

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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It is my purpose in this thesis to draw out and discuss certain relationships between modes and levels of theorizing, and social practice. My intention is to explicate certain immanent connections between epistemology and methodology, and social life-practice. I propose to discuss these claimed connections in four different schools of social science: Max Weber (and certain related neo-Kantians), Hermeneutics, Positivism, and Critical theory.

I am especially concerned with the relationship between theory and practice in theory--specifically, with internal relations in theory between:

1. epistemological positions (e.g., on fact/value, description and evaluation, subject and object, science and criticism) and social, political, and moral issues and positions;
2. epistemological and methodological positions and capacities to conceptualize social and historical action;
3. levels of theory and modes of verification, i.e., the relationship between a theory's conjectures/hypotheses truth claims and the nature of evidence it regards as necessary and/or sufficient for its verification or falsification;
4. the structures of knowledge and the interest structure (generalized motives) of the species (i.e., can certain modes of knowing be explained, as Habermas contends, by the structure of human action?); and
5. the theory of the relationship between theory and political and moral life.

The relationship between theory and practice in practice essentially concerns the relationship between theory as the expression of

a specific mode of practice and labor, and the practice and labor of individuals, groups, classes, and epochs. This latter area is the traditional area of the sociology of knowledge which seeks to explicate the social situatedness of all human knowledge. It is an area of enormous complexity and my least concern in the thesis. It is left mainly to suggestion and references (of those who have systematically addressed these questions).

I proceed by examining key texts in each tradition. It need hardly be said that I make no claims to deal exhaustively with each school (or author). Rather, I endeavor to demonstrate the central assumptions and implications of each school through these key texts recognizing full well that any claims that are made are specific to these authors and do not represent all possible positions available within each tradition.

I do not intend to discuss each school simply within the dimensions above, but hope to develop the discussion, pointing out similarities and differences, etc., across schools. Particularly, I would like to show how critical theory and science highlight many of the self-misunderstandings and inadequacies of the other three schools. Finally, I intend to argue that the Critical school itself is extremely vulnerable to a number of important and fundamental criticisms which leave open a further series of questions and issues which have yet to receive the attention they require.

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I have also been enormously assisted, directly and indirectly, by Jim Schmidt. His influence is (at least) twofold. First, he has been a direct source of ideas, stimulus, and inspiration. Second, through his own work he has, indirectly, become a partner in debate.

He will probably not agree with certain of the concerns and themes of this thesis --but anticipated disagreements often provided the impetus to develop this study. Hayward Alker and Paul Breines have criticized this work in a variety of ways. I only hope that there are some signs in the pages that follow to show them that their work was not without avail.

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INTRODUCTION

It is my purpose in writing this thesis to draw out and discuss certain relationships between modes and levels of theorizing and social practice. My intention is to explicate certain immanent connections between epistemology and methodology and social life-practice. I propose to discuss these claimed connections in four different schools of social thought and science: Max Weber (and some related neo-Kantians), Hermeneutics, Positivism, and Critical theory.

The terms "theory" and "practice" have a long and complex history that dates back, at least, to the Greek concepts of "theoria" and "praxis." The historicity of these terms need not concern us here at any length, although an initial orientation to these terms is important.¹ As Nicholas Lobkowitz points out in his history of the concept of theory and practice from Aristotle to Marx:

When today we oppose "practice" to "theory" we usually have in mind lived life as opposed to abstract ideas, or else man's acting as opposed to his "mere" thinking and reflecting.²

The term "practice" or "practical" in contemporary English usage frequently implies a denotation to "technically skilled" activities, activities which have specified uses and perhaps exchange

value. The Greek terms "praxis," however, in its ordinary usage, had a broader sense and reference, i. e., to "doing" and "acting" in general. As Lobkowitz writes:

The verb "πράσσειν" [prassô] has a number of closely related meanings such as "I accomplish (e. g., a journey)," "I manage (e. g., a state of affairs)," "I do or fare (e. g., well or ill)," and, in general, "I act, I perform some activity."³

The etymological source of the term "theory" is the Greek term "theoria." Although "theoria" is sometimes rendered as "contemplation," "contemplation," as Richard Bernstein has noted, too often tends to suggest "a receptive and passive state of mind."⁴

In Greek usage, and in particular in Aristotle, "'theoria' is a form of life that involves strenuous disciplined activity."⁵ For the Greeks the connotations of theoria and praxis were often intertwined with a question that was frequently posed in their culture and tradition, namely, "which is the best and most desirable of lives?"⁶

Within Greek philosophy systematic reflection on the nature of theoria and praxis was argued to reveal an immanent connection between knowledge and a "particularly sublime way of life,"

"a truly free life."⁷ This connection was founded on the claimed insight that the truth of statements is linked ultimately "to the intention of the good and true life."⁸

In this thesis I will be concerned to explore the theory of the relationship between theory and practice and, particularly, as

first suggested by the Greek philosophic tradition, certain claimed immanent connections between theory and practice. My initial conceptions of theory and practice are commonsensical and conventional. On this account theory is a schema or system of statements or ideas held to understand and/or explain and/or account for social or natural phenomena. It is a human creation, a product of social activity. Practice refers potentially to the totality of human activity, to the world-constitutive, self-formative and self-generative activities of the human species or to some special sector of these activities (where specified).

The essential guiding principle of this thesis is the study and examination of how Max Weber and certain neo-Kantians, Positivists, Hermeneuticians, and Critical theorists conceive, characterize, analyze, understand, and explain the relationship between theory and practice. I will be concerned specifically with the relationship between theory and practice in theory. I will also be concerned, but to a much lesser extent, with the relationship between theory and practice in practice.

In examining the theory of the relationship between theory and practice in theory, I seek to analyze and understand the internal relations between:

1. epistemological positions (on fact/value, description

and evaluation, science and criticism, subject and object) and social, political, and moral issues and positions. For example, does holding certain epistemological positions entail commitments to particular moral positions?

2. epistemological and methodological positions and capacities to conceptualize social and historical action. For example, do certain epistemological and methodological presuppositions imply specific characterizations of social action? If so, what kinds of questions can and does a given school ask about social action? Are any areas of potential concerns and questions about social action closed off as a result of a school's initial presuppositions?

3. levels of theory and modes of verification. For example, what is the relationship between a theory's conjectures/hypotheses/truth claims and the nature of evidence it regards as necessary and/or sufficient for its verification or falsification?

4. the structures of knowledge and action. For example, can the logical structure of scientific knowledge, certain modes of knowing, be explained, as Habermas contends, by the basic interests, or basic orientations, of the species?

5. the theory of the relationship between theory and

political and moral life. For example, how do different schools and writers conceptualize the way theory should inform and guide social, political, and moral life? How do different schools characterize the relationship between theory and the social and political practice of individuals, groups, classes, and epochs?

The relationship between theory and practice in practice essentially concerns the relationship between

1. theory as the expression of a specific mode of practice and labor and the practice and labor of individuals, groups, classes, and epochs.

This latter area is the traditional arena of the sociology of knowledge which seeks to explicate the social situatedness of all human knowledge. The topics invoked by the sociology of knowledge are of enormous complexity and are my least concern in this thesis. This whole area of inquiry is mainly left to suggestion and to reference (of those who have systematically addressed these questions).

In concentrating attention on the relationship between theory and practice in theory, it is my purpose and hope to shed light on the status and character of certain aspects of social theorizing and of the self-understanding and self-comprehension of theorists. A discussion of these issues is claimed to be of significance to social

science, theory, and social scientific practice. It is, furthermore, contended that they are by no means only "abstract philosophical" questions of limited academic import. They also have immanent implications and consequences for the practice of political and social life.

The work begins with an examination of the writings, especially the methodological works, of Max Weber.⁹ My intention is to reconstruct some of the central concerns of Weber's sociology, epistemology, and methodology. I will, in particular, be concerned with the presence in Weber's work of certain claimed dualisms: the often perceived cleavages between fact and value, description and evaluation, subject and object, science and criticism, and the claimed separation of theory and practice that follows in their wake. It is my hope in discussing Weber's work to critically explicate its specifically Kantian and neo-Kantian underpinnings.

I chose to begin this thesis with a discussion of Weber for three reasons: First, because his writings have been and continue to be of central importance to the shaping of contemporary social science; second, because in his work we find detailed and important statements that explicitly place the dualisms we mentioned above at the heart of sociology, epistemology, and methodology; and third, because we find him often attempting to integrate a

positivist and a hermeneutic conception of social science. The latter two features of his work make it an enormously fruitful basis on which to raise many of the themes of this study.

The tensions and problems that are highlighted in Weber's work sometimes find their source and origin in his attempt to locate in social science a role for a nomothetic (generalizing) and ideographic (individualizing) science. These respective dimensions of his thought raise important questions and issues as to the nature of a generalizing or individualizing (social) science. These questions and issues are systematically addressed in Part 2.

In Part 2 I will discuss central aspects of the positivist and hermeneutic programs for science. The former is a philosophical expression of a generalizing science, while the latter is a theory that informs a conception of an individualizing science. In an analysis of these schools a central theme of this thesis is developed; namely, that in positivist thought there is a tendency to reduce practice to theory, and in hermeneutic thought there is a tendency to reduce theory to practice. We will see that positivism is unable to comprehend science, where the latter is conceived, not as a formal, self-enclosed system, but as human activity, as the practice of the community of investigators. In the positivist program, theory was dirempted from practice and the former became

unable to comprehend and thematize the latter. As a consequence, positivist theory is unable to account for itself and so is unable to justify itself. The hermeneutic tradition, on the other hand, places at its center the concern to interpret and understand social practice. However, within the hermeneutic tradition we find a strong tendency to reduce the role of theory to that of explicating practice. The tradition tends not only to grant authenticity, but also authority, to the categories and concepts of its subject/object of investigation. As such, within hermeneutic epistemology and methodology, it is contended that theory falls into a relativism and descriptivism, and into a position whereby it is unable to justify its (sometimes expressed) claim to be advancing an understanding of an event in the world which is something more than just another everyday account.

In Part 3 I will try and show how the Critical tradition attempts to overcome the problems associated with the previous three schools' theories of objectivity and truth. The Critical tradition has developed, with various degrees of rigour, positions which attempt to ground (ultimately justify) its choice of theoretical principles and methodological procedure. This tradition attempts to maintain standards of objectivity and truth that are both of social practice and independent of its immediacies and contingencies. Unlike the previous three schools, the critical school seeks to distinguish between:

---ideology and truth.

---false consciousness and true consciousness.

---understanding and critical understanding.

Within this context I will examine certain of the works of Georg Lukács, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse.

In Part 4 I expound and analyze the work of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas directly confronts the central concerns and themes of this thesis. His work is a sweeping attempt to develop a systematic theory of the relationship between theory and practice, and to ground a conception of a critical science. Throughout this thesis I both use and refer to his work as a resource and topic. It should be noted that Habermas' thought and writing have been extremely influential on (and to some extent informed by) the thinking and writing of a number of associates, notably Karl-Otto Apel, Albrecht Wellmer, Gerard Radnitzky, Thomas McCarthy, and Trent Schroyer. Their work often contains both very helpful elucidations and clarifications of Habermas' positions, as well as additions to and developments of his conception of a critical science. In this context reference will be made to their writings.

Throughout this thesis I will proceed by examining key texts in each tradition of social thought and science. It need hardly be said that I make no claims to deal exhaustively with each school

(or author). Rather, I will endeavor to demonstrate the central assumptions and implications of each school through these key texts recognizing full well that any claims that are made are specific to these authors and do not represent all possible positions available within each tradition.

The discussion of each of the four schools of social science is organized around a continuous concern with the theory of theory and practice. I also approach each school with a direct concern to investigate its central foci. In each part I hope to give an exegesis of respective positions as well as a critique. I do not intend, however, to discuss each school simply within the dimensions above, but hope to develop the discussion, pointing out similarities and differences, etc., across schools. Particularly, I would like to show how critical theory and science highlight many of the self-misunderstandings and inadequacies of the other three schools.

It is very important to note that throughout this thesis there is a continually expressed interest in the capacity of social science to be able to generate a critical theory of society. By critical theory (or critical science, or critique of ideology), I understand, unless otherwise stated, a social theoretic position that is able to:

1. give an account of the concept of ideology.
2. support its pretensions to a critical perspective by

grounding its vision of ideology-free intersubjectivity, i. e., clarify and justify in the notion of ideology, a necessarily implied conception of a "self-conscious" and "self-transparent" actor. In short, it must be able to elucidate the difference between false-consciousness and true-consciousness.

3. give a reconstruction of the natural-historical development of ideological structures of intersubjectivity.

In the analysis of Max Weber and the neo-Kantians, positivism, and hermeneutics I attempt to uncover how a critical perspective is closed off as a result of epistemological and methodological presuppositions. As a consequence we see how each school is unable to conceptualize the problematic of ideology, the possibility of systematic distortion in the self-understanding of communities, societies, and traditions. In this context of themes, certain criticisms are made of these three schools. In making these criticisms I often draw on the writings of the authors I discuss directly in Parts 3 and 4. It is crucial, however, to remember that in making these criticisms we not only raise a series of questions which uncover issues and problems which the three schools do not satisfactorily address, but also note that certain of these criticisms themselves depend for their viability on the capacity of the critical tradition to "make good" on them. In other words, the force of

the criticism, for example, that these three schools close off a critical theoretic approach, rests on an assessment of the validity of such a project. If the validity of such a project can be systematically doubted, the previously expressed "criticism" loses its status qua criticism. In criticizing the three schools' accounts of objectivity and truth we must be careful to explicate, clarify, and justify presupposed standards.

In a discussion of the Critical school we see that some of our presupposed standards have, at best, an ambiguous status. I intend to argue that the Critical school itself is extremely vulnerable to a number of important and fundamental criticisms. The Critical school has not (as yet?) been able to develop a defensible theory of objectivity and truth. Here I will argue that to the extent that this school searches for ultimate foundations, absolute standards, it raises a multiplicity of problems. These problems are not simply problems internal to the critical tradition. They are also not problems that can be solved within its terms of reference. In my concluding remarks I suggest that the quest for ultimate foundations implies a task which is theoretically and practically implausible. The Critical enterprise cannot be grounded. However, this does not mean that a critique of ideology is necessarily an unfounded imposition on social life. It is my contention that the epistemological

questions and issues could be reformulated in a manner commensurate with a conception of a critical program in social science. Such a program, it is suggested, would be dependent for its validity on an appreciation of the important role a nomological and hermeneutic science can have. Needless to say, we are left, at the end, with a further series of questions and problems which have yet to receive the attention they require.

NOTES

¹ Nicholas Lobkowitz, Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx (Notre Dame, Ind.: University Press, 1967). Lobkowitz's work is a useful source for references to the long history of these terms.

² Ibid., p. 3 (my emphasis).

³ Ibid., p. 9, and quoted in Richard Bernstein, Praxis and Action (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. ix. Bernstein added the bracketed phonetic translation which I have included.

⁴ Bernstein, Praxis and Action, p. x.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lobkowitz, Theory and Practice, p. 3.

⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸ Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 317.

⁹ The works of most immediate concern are: (1) Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, trans. and ed. Edward A. Shils and Henry F. Finch (New York: The Free Press, 1949) (which will be referred to below as M.S.S.); (2) Max Weber, Theory of Social and Economic Organizations, trans. and ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1969) (which will be referred to below as T.S.E.O.); (3) Max Weber, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) (to be referred to below as From Max Weber); (4) Max Weber, Economy and Society, 3 vols., ed., revised, and partially trans. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

PART I

MAX WEBER AND NEO-KANTIANISM:
THE ISSUES RAISED

CHAPTER I

THE EXPANSION OF RATIONALIZATION: THE EMPIRICAL BASIS OF WEBER'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

Introduction

In the following three chapters I will examine certain immanent connections between Weber's general interpretation of the social tendencies of his times and his epistemological and methodological work. Of particular concern will be the relationship between Weber's recognized and unrecognized commitments to theory and practice as developed in his theoretical writings. Weber's adherence to certain claimed dualisms, for example, those between fact and value, subject and object, description and evaluation, will be discussed. I would also like to suggest a relationship between that which his work subsumes and the social life of an epoch and practice of a particular class. The latter task is, unfortunately, mainly left to suggestion. It is here a secondary task. To fulfill it, would require a massive study that obviously cannot be carried through within the boundaries of this thesis. In one of the best studies of Weber's life in Germany at the turn of the century, Arthur Mitzman has attempted such a study. In The Iron Cage, Mitzman persuasively argues that:

- a. . . . generational conflict, aggravated both by the special tensions of his family and the suffocating character of bourgeois society in Imperial Germany did, indeed, underlie Weber's scholarly and political perceptions;
- b. that his formulation of liberal-imperialist ideology reflects a stage both in his personal evolution and in the psycho-social development of the German bourgeois; and
- c. that the "heroic pessimism" of the late Weber was in large measure a result of his shattering conflict with his father . . . which . . . reveals in contours the underlying conflict . . . in fin de siècle Germany and that a similar hopelessness as to any conceivable alteration of the merciless course of rationalization and bureaucratization [was] the source of a great deal of the estrangement and voluntarist irrationalism of the age. ¹

However, Mitzman's work, as a whole, has certain fundamental weaknesses, the most important of which is his option for the methodology of Psycho-History. ²

In this study we hope to take up a number of the issues suggested by our second task. But we will only have time to note a few critical points and establish a direction for further investigation.

We begin this study with an exploration of the empirical basis of Weber's epistemological presuppositions.

* * * * *

It will be seen that we cannot separate an interpretation of Weber's methodology from his general interpretation of the social tendencies in development during his life and times.³ As Karl Löwith has emphasized, Weber's methodological standpoint can only be comprehended adequately in close analysis and appreciation of his other works, and more particularly, his general interpretation of the rise of modern capitalism.⁴ In fact, the perceived hopelessness of the course of rationalization, with its resulting "disenchantment," may be conceived, as Jean Cohen has argued, to be "the foundation for his epistemological presuppositions."⁵ It is worth, for a moment, exploring the concept of rationalization.

In Economy and Society Weber attempts to recount the history of rationalization in the formal theory of rationality and domination, the two central themes. Through them the concept of industrial capitalism becomes concretized. Economy and Society is in large measure an effort to determine the connections between rationality, domination, and capitalism. Herbert Marcuse has summarized the connection in its most general form:

. . . the specifically Western idea of reason realizes itself in a system of material and intellectual culture (economy, technology, "conduct of life," science, art) that develops to the full in industrial capitalism, and this system tends toward a specific type of domination which becomes the fate of the contemporary period: total bureaucracy.⁶

The essential concept is Western Rationality.

In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Weber sets out to discuss and account for the emergent instrumentalism (the Spirit) of capitalism and to examine the part which religious ideas of ascetic Protestantism played in accounting for an ethos, he believed, to be peculiar to the West. Weber points to the existence of capitalist economic and commercial organizations before the Reformation in order to refute any theory that attempted to hold that the political-economic institutions of capitalism "were a result of the Reformation." He dismisses such a view as a "foolish and doctrinaire thesis."⁷ He argues instead that he regards "the influence of economic development on the fate of religious ideas to be very important"⁸ and declares that any further study of the Protestant ethic would demonstrate "how Protestant asceticism was in turn influenced in its development and character by the totality of social conditions, especially economic."⁹ The thesis has to be seen in context of his other works.

Weber discusses a number of areas of social and economic life in which elements of rationalization had advanced prior to the outgrowth of modern capitalism. These early developments (e. g., the emergence and formation of "rational jurisprudence" in Roman law) are seen as having created an increasing capacity for, and having a facilitating role in, the rise of capitalism. "The

importance of Calvinism and other branches of ascetic Protestantism, as Weber makes clear in The Protestant Ethic, " is, as Anthony Giddens has pointed out, "not that it was a 'cause' of the rise of modern capitalism, but that it provided an irrational impetus to the disciplined pursuit of monetary gain in a specified 'calling'--and thereby laid the way open to the further spread of distinctive types of rationalization of activity stimulated by the vicarious expansion of capitalism."^{10, 11} The ascetic religious ethic sanctioned hard work, resignation to one's "lot in life"; the division of labor, etc.; integral components of liberal and organized capitalism. What were the elements of rationalization?

The term is a complex one and is used to refer to a number of sets of related phenomena. (1) There is a growth in mathematization, as Marcuse pointed out, of "experience and knowledge"; the shaping of all scientific practice according to the model of the natural sciences and the extension of (scientific) rationality to "the conduct of life itself." This in turn must be seen as part of a specific feature of the secularization of the modern world which Weber often terms the intellectualization (i. e., demystification and demagification) and/or the disenchantment of the world. (The respective characterizations reflect Weber's ambivalence to the program of the Western, modern "spirit.") (2) There is "the growth of rationality

in the sense of 'the methodological attainment of a definitely given and practical end by the use of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means'.¹² The expansion of capitalism presides over the final transformation of social relationships to the form which approximates the ideal-type of Zweckrationalität, in which a person rationally calculates the consequences that follow from the choice (from a range) of means to accomplish a given end.¹³

(3) There is "the growth of rationality in the sense of the formation of 'ethics that are systematically and unambiguously oriented to fixed goals'.¹⁴

The rationalization of mythical, religious, or metaphysical interpretations of reality takes numerous different forms. Weber shows in his studies of China and India that the rationalization of ancient and medieval world views may follow one or a combination of the three elements above and may extend to a varying degree through modes of social relationships and the orientation of social conduct; modes of legitimacy, domination, and authority; classes and status groups and the respective institutionalized universes of symbolic meaning. Weber, furthermore, sought to demonstrate that each of these three aspects of rationalization was promoted much further by capitalism. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss and trace the history of rationalization in all these forms.¹⁵

It is, however, an important task of this work to show how this complex concept provides an empirical basis and justification for his epistemological presuppositions. But before we can discuss this relationship and indeed explicate what these epistemological presuppositions are, a number of additional points need to be noted.

In Parsons' highly influential discussion of Weber the suggestion is made that the process of rationalization can best be described as a law and, in fact, Parsons goes on to compare the process with the second Law of Thermodynamics.¹⁶ The process is not best understood in this light. For Weber, rationalization, as the extension of formal rationality, is not a unilinear law of all-embracing proportion. Rather, the extension of formal rationality is seen to be dependent on the outcome of conflicts with substantive rationality (which "cannot be measured in terms of formal calculation alone, but also involves a relation to the absolute values or to the content of the particular ends to which it is oriented. . . . In principle, there is an indefinite number of possible standards of value which are 'rational' in this sense").¹⁷ Often an advance of formal rationality is itself an unintended consequence of action oriented to substantive values. The extension of formal rationality results also, it is argued, in the generation of unintended irrationalities of a formal and substantive kind. "In short," as Cohen put it, "the process of rationalization

can be seen as a dynamic between formal and substantive rationality."¹⁸

Formal rationality is the organization and orientation of action to formal laws, rules, and norms; it was the expression of contemporary reason, both the result of and impetus to an impersonal, bureaucratic order, an order of precise calculation, of objective scientific rationality. But with the increasingly impartial, "fair," and modern world we continually risk the "dialectic of the enlightenment."¹⁹

The extension of formal rationality to "the conduct of life" becomes a concern for Weber also as a "form of domination"; means becoming ends, social rules becoming reified objectifications commanding directions, the market becoming a key mechanism in the orientation of conduct and planning. Rationalization expressed as formal rationality spins off its own dynamic and depersonalizes both history and social structure. The very products of human activity are seen as having a strong tendency to be apprehended "as if they were something other than human products -- such as facts of nature, results of cosmic law . . ."²⁰ Impersonal forces threaten the role of subjectivity. "It is precisely here," Cohen has suggested, "that substantive rationality or action oriented to the particular, qualitative needs of man as the ultimate value, intervenes and presents tensions and limits to the process of rationalization."²¹ In Cohen's view, "as formal rationality advances, it evokes counterforces all along

the way."²² This, indeed, seems to a large extent to be Weber's position. But there is an important point that has not yet been made that should be stressed. Weber was increasingly pessimistic and doubtful that action oriented to substantive issues could limit the process of formal rationalization in the modern era.²³ If such substantively oriented action was absent or of insufficient strength to provide such a limit, Weber thought this should not be the case and a limit to formal rationality rigorously defended (as the theme of "Politics as a Vocation" suggests).²⁴ How he sought to protect a realm of values we take up later.

Weber's ambivalence to this process and the historical extension of formal rationality has already been briefly mentioned. It is crucial, nonetheless, according to him, to realize that the resultant "disenchantment" acts as a critique of traditional world views (e. g., Christianity). This means:

. . . principally [that] there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This is above all what intellectualization means.²⁵

The basis for the attribution of ultimate meaning and value-universalism by world views is undermined. In the modern, rational,

disenchanted world there is no simple reconciliation for "ultimately possible attitudes towards life . . . their 'struggle' can never be brought to a final conclusion."²⁶

The rationale of action under capitalism, given the pervasiveness of Zweckrationalität, can only be based on value-judgments and preferences, on individually chosen values, based in turn on an "ethic of responsibility." The only account that we can give of our ultimate values is through a description of the processes whereby we choose them; the only justification of our values lies in the coherence and clarity of our choice. The coherence of our substantive rationality, our values and upheld goals was open, in Weber's view, to critical tests in discourse. An ethic of responsibility was based on the rational, scientific consideration and calculation of possible consequences of claimed necessary means, in the pursuit of an end, goal, or action.²⁷ But, the choice between values, in the last instance, was the unique prerogative of the individual. "It is the responsibility of each person to judge and decide." There is no ultimate justification, but the calculated choice of an individual to "which of the warring gods we should serve."²⁸ The struggle to choose amongst gods is, ultimately, an irrational one.

Or speaking directly, the ultimately possible attitudes toward life are irreconcilable, and hence their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion. Thus it is necessary to make a decisive choice.²⁹

Our decision is, in the last analysis, based on faith: "only on the assumption of belief in the validity of our values is the attempt to espouse value-judgements meaningful. However, to judge the validity of such values is a matter of faith."³⁰ This is, as Weber put it, "the fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge. . . ." An account of ultimate meaning can no longer be grounded. There are no longer world-views which can have any ultimate basis to command intersubjective agreement.

Weber never "distanced" himself from this position. It is a position commensurate with the unfolding of Western Rationality. It is a position, as we shall see, that also subsumed and sanctioned this rationality and an individualistic, atomistic ontology.

NOTES

¹Arthur Mitzman, The Iron Cage (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1970), p. 12.

²Mitzman's work is ill balanced. For a more theoretically balanced view of the use and insights psychotheory can provide in historical works, see Wilhelm Reich, Sexpol (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 59-74.

³For a useful restatement and elaboration of this theme, see Anthony Giddens, Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber (London: The Macmillan Company, 1972).

⁴Karl Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik 67 (1932).

⁵Jean Cohen, "Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination," Telos 14 (1972): 66.

⁶Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in Max Weber," in Negations, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 203.

⁷Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Unwin University Books, 1971), p.91.

⁸Ibid., p. 277.

⁹Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁰Giddens, Politics and Sociology, p. 45.

¹¹For an excellent discussion of Weber's views on the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism, see John Eldridge, Max Weber (London: Nelson, 1972), pp. 33-53.

¹²Giddens, Politics and Sociology, p. 44, and quoting Weber, in From Max Weber, pp. 293-94 (amended translation).

¹³We discuss the concept of Zweckrationalität, and the consequences of such rationality, in greater detail in the following chapter.

¹⁴Giddens, Politics and Sociology, p. 44.

¹⁵Eldridge, Max Weber, pp. 53-70.

¹⁶Talcott Parsons, Structure of Action (New York: The Free Press, 1937).

¹⁷Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 185-86.

¹⁸Cohen, "Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination," p. 66.

¹⁹See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, The Dialectics of the Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

²⁰Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 106.

²¹Cohen, "Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination," p. 66.

²²Ibid., p. 65.

²³For a summary of his views, cf. Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), chap. 12. Also note Weber's critique of socialism. See, for example, Weber, Economy and Society, vol. 1, pp. 85-88, 100-7, 110-11, 224-26, and "Politics as a Vocation," in Weber, From Max Weber, pp. 100, 121.

²⁴Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," From Max Weber, pp. 77-129.

²⁵Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, p. 139.

²⁶Ibid., p. 152.

²⁷The nature and status of Weber's reflections on ethics will be considered at length in the following chapter.

²⁸Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, pp. 152-53.

²⁹Ibid., p. 152.

³⁰Weber, "Objectivity in the Social Sciences," M. S. S., p. 55.
I am indebted to Larry Simon for pointing out this quotation to me.

CHAPTER II

SCIENCE IN THE LIGHT OF DISENCHANTMENT: THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE; WEBER'S DOCTRINE OF VALUE-FREEDOM, OBJECTIVITY, AND THE ROLE OF METHOD

The process of rationalization is then, an agent in the demystification of the social world. With and because of disenchantment, the undermining of the legitimatizing efficacy of cultural traditions, the central questions of men's collective existence and of individual life history no longer found or could find an all-embracing world-view with systematic answers, providing a coherent and cohesive social identity. "Now," and as a result, Weber argued, "as soon as we attempt to reflect about the way in which life confronts us in immediate concrete situations, it presents an infinite multiplicity of successively and coexistently emerging and disappearing events, both 'within' and 'outside' ourselves."¹ To those who have eaten of the tree of knowledge, reality no longer appears with the cohesion of one constituted by myth, religion, and metaphysical world-views, but as a totality "in bewegung"--a "heterogeneous flux."

For Weber, the consequences of disenchantment were, as we shall see, multifarious. Of these and of primary importance, was

that historical reality became conceived in identical terms to those which Kant had conceptualized natural reality. For Weber, history was, then, a cultural manifold of infinite richness; for Kant, natural reality was a sensuous manifold.² The "absolute infinitude" of this reality, this multiplicity, "is to remain undiminished," for Weber, "even when our attention is focused on a single 'object,' for instance, a concrete act of exchange, as soon as we seriously attempt an exhaustive description of all the individual components of this 'individual phenomenon' to say nothing of explaining it causally."³ Causal analysis evinces the same character; "an exhaustive causal investigation of any concrete phenomenon in its full reality is not only practically impossible--it is simply nonsense."⁴ How then can social science embrace reality?

Since reality is unknowable in its infinity, the "object" of investigation is delineated and constituted by the scientific investigator. For Weber, all knowledge is a result of constitution; all cognition and rationality are to be located on the side of the knower. The scientific investigator proceeds according to his or her own individual "values" and cognitive interests. The knowledge generated by scientific practice is in consequence seen to be partial and one-sided. But having said this, Weber, nevertheless, claims "objectivity" for the social sciences and scientific "truths"/"proofs" as value-

free. What is the nature of his argument? How can we conceptualize Weber's position?

The core of Weber's discussion of the nature of "objectivity" consists in the attempt to clarify the "logical relationships" between scientific and value judgments. The discussion revolves around their incompatibility and differences. For Weber, this most definitely does not imply an attitude of "moral indifference"; such an attitude "has no connections with scientific 'objectivity'."⁵ (The authority of science, in Weber's view, as we shall see, rests on an explicit commitment.) It does, however, imply a complex attitude that pivots on what he calls "value-orientations" and rational method (that guarantees the "objectivity" of scientific results). The underpinning assumptions of this view, and the view itself, need careful explication and analysis.

According to Weber, "The type of social science in which we are interested is an empirical science of concrete reality [Wirklichkeitswissenschaft]"⁶ and our aim is to:

- a. . . . understand the characteristic uniqueness of social reality, the relationships and the cultural significance of individual events [and phenomena; and
- b. . . . to understand the causes of these events] being historically so and not otherwise.⁷

Since social and cultural reality is infinite, the question arises: how can we know and conceptualize a part of this reality?

The number and type of causes which have influenced any given event are always infinite and there is nothing in the things themselves to set some of them apart as alone meriting attention. A chaos of "existential judgements" about countless individual events would be the only result of a serious attempt to analyze reality "without presuppositions." And even this result is only seemingly possible, since every single perception discloses on closer examination an infinite number of constituent perceptions which can never be exhaustively expressed in a judgement. Order is brought into this chaos only on the condition that in every case only a part of concrete reality is interesting and significant to us, because only it is related to the cultural values with which we approach reality. Only certain sides of the infinitely complex concrete phenomenon, namely those to which which we attribute a general cultural significance--are therefore worthwhile knowing.^{8*} [Emphasis added in last sentence.]

*Weber's discussion of the "cultural significance" criterion for problem selection (cf. M. S. S., pp. 74-77) is ambiguous. Parsons argues that Weber insisted on the very great importance of the cultural significance of a problem for the values of the time in determining the directions of the interest of the investigator. Miles Morgan, on the other hand, has pointed out that a careful reading of the texts reveals several inconsistencies in Weber's usage of the terms. It is unclear by whose estimation a problem is to be regarded as "culturally significant": the investigator's, or the society's being studied, or people's in different groups in a given society or which culture's "significance" is to be used (even given that all "cultures" take the phenomenon to be "significant" in some way or another)? Broadly, Weber's remarks on the interest of the investigator indicate the social scientists' sense of "significance" is central, and his remarks on Verstehen, which we discuss at length in the following chapter, indicate the subject's sense of "significance" is the most important.

Given the nature of reality we cannot, Weber argues, give an exhaustive description or causal explanation. Weber assumed that a true picture of concrete reality was impossible and that no individual or collective scientific enterprise could furnish an "absolutely 'objective',"⁹ or authentic "copy of reality." Saloman, reflecting on such statements, has correctly observed that for Weber "the utmost that can be accomplished by such sciences, either in the historical or the social disciplines, is, through reasoned thought, to bring order into the world of reality, which is in a state of ceaseless flux. The principles of classification by which this order is to be achieved, . . . must be imposed by the scientist himself."¹⁰

Weber's methodological standpoint consequentially hinges upon the establishment of certain dichotomies; between reality as infinite and science as finite; between subjectivity in science and objectivity in science; and between "rationality" and "irrationality."

The objective validity of all empirical knowledge rests exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are subjective in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the presuppositions of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the value of those truths which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us. . . . But these data can never become the foundation for the empirically impossible proof of the validity of the evaluative ideas. The belief which we all have in some form or other, in the meta-empirical validity of ultimate and final values, in which the meaning of our existence is rooted, is not incompatible with the incessant changefulness

of the concrete viewpoints, from which empirical reality gets its significance. Both these views are, on the contrary, in harmony with each other. Life with its irrational reality and its store of possible meanings is inexhaustible."¹¹

We need to ask more about how these dichotomies were established.

Central to any attempt to explore the polarities Weber established is an understanding of the distinction between value-judgments and value-orientations.* It is important to emphasize that Weber's notion of value-freedom was concerned explicitly with the relationship of science to value-judgments. As distinct from a value-orientation, a value-judgment is used to evaluate an object, to express preference, approval, or dislike, etc. Such judgments are not in any way part of science.

"By 'value-judgements' are to be understood, where nothing else is implied or expressly stated, practical evaluations of the unsatisfactory or satisfactory character of phenomena subject to our influence."¹² And, as Weber states: "The social sciences, which are strictly empirical sciences, are the least fitted to presume to save the individual the difficulty of making a choice, and they

*It should be noted that Weber rarely, if ever, made (detailed) arguments for the positions we are attempting to summarize in his name. Rather, for example, The Methodology of the Social Sciences reads like a series of position statements.

should not create the impression that they can do so."¹³ In fact, the position that he seeks to sustain in "The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality'"¹⁴ and elsewhere, is that if scientific methodologies, theories, and validity claims neither entail nor imply value-judgments, they are then value-free.

Weber's position on value-freedom, it can be argued,¹⁵ arose as a response to two factors. Firstly, he sought to protect science from "the present political situation." "Everyone knows . . . that . . . vital questions which are of decisive political significance are permanently banned from university discussion," and in view of that fact ". . . it seems to me to be only in accord with the dignity of a representative of science to be silent as well about such value-problems as he is allowed to treat."¹⁶ Secondly, he sought to protect "the realm of values" from the increasing encroachment of rationalization. Hence his views on the state,¹⁷ his critique of those that viewed the state as a value in itself,¹⁸ and his famous stress on charismatic leadership and "politics as a vocation."¹⁹ With such distinctions Weber attempted to establish an enclave for science and an enclave for value-judgments. Such an attempt reflects Weber's anxiety to provide a limit to the rationalization of everyday life and yet to preserve the benefits of "the fruit of the tree of knowledge."

The discussion of value-freedom, Weber makes clear, presupposes the crucial questions about the nature of "objectivity" itself.

When we distinguished in principle between "value-judgements" and "empirical knowledge," we presupposed the existence of an unconditionally valid type of knowledge in the social sciences, i. e., the analytical ordering of empirical social reality. This presupposition now becomes our problem in the sense that we must discuss the meaning of objectively "valid" truth in the social sciences. The genuineness of the problem is apparent to anyone who is aware of the conflict about methods, "fundamental concepts" and presuppositions, the incessant shift of "viewpoints," and the continuous redefinition of "concepts" and who sees that the theoretical and historical modes of analysis are still separated by an apparently unbridgeable gap."²⁰

Weber's famous claim that social scientific knowledge is constituted with reference to value has already been noted.²¹ At a preliminary level the influence of values or presuppositions ("value-orientations") is not only not denied but seen as the very principle that makes "objectivity" possible in the first place (and prevents "a chaos . . . of judgements"). As with the Heidelberg school of neo-Kantians, the "theoretical relation to values rather than interfering with the acquisition of objective knowledge, becomes the active subjective precondition which allows us to acquire objective historical knowledge. It allows us to detach from historical reality . . . (an infinite richness) . . . , a definite object."²² This is a key part of Weber's

position. If historical and social reality is best characterized as "nothing more" than an infinitely detailed manifold there can be (a) not only no objective analysis of it but also (b) no most profitable starting point from which we might best begin an examination and investigation of social phenomena.

There is no absolutely "objective" scientific analysis of cultures: or of social phenomena independent of special and "one-sided" viewpoints according to which--expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously--they are selected, analyzed and organized for expository purposes.²³

As Cohen observed, "Rationalization and disenchantment result in the fragmentation of the knower into a one-sided specialist and in the fragmentation of knowledge into separate partial systems constituted according to one-sided viewpoints."²⁴

Thus the study of social phenomena presupposes value-orientations and the work of the social and/or historical investigator cannot be conceived independent of them. Indeed, the very naming of a phenomenal object as a cultural or socio-economic object or event, reveals the interplay of values which cannot be taken as a given. "The quality of an event as a 'socio-economic' event is not something which it possesses 'objectively'. It is rather conditioned by the orientation of our cognitive interest, as it arises from the specific cultural significance which we attribute to the particular event in a given case."²⁵ The concept of culture is then, for example,

a "value-concept."²⁶ Therefore, the facts we select for study depend also on "a small portion of existing concrete reality . . . coloured by our value-conditioned interest and it alone is significant to us."²⁷ Likewise, ". . . the extent or depth to which . . . the . . . investigation attempts to penetrate into the infinite causal web . . . is . . . determined by the evaluative ideas which dominate the investigator and his age."²⁸ For Weber, the explication of value-orientations serves to locate--individually, socially, and historically--the human sciences. It is a thesis that attempts to take seriously the relativity of the investigator's "presuppositions"; the recognition that detachment of an "object" for investigation (from the "cultural manifold") speaks of the investigator, not of the object in-itself; the recognition that "the stream of immeasurable events" that "flows unendingly toward eternity"²⁹ "freezes" science in its youth;³⁰ the recognition that "every science, every single descriptive history, operates with the conceptual stock in trade of its times."³¹ For Weber, there was a potentially inexhaustible number of alternative ways to describe, analyze, and account for social reality. The result is an expectation and tolerance of a relativism in regard to theory (which is grounded in his relativism in regard to value--the "result" of a rationalized and disenchanting world).

* * * * *

Weber's view of value-relativism, it should be noted, does not imply that "social phenomena" or "cultural objects" are appraised according to some schema of values. The history of art, he states, must be distinguished from an aesthetically evaluative approach.³² Rather, it can be argued, the thesis of value-relativism attempts to distinguish the appraisal of objects by value schema (which would conclude that "some envisaged or actual state of affairs is worthy of approval or disapproval") from their characterization (which affirms that "a given characteristic is in some degree present (or absent) in a given instance"),³³ according to their "significance" or "meaning" within the structure of cultural values of the investigator himself.

This view is not without its tensions. For, firstly, "while reference to value makes possible objective knowledge of a cultural or historical object," as Goddard put it, Weber also want to hold, as we have seen, that "knowledge is condemned to remain incomplete. The criterion of the real ultimately renders the real unknowable as to its intrinsic or true nature or structure, or its objective meaning."³⁴ Secondly, the implicit distinction between appraising and characterizing establishes a false dichotomy. Weber's attempt to simply characterize an object implies or takes for granted a further schema of values that restricts social scientific practice, "by a meta-theoretical assertion," to the "production" of knowledge which

"must have an exclusively descriptive [i. e., a nonevaluative, non-judgmental] content."³⁵ However, this assertion hides an evaluation, a commitment to a particular form of rationality and, as we shall see, a certain type of practice. These points need further careful explication.

Weber's position is clarified and better understood in light of the previous discussion of the empirical basis of Weber's epistemological presuppositions. With rationalization came "disenchantment" and the "intellectualization" of the world, the perception of the world as infinitely complex. This process Weber saw as undermining the possibility of attaining value-consensus in the constitution of the world and, consequently, destroying the foundation for a collectively attained consciousness. The end result of this process, for the context of our discussion, was a multitude of competing value-claims, value-relativism, no value of which could have a privileged status. There was, in Weber's view, no ultimate justification for any value. As a result, which we previously noted, Weber sought to keep value-judgments outside the realm of science.

Weber's view of the human sciences rests "on an interpretation of developments in the whole of society, on interpretations which" if it is to have validity, as Habermas has pointed out, "presupposes a more pretentious concept of sociology,"³⁶ i. e., a sociology that

is able to grasp the totality of a given social formation, the dominant trends in it and make fundamental claims about them.³⁷ Indeed, as we shall see, Weber's conception of social science is, to a significant degree, constituted by his conception of the essence of the modern era, his pessimism and resignation to what he considered the "fate of our time"--rationalization, etc. ("the inescapable condition of our historical situation").

Weber claims scientific practice to be free of the value-judgments of the social and historical scientist. But this claim hinges on a belief in the value of scientific truth and its having synonymy with "objectivity." A value-judgment is concealed: "The capitulation to, and acceptance of, the rationalized world as it appears. The method of formal rationality (use of nonevaluative concepts) is an expression of Weber's evaluation of the meaning of the rationalized, meaningless world, of his acceptance and resignation to this rationalization."³⁸ In arguing for scientific truth as objectivity, he presupposes the rationality of this society. The fate of the modern world is the unalterable foundation of "science." Let us examine this claim further.

The rigid demarcation Weber draws between value-judgments and scientific practice has parallels to one of the central tenets of positivism: that facts and values are separable and that value-

judgments have no cognitive bases. In the positivistically oriented social sciences, this presupposition has consequences not only on the epistemological level of self-misunderstanding of science but, also, on the level of social theory and social practice, e. g., social policy planning. To believe in the dichotomy of "objective" knowledge (facts) and values is in effect to attempt to divorce theory from practice. Despite Weber's concern with the interplay of value-orientations and, as we shall see, his views about the role of scientific practice, he, nevertheless, ultimately reestablished this dichotomy as a fundamental tenet of his view of the sciences. Weber's position amounts, in effect, to separating theoretical reason from practical reason and restricting claims to objective, true knowledge to the sphere of the former. This dichotomy, as we emphasize later, supports a technocratic consciousness and leads into a decisionistic ethics:³⁹ ideological factors central to the organization of contemporary capitalism. (These factors are held to be ideological because their very claimed status is an inadequate conceptualization of the nature of their own status.)

Under the guise of a value-free science, Habermas has attempted to demonstrate that positivist social science masks its true nature as a proponent of a quite specific form of rationality and practice.⁴⁰ This much, we contend, Weber has in common with

positivism.⁴¹ N. B. There are strong parallels between our claims about Weber's own self-misunderstanding and miscomprehension of the status of his own claims, and those of the positivists. The details of Habermas' argument against positivism cannot be made here but the points of immediate relevance to our discussion of Weber should be drawn out.⁴²

In the name of his own view of science and rationality, Weber felt that he was able to launch a critique of ideology aimed at rooting out competing theories which are supposedly value-laden and, therefore, illegitimately claiming scientific status.⁴³ But, as we have just pointed out, this critique is laden with a schema of values, an evaluation which Weber overlooks. Although not recognized as such, an interest in technically useful knowledge (i. e., knowledge which can aid decisions on substantive questions by providing, for example, knowledge of the choice and effectiveness of means, regularities, etc.)⁴⁴ and the rationality which embodies it, are values assumed by this (and the positivist) conception of science. They are not recognized as values because of a persuasive definition of (scientific) rationality which makes such rationality coincide with purposive, rational, scientific procedures. Thus the rationality concept underlying Weberian science is that of a formal rationality, a means-ends rationality:

. . . simply, efficiency of means to given ends.
 These values are accorded a privileged status since
 they are implied in "rational" procedure itself . . .⁴⁵

In the name of value-freedom this criticism of ideologies dictates the value-system for all other modes of scientific practice. Theoretical objective knowledge is made coextensive with a particular form of method, rationality, and scientific practice. Questions of practical reason are ruled out of the range of science and beyond rational investigation (although, as we shall see, Weber's views of the role of science do specify that science can be critical of the coherence and "practicality" of ends). Not being open to rational solution, practical questions become the province of the private individual and, in the final instance, can be justified only by reference to a decision; ethics becomes decisionism and not open to cognitive mediation.

Thus the belief in the fact-value, theory-practice dichotomies leads to contradictory results. In the name of value-freedom (i. e., freedom from "value-judgments"), a certain schema of values is championed to the exclusion of all others. (On this conception, Weber's understanding of the role of values [value-orientations] is singularly inadequate. For his conception of the interplay of science and value-orientations implies orientations with more extensive commitments.) Furthermore, despite Weber's tacit claim that theory

and practice are essentially two distinct realms, a particular form of practice is sanctioned. Weber's seemingly passive contemplative scientific reason masks an underlying level of committed reason.

In the name of value-freedom, Weber smuggles in a value-laden concept of rationality and implicitly sanctions that which he most feared: the spread of formal rationality. Substantive rationality is suppressed in the "innocent partisanship for formal rationality."⁴⁶ The effect on social theory of this hidden value-orientation is a conceptualization of "science," "scientific problems," "social problems" and "alternative solutions" which encourages the spread of formal rationality. Substantive rationality, i. e., the rationality of ultimate ends, was held to be independent of science. But because of the fact-value dichotomy, substantive rationality could not itself be rationally justified and could not be used to ultimately ground value choices. Thus there was no way to rationally combat the spread of formal, means-end rationality as a value, i. e., the process of rationalization which enthroned science and the technical values of economy and efficiency as ultimate values. Weber saw no historical alternative to the "fate of our time" although he sought to protect an enclave for values and justify a limit to the process of rationalization. But while not endorsing Zweckrationalität and its threat to monopolize reason, Weber, nevertheless, succumbed in

the end to its logic--by grounding science in it. As Habermas wrote,

It is ironical, however, that, as we have seen, this recommendation of a restrictive concept of science rests on an interpretation of developments in the whole of society: . . . In his own work Max Weber did not keep within the limits set by positivism: he was, however, in agreement with the Neo-Kantians, positivistic enough not to allow himself to reflect upon the connection between his methodological perspective and rules, and the results of his social analysis.⁴⁷

These connections need further explication. They will be discussed and developed throughout the remainder of this thesis. They also will be further illustrated in our discussion of how Weber approached causality and method and what he himself thought science could tell us. These topics must be temporarily put aside, but will be taken up later. It is necessary, first, to explore in greater detail Weber's relationship to Kant and the neo-Kantians.

* * * * *

The theoretical positions Weber adopts overlap in many important respects with those of Kant and the neo-Kantians of his day. The elaboration of this theme provides further insight into his discussion of "objectivity" and the claim that there exists "an unconditionally valid type of knowledge in the social sciences, i. e., the analytical ordering of empirical social reality," the full nature of

which we have yet to elaborate. The discussion serves further to highlight the tension between value-relativism and "objectivity" and the tension between Weber's methodological position and what we have hitherto referred to as his subsumed and more "pretentious concept of sociology."

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant argued that "nature" is scientifically known to the human consciousness through the operations of the Understanding. We cannot know "things-in-themselves" (the noumenal character of phenomena are inaccessible to the understanding). We can claim to know only what is mediated by the transcendental principles, rules, and representations of human consciousness (the phenomenal world).⁴⁸ N. B. It is precisely with this context in mind that D. Goddard has noted that:

Weber follows Kant fully here, since he argues that the "meaning" of history [i. e., objective meaning, in the sense, for example, of history embodying an objective teleology] is inaccessible and that the actual, empirical objectivity of phenomena is only possible through the synthetic operations of consciousness.⁴⁹

Goddard further argues that a formal analogy with Kant's critique of reason may be advanced. First, it may be noted that

Kant . . . took as given that the perceptual world was atomistic in character. Perceptions are distinct and separate from each other. . . . The sensuous manifold presents itself as . . . a mosaic of impressions which . . . could only be unified through the spontaneous operation of the understanding.

Sense data are given as subject to unification.
Here is the first parallel with Weber.

For Weber reality is

. . . "an infinitude of details," "an infinite richness," "a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process." It has no meaning or significance, nor any internal bond or connection, except that which is conferred on it by the operations of a meaning-endowing consciousness. In other words, the historical process also presents itself as a mosaic of confused events and actions, the total investigation of the detail of which must always lead to an infinite regress resulting in a "chaos of existential judgements."⁵⁰

Secondly, noting the influence of the neo-Kantians (and particularly Rickert), we saw that

. . . segments of that manifold only become cultural constellations or objects, having a certain unity of meaning, by reference to value or meaning, or, as it might be put, under the form of meaning. In the same way we find in Kant that temporality and spatiality are the conditions under which sense-data are received. Sense-data present themselves as stable objectivities (phenomena) under these forms alone. Nothing in the external world can be considered phenomenal, that is, be anything more than a vague and confused impression, unless it satisfies these conditions.

However, thirdly,

. . . phenomena remain distinct and separate unless connection is imposed on them by the pure understanding. They are subject to ratification. Thus a temporal sequence A-B-C-D may have no connection unless the temporal relationship is ratified under the law of causality, the principal category of the understanding in which Kant was interested.⁵¹

There is, of course, an extraordinary conjunction and complementarity between Weber's Kantianism and his sociological investigations. Whereas the theme of rationalization can be seen as the empirical basis (or concretization) of his epistemological presuppositions, it is clear that his epistemological presuppositions themselves were in part Kantian. But in discussing the category of causality (which was crucial for Weber), we will see that he develops the Kantian epistemological viewpoint as he both extends the category's significance for the human sciences and locates its role within a complex methodology.

For Weber, the particular concepts we develop cannot represent reality. The elaboration of concepts serves to "clarify a singular event or phenomenon and facilitates the construction of a systematic or rational picture of a segment of culture in order to establish its internal meaning and to discover its adequate causation."⁵² Yet the concepts themselves accentuate already selected aspects of reality; for instance, an ideal-type "is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view . . . which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (Gedankenbild)."⁵³ An ideal-type is constructed by the abstraction and combination of a number of elements which, although given in reality, are stressed and constituted from the point

of view we are interested in.* As Goddard has correctly observed, "the ideal-type endows features of cultural experience, which otherwise would remain indistinct, with a clear and precise meaning."⁵⁴ The result is that the concepts generated permit us to make a precise analysis of it from the value-orientation we took toward it.

The question remains, however, what is the status of this analysis, given Weber's claim that it can be "objective," if our topic of investigation is constituted by value and if our concepts are both value and empirically relative?

The answer lies with Weber's emphasis on rational method. On this claim rests Weber's attempt to have separated "science from faith."

In "Science as a Vocation" and "Objectivity in the Social Sciences," Weber states that all scientific work presupposes two things: (1) ". . . that the rules of logic and method are valid," i. e., a "rational method,"⁵⁵ and (2) that "what is yielded by scientific work is important in the sense that it is "worth being known."⁵⁶ The former presupposition is crucial for the claims to objectivity,

*Ideal-types are not formed purely through theoretical reflection. Rather, they are modified and sharpened through empirical analysis and in turn further aid the exactness of that analysis. (Cf. Weber, M. S. S., pp. 32-47 and 90-98.) The role of ideal-types will be discussed further in the next chapter.

for it is argued that "rational method" in the social sciences ". . . if it is to achieve its purpose . . ." must generate "systematically correct scientific proofs" that must be "acknowledged as correct even by a Chinese--or--more precisely stated--it must constantly strive to attain this goal, which perhaps may not be completely attainable due to faulty data. Furthermore, the successful logical analysis of the content of an ideal and ultimate axiom and the discovery of the consequences which arise from pursuing it, logically and practically, must also be valid for the Chinese."⁵⁷ That is to say, despite the interplay of values, rational method is claimed to be the basis on which truths/proofs are produced having cross-cultural inter-subjective validity.

This does not imply that validity claims generated by "rational methods" (or the "ideal" mentioned above) will be accepted or rejected across cultures. In the second presupposition, as Weber put it, "are contained all our problems";⁵⁸

. . . for this presupposition cannot be proved by scientific means. It can only be interpreted with reference to its ultimate meaning, which we must reject or accept according to our ultimate position towards life.⁵⁹

In fact, Weