysis of systems-structures. In *Legitimation Crisis*, Habermas says of Marx: "Propositions following from a theory of contradictory capital accumulation can be transformed into action theoretic assumptions of the theory of classes."[70] Marx permits the possibility of retranslating economic processes etc., into social processes among classes. Therefore Marx's theory can be seen as both a theory of the system crisis of capitalism and as a theory formulated from the life-world perspective, as the articulation of class antagonism in terms of the experienced victimisation of the proletariat and in terms of its initial steps towards a politics of emancipation. Thus, while the theory is objective on the systems-level, it becomes partisan and committed to a practical/political point-of-view made out by the theory as the necessary one, when systems-level descriptions are retranslated into propositions asserted by a critique of ideologies. Moreover, the latter claims the competence of reflective penetration of systems-level descriptions by describing the functioning processes not as natural events but as events which are maintained by beliefs which are ideological. For systems-level descriptions describe something as having "the objectivity of natural events" which actually can be altered by practical reflection.

Apart from Habermas's observations about the limits of Marx's proposed program of systems analysis and practically committed reflective and emancipatory critique, there is a noticeable gap in his account. That gap can be shown in the following questions:

1. Where does the system-level description originate? In the practical experience of the victimized group itself? This explanation is not plausible. For the proletariat seems to be in need of an analytical, comprehensive and scientific theory. 2. Does a systems-level description lead to a practical commitment of its own accord? This possibility is doubtful. For then the retranslation alluded to above would not be necessary. 3. In terms of what considerations is the retranslation required and how does the commitment of the theory to the imputed point of view of the proletariat come about?

This latter would be a crucial question. For here the difference between a blatantly instrumentalist conception and a 'humanist' one would emerge. The

blatantly instrumentalist one would be as follows. A systems-analysis shows that there will be crisis. One must identify with those who will emerge as the dominant force. But why, like Marx and Habermas, must one do so, given that one may never witness the arrival of the crisis?

At this point, a theory searching for practical commitment would coincide with the humanist conception of the necessity of identification with the proletariat. It would have to be based on a moral obligation, formulated as an unconventional ethical code and supported by a tentative, yet never fully elaborated, theory of history as well as by prudential considerations. It would always have to take the following form: given that exploitation is inhuman and that it has varying forms and given that circumstances X to Y exist, what ought we do and what can we do, when we do not merely act in terms of self-interest? The 'we' are the theoreticians — 'we,' Marx, Habermas *et al.*, — not the proletariat, for whom ethical imperatives, necessities of survival, and/or desire for self-respect happen to coincide, to be collapsible under certain conditions into one urge.

Habermas confuses the issue once more. He sees Marx as a systems-theoretician and a theorist of class action who reformulates systems-categories into categories of social interaction or social integration. But he fails to mention in his account of Marx and in his own account of late capitalism that action-theoretic categories include moral principles or, at least, a vision of a different life, the concrete content of which would vary with cricumstances. It can only be formulated by reference to the experiences of those who have no such way of life available but who know in some respects that others do. Habermas never analyses social integration or communicative interaction (as distinct from strategic action) in terms of the formulation of moral and political claims in pragmatic contexts of action. In doing so one could see that practical reasoning or discourse contains elements of moral justification as well as of strategic-pragmatic calculation. One sets limits to the other. Furthermore, the notion of an ideal situation of discourse is probably superfluous. This ideal is too ambitious to solve practical dilemmas and too pale to give a powerful, action-motivating image of utopian fulfillment. It is practically impotent. Should we wish to make use of it, we would have to introduce some concrete social norm such as the denial of certain satisfactions or of participation rights. Habermas's ideal seems to ignore the situated and occasioned nature of human activity and talk. It leaves us where we are.

Here one best returns to some of Habermas's earlier problems, such as the distinction between practical questions and technical ones. From here, one could work one's way up once more and leave systems-theory aside. For the explication of communication in everday life is still wanting. As yet, we do not have a theory, or anything like it, which could represent for us how questions of justification arise in the context of daily deliberation and action, questions

concerning the justification of claims about the best life that people might live. Yet a theory, or at least an outline of it, is needed to represent to us perspicuous examples of the kind of reasoning involved in the discussion of such claims in daily deliberation and examples of the effects the intrusion of technical and expert knowledge has had on these processes of deliberation.[71] Once these initial steps have been taken, we may be in a position to diagnose whether, indeed (as Habermas firmly believes), the public discussion of social and political questions has atrophied, and to discern the criteria in terms of which it could be determined that this has occurred. We would know that practical interventions to counteract 'depoliticization' can be initiated for good *practical* reasons. A revitalisation of the 'public sphere' would not necessarily amount to a scientisation of politics or of public opinion either. It could instead be the rehabilitation of a practical reasoning which is situation-bound and context-specific, over against the technocratic universalism of expert opinion.

It is doubtful that systems theory has eliminated potential for this practical reasoning. It is equally doubtful that the realities of political life even remotely resemble the projections of a system-theory which sees itself as the steering and control centre of the rationalization of public administration in advanced industrial societies. For, after all, there is already great distrust of the bureaucratic invasion of the private sphere.

F. The Question of Organization and the Objectivating Use of Reflexive (Critical) Theories

In reviewing Lukács's "Toward a Methodology for the Problem of Organization," Habermas addresses the relationship between theory and organizational issues, which Lukács had once formulated. Lukács states that for pure theory diverse interpretations can "assume the form merely of discussions" where differences in the interpretation of theory live side by side. He then says, for Marxists, "every theoretical direction . . . must immediately be transformed into an organizational issue, if it is not to remain mere theory." Habermas interprets Lukács to mean this: "Theoretical deviations are therefore to be immediately subjected to sanctions on the organizational level."[72] Habermas wants to say that the truth of theories must be testable independently of whether they are useful or whether certain discourses are preparatory for action. He states that Lukács does not recognize the autonomy of theoretical reflection. Therefore, Lukács can speak of the Party as acting representatively for the masses without merely depending on their spontaneity.

Yet I am not so certain that Lukács could not be interpreted differently. He

seems to propose that in Marxist theory one can only determine the validity of theoretical propositions by interpreting them in terms of their potential for the organization of the class struggle. What Habermas objects to is the view that the very necessity of the class struggle — the validity of this concept, and the descriptive account of a society as being a class society — are then removed from the sphere of discursive and other types of examination. The theory will be instrumentally used. The theoretician and party strategist become one and the same. Self-critical reflection upon the principles and theoretical accounts which have been believed to warrant commitment to class struggle in the first place becomes impossible.

Yet such a view is only one possible interpretation of Lukács's claim that Marxists must interpret theoretical questions as organisational issues. For it is quite conceivable that the claim to the unity of theory and praxis requires that every theoretical question be seen also as an organisational one. The meaning of 'organisation' would then be the practical, experimental testing of the theory by trying to enact claims for the need of emancipation. Here the claim to validity of the theory can only be established if it proves itself in practice, that is, if it permits the interpretation of situations practically encountered as susceptible to an interventionist practice of some kind.

Habermas comes to his negative conclusions about Lukács, because he seems to adopt the following schema for his interpretation of Marxism:

1. Marxism is a general theory of society, formulated as a theory of social systems and their evolutionary history.
2. The theory is guided by practical intentions directing its attention to *loci* of possible emancipatory struggle.
3. These locations of possible struggle can be made out in advance on a systems level discourse by the theory.
4. Once this has been done, a practice can be initiated.

But, in my view, this account of how a commitment to emancipation comes about is erroneous. This account results (1) from a preoccupation with correcting Marxist theory, with making it respectable as a theory, and (2) an overreaction to voluntarist practice aiming at the "overthrow of the system."

In other words, Habermas expresses doubts that there can ever be simultaneously a theory sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to warrant the inference for praxis that "the system can be overthrown," or even to warrant the prediction of what specific system-transforming effects particular types of practice can have. He also refuses to sanction "revolutionary practice" as Lukács endorses it, because, for Habermas, in his analysis of late capitalism, one cannot be certain at all of the justifiability of its interventionist intentions until one has a sufficiently comprehensive and detailed theory. How could we interpret Lukács's suggestions so that something less menacing results than what Habermas finds in it, and also, than what was made of it in

the history of Soviet Marxism?

I would suggest that one begin with a reflection upon the origins of a practical commitment to emancipation and emancipatory struggle. These origins can only be found in practical experiences which then are interpreted in terms of practical norms entailing a claim to universality. In other words, instead of beginning with a theory of the universal norms implicitly recognised by speakers of natural languages, one could begin with situations in which the effort to develop a discourse about some taken-for-granted norm is frustrated. Or one begins with situations in which norms and actions deviate one from the other (or are interpreted as deviating) as this becomes visible to someone or to a group reflecting on their relation. We have a particularly strong case for this reflection when these someones or this group are in fact told that the actions in question are appropriately sanctioned by the norms. In all these cases, it cannot be denied that any effort to either problematize norms or their relation to actions might be construed as implicitly appealing to something like an ideal situation of discourse.

But, there is no reason for a theory which intends emancipation practically, and thus, in some sense, also organizationally to require the *explicit* statement of an ideal situation of discourse as a norm. Women, for example, as I discussed in the introduction, argue that in the past and even now they have been excluded from most important kinds of discourse regarding social norms. This exclusion has been so effective because in the past it was believed that women did not have to be considered by themselves or because it was taken for granted that they were included in men's discourse, that men could speak for them. Dorothy Smith says about the issue as it arises in sociology: "Sociologies of sex roles, of gender relations, of women, constitute women as the object of inquiry. *It never quite makes sense to do a sociology of men*, nor is it clear how that would differ from the sociology we do."[73]

It is clear enough that Smith could appeal to something like an ideal situation of discourse as a norm, but does not need to do so for her purposes. She prefers not to. Why? Something like an ideal situation (of discourse) is not appealed to as a norm by Smith and many other theorists analyzing phenomena of the suppression of participation in cultural and intellectual discourse because, in their view, *it would not reveal anything* one could not already see operative in the analysis of the suppression of participation and in the critique of it.

For women to articulate their experience of being excluded, furthermore, is not the same as articulating their *right* to participation, as liberal theory and, implicitly, Habermas would have it. It is, rather, to formulate how they need, for *their own sake*, the articulation of *their* experience, *their* understanding. The whole point of this kind of emancipatory analysis could be lost were it to refer itself right at the start to a universal ideal. For an emancipatory and

critical analysis such as Smith's is *not a theory* preceding the practical organization of enlightenment or emancipation. *It is already a kind of practical reflection*, because it *achieves the expression* of what previously could not be expressed (women's sense of being excluded).

Theory and practice of emancipation are one in this case, at least in so far as women's critique of academic disciplines, or of the organization of knowledge in the professions, requires their bringing *themselves* to expression, requires their claiming and making visible an identity they have not been able, so far, to publicly bring into play.

The analogy to Habermas's construction consists only in this: something is brought to expression which previously was not. The theorem of an ideal situation of discourse warrants the bringing to expression of issues and social positions previously unarticulated — but it only does so abstractly: the ideal situation of discourse could mean, in practical terms, that whatever has not found expression in the past may be or must be expressed, if all the participants in the discourse (ideally all of humanity) agree that it should be expressed in the course of a discourse which can be carried out without restrictions (of time, of place?).

Now we see clearly that Habermas's ideal can never do justice to the local and particular character of the experience of exclusion nor to what one claims as one's own in breaking out from it. He entirely misses the *lived* form of oppression, dependence, and exclusion. We must ask, in the end, if there possibly is a lived sense of the crisis of capitalism and how we could reflect on it. Here I have, as yet, no suggestions to offer, except to say that the approach taken by Smith or that taken by the Brazilian revolutionary educator, Friere, who proceeds similarly in Third World situations, promises more.

We may, however, have to choose between a *general* theory of class society and the articulation of the *lived* and *practically constructed* sense of class dependence and class oppression. Habermas is so fascinating, because he attempts to unite both positions in his theory. But it is also due to this attempt at unification that his theory is extremely hypothetical and sterile. Habermas separates theory and practice too emphatically. Habermas is so insistent about the need for adequate *theory* as the way to bring an interest in social emancipation to expression, that he does not see that questions of emancipation (distorted communication, etc.) become as a consequence *only* a matter of theory.

Once more, one may have good reasons for preferring a more practically oriented analysis, even at the price of not having a fully validated theory. Otherwise there is only interminable theorizing about emancipation and distorted communication, but no understanding of what both might be as practically interpreted matters. The appropriate place to begin this practical reflection can only be experiences of exclusion or of the failure of articulation

(of one's experience, one's interests, needs). One should not fear charges of relativism or particularism when these points are chosen as the places to begin a critical analysis of the historical situation of "late capitalism."

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Notes

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1. Sections of this paper were first presented to a session of the Radical Caucus of the American Philosophical Association at the APA meetings, New York 1975. I would like to thank Kai Nielsen and Trent Schroyer for comments made in the session. I decided not to publish the earlier version, because I had seen unpublished sections of Habermas's essays now published under the title *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979). I also discussed the role of hermeneutics in Habermas's theory with Thomas McCarthy in Starnberg in Summer 1976 while he was writing his book on Habermas and with Juergen Habermas himself. My feeling was that these recent publications are even more strongly subject to the criticisms made in this essay, and that to begin with *Legitimation Crisis* is advisable with respect to the recent development of Habermas's theory.

   I wish to acknowledge valuable help from two of my students, Peter Grahame and Robin Holloway, O.I.S.E. Thanks are due as well to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for having supported my work with a Sabbatical Leave Fellowship during 1979.

2. The texts which have taught me most about the women's movement are Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution,* New York: Bantam Books, 1977; Dorothy E. Smith, "A Sociology for Women," in J.A. Sherman and E. Torton Bede (Eds.), *The Prison of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge,* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, pp. 135-187; and, of course, Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics,* Garden City: Doubleday Inc., 1970.

3. Gadamer's strongest formulation of the issue is the following: "History does not belong to us, but we to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror." *Truth and Method,* New York: Seaburg Press, 1975, p. 245. Remarks like this have provoked Habermas's resistance. Cf. D. Misgeld's analysis of the difference in "Critical Theory and Hermeneutics," in J. O'Neill (Ed.), *On Critical Theory,* New York: Seaburg Press, 1975; also, D. Misgeld, "Discourse and Conversation," in *Cultural Hermeneutics* 4 (1977), pp. 321-44; and D. Misgeld, "Science, Hermeneutics, and the Utopian Content of the Liberal Democratic Tradition," in *New German Critique* (Spring 1981), in press.

4. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1975, p. 10.

5. Rich, *op. cit.* and others argue that midwifery as a practical art was more helpful and definitely less harmful to women than the expertise of gynecologists. Thus past practices offer a possibility for the critique of present ones.

6. Cf. N. Luhmann, *Soziologische Aufklaerung,* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1971. To appear in translation this year by Columbia U. Press. Cf. also J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozial technologie,* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971.

7. Cf. D. Smith, "A Sociology for Women." Her argument is built on the difference between universalist procedures of inquiry in sociology, which have been naturally open to men, and women's place outside this frame. Women's lives, the place to begin a sociology for them, have hitherto been bound up in the local and particular, i.e., in the needs for the body as they are present in and for domestic labour and care.

8. J. Habermas, quoted by T. McCarthy in *The Critical Theory of Juergen Habermas,* Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1978, p. 354.

9. *Ibid,* p. 354.

10. *Ibid,* p. 355.

11. *Ibid,* p. 355.

12. This view is implicit in H.G. Gadamer's position in *Truth and Method.* It is addressed, I believe, in the recommendation that every interpretation of what a text (a philosophical text or a work of literature in particular) says requires the application of what it says to the interpreter's own situation (pp. 289 and 341). Understanding what a text says is only achieved by the interpreter when he has accomplished this application. It is achieved in particular when he lets his own situation come into question. This is not to say that his situation can be accounted for in particularistic terms. Habermas and McCarthy overlook, I believe, that for Gadamer, one's situation comes into question when one discovers its dependency, and one's own, on traditions in the interpretation of life preceding it and passing beyond it.

    C. Taylor has explicated the logic of the hermeneutical procedure of interpretation in terms of the notion that there can only be readings of an institution of a set of cultural practices which can be corrected by further readings. He argues, as Gadamer would, that there is no definite vantage point from which the final correctness of a reading could be established. A 'brute data' approach could achieve this by establishing a commonly agreed base line for inquiry, but only by reducing the subject matters contested in inquiry to a format, which eliminates the very topics giving rise to conflict in interpretation. In Dallmayr and McCarthy (Eds.), *Understanding and Social Inquiry,* London: Notre Dame University Press, 1977.

13. McCarthy, *Critical Theory,* p. 355.

14. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* p. 16; McCarthy, *Critical Theory,* p. 354.

15. R. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978, p. 230.

16. *Ibid,* p. 231.

17. McCarthy, *Critical Theory,* p. 358.

18. In J. Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.

19. *Ibid,* pp. 152-3.

20. *Ibid,* p.153.

21. M. Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (1976).

22. Habermas, *Communication,* p. 158.

23. *Ibid,* p. 146.

24. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, pp. 301-17.

25. Habermas, *Communication,* p. 146.

26. *Ibid,* p. 154.

27. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* p. 87; and *Communication,* pp. 95-130.

28. The relation between the political and administrative 'subsystems' of societies is centrally thematic in the work of Niklas Luhmann, a German sociologist with a strong systems-theoretical orientation. It is a point stressed by Luhmann in his adaptation and expansion of the framework of Structural Functionalism developed by T. Parsons. For Luhmann's basic categories see *Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalitaet*, Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1968; for his relation to Functionalism, see *Soziologische Aufklaerung* (1971), pp. 9-53. See also the important debate between Luhmann and Habermas in J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft* (1971).

29. My formulation is a very schematic characterization of the position adopted by Luhmann in all his systems-theoretical analyses. While he attaches a number of qualifications to the use of the concept 'complexity,' the following is a passage illustrative of his procedure: One finds in the problem of structural complexity "the foundations for a theory of evolution. By means of the formulation of systems the complexity of the world is increased, or the number of structured possibilities. This is how chances arise for the development of evolutionary achievements, which are tailored toward the mastery of a higher degree of environmental complexity which at the same time however, increase the complexity of the world . . ." (1971, p. 261, my translation). While Luhmann does not argue that social progress is inevitable, i.e., without risks, he does claim a progression from a social system based on the 'functional primacy' of an ethical-political order to one in which the economic subsystem predominates, and from here to one in which the subsystem of 'science' will assume a guiding role. Luhmann argues as well, however, that an increase of functional specification in 'social systems' leads to more risks internal to them, i.e., the possibility that their own development becomes more problematic.

30. Habermas, *Communication*, p. 141.

31. *Ibid*, p. 142.

32. Habermas, *Knowledge*, pp. 301-17.

33. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

34. *Ibid*, p. 40.

35. The position suggested here has much in common with the ethnomethodological analysis of the relation between general sociological research policies, general procedures recommended for a variety of purposes, and the actual use and application of them in particular settings. It is argued that the application of such policies and procedures to actual circumstances inevitably transforms them into instances of practical reasoning which characterises any kind of reasoning in those settings. They can therefore not be expected to succeed in making practical reasoning facing actual exigencies of action more rational, which is what they were designed to achieve in the first place. At least this is one possible, admittedly hermeneutically influenced, account of the developments in sociology which Harold Garfinkel has inaugurated. See *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976. Yet general policies, research procedures and the like are not insignificant, 'generally speaking' as I had said in the text, because they stand for the effort of any reasoning to acquire definite objective, i.e., enduring status.

36. Bernstein, *Restructuring*, p. 235.

37. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, p. 357.

38. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, pp. 1-41.

39. *Ibid*, p. 37.

40. *Ibid*, p. 39.

41. This seems to be the reason for Habermas's strong opposition to Luhmann and a motive for giving one chapter of *Legitimation Crisis* the title "The End of the Individual?" (pp. 117-30).

For the systems-theoretical approach seems to recommend that individuals be introduced (undergo a learning process) to various social practices, circumstances and contexts of concerted action, without their being permitted to reflectively appraise these situations. They are only permitted to deliberate in terms of pragmatic-technical considerations, on e.g., how to diffuse tensions, how to shift a particular stressful pressure off to a set of systems-activities in a better position to cope with it, etc. (See also the highly interesting remarks on court procedure in Luhmann, 1969/75.)

42. My formulation expresses disagreement with Habermas's view that "the fundamental mechanism for social evolution in general is to be found in an automatic inability not to learn. Not *learning* but *not-learning* . . . calls for explanation" (1975, p. 15). Habermas claims that "the overpowering irrationality of the history of the species" can only become visible against this background of an increasing rationality, which however fails to reach into all dimensions of human life, moral-practical consciousness in particular. A hermeneutical position would suggest that we never really are in a position to definitely assess the rationality *or* irrationality of the history of the species because we never bring it fully into view. One might even propose that a radically hermeneutical perspective would view human life as dependent upon the recognition of *rationality in crises*, because one does not presume to judge social life from a historical vantage point, which itself escapes the contingency of reflecting historically, both in terms of its starting points and of its self-applicative results.

43. Habermas, *Communication*, pp. 130-177.

44. Habermas, *Knowledge*.

45. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, p. 12.

46. *Ibid*, p. 23.

47. *Ibid*, p. 12.

48. *Ibid*, p. 14.

49. D. Howard, "A Politics in Search of the Political," in *Theory and Society*, pp. 271-306.

50. T. Schroyer, "The Re-politicization of the Relations of Production," in *New German Critique*, No. 5 (Spring 1975), pp. 108-127.

51. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*; and R. Doebert and G. Nunner-Winkler, *Adolescenskrise und Identituetsbildung*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975.

52. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 5.

53. *Ibid*, p. 4.

54. *Ibid*, p. 5.

55. It seems to be the aim of C. Taylor's studies on Hegel (In *Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1975; and *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1979) to demonstrate the dependency of the individual search for meaning on the availability of shared meanings, which lie beyond the range of individually justifiable aims, be they stated in utilitarian terms or in terms of the pursuit of radical autonomy (Cf. in particular 1979, pp. 154-170). There is some convergence here with Gadamer's insistence that the meaning of traditions reaches beyond the reflective grasp of individuals.

56. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 5.

57. *Ibid*, p. 4.

58. Habermas says: "A society does not plunge into crisis when, and only when, its members so identify the situation"; and, "Crisis occurrences owe their objectivity to the fact that they issue from unresolved steering problems" (1975, p. 4). The issue here is, that only societal members in particular social locations can even identify a crisis as one of steering problems. Not everyone would do so. There may be a crisis, or a *new* crisis for economic planners where there

is nothing new about it for large sections of the population who interpret the 'crisis' situation as just more of the same. They then do rely on their interpretive accounts.

59. Habermas, *Communication*, Chs, 2 and 3.

60. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 177.

61. Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1970, p. 75.

62. The notion of an ideal situation of discourse occurs in Habermas and Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft*, pp. 101-141. Cf. also Dreitzel, pp. 114-151. It also occurs in *Theory and Practice*, pp. 17-19. The most systematic language theoretical argument for it has been developed in Communication, pp. 1-69. I cannot discuss the details of this very elaborate construction here.

63. I am alluding to the procedures recommended by J. Rawls in his famous *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1971, which are to permit the construction of the basic institutions of a society which satisfy requirements of rationality in an approximately ideal sense. He employs the notion of a 'well-ordered society.' I am specifically thinking of the 'difference principle' that subject to certain constraints, a well ordered society requires that the expectation of the representative occupant of the least advantaged place in the distribution of income and wealth be maximized (from R.P. Wolff, *Understanding Rawls*, Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1977). The ideal procedure of reflection which Rawls recommends could easily be used, in my view, to make an already existing distribution of income and wealth appear reasonably legitimate. But this is a widely discussed issue and I shall just mention that there are interesting similarities, of a *formal* kind, between his conception and Habermas's ideal situation of discourse.

64. More details on the 'ideology' of achievement, the 'achieving society,' achievement principle and performance ideology are to be found in C. Offe, *Industry and Inequality*, London: E. Arnold, 1976. In short, what is meant, is the allocation of status and life chances on the basis of individual occupational performance as in Parsons' systems of normative orientation and pattern variables.

65. This project is characterised as follows in *Legitimation Crisis:* "only communicative ethics guarantees the generality of admissible norms and the autonomy of acting subjects solely through the discursive redeemability of the validity claims with which the norms appear" (p. 89). It is meant to bridge the gulf between the private and public domain. Habermas recognises that even such an ethics can only appeal to "fundamental norms of rational speech" (p. 120) and can therefore not provide consolation, as worldviews once could, for the "risks to individual life." And: no theory can "interpret away the facticities . . . of loneliness and guilt, sickness and death." The difficulty is, however, that the norms of speech as well as speaking itself may be so fundamentally intertwined with these contingencies, that a universalistic communicative ethics lacks any interpretive force vis-a-vis the actual communication processes in which these unavoidable contingencies are accounted for in practical ways (cf. Garfinkel, *Studies*, p. 35, on a version of practical ethics.) For even further reaching doubts than the ones mentioned above, cf. Habermas *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 121. Here the possibility of a retreat to particular identities is mentioned, as a settling down in the unplanned, nature-like system of world society. This comment does reflect what has become a frequent attitude in contemporary Western societies, which may be linked to the withdrawal with respect to the crises of adolescence.

66. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 113.

67. *Ibid*, p. 113.

68. *Ibid*, p. 117.

70. *Ibid*, p. 30.

71. Recent developments in ethnomethodological studies show more promise in this direction. Cf. J.M. Atkinson and P. Dres, *Order in Court*, London: MacMillan, 1979.

72. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, p. 35.

73. Smith, "Sociology for Women", p. 159, emphasis mine.

74. I cannot illustrate in detail what I mean by this: The central point, however, is Freire's pedagogy is that an interventionist practice sanctioned by clearly, i.e., practically identifiable instances of suffering and oppression will build up a theory of the situations in question in the course of a discourse developing between those intervening and their addressees. The addressees will themselves revise the conceptions the interventionist teachers bring to them. Details are best shown by comparing Freire's approach, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology on the one hand, with Habermas's orientation on the other.

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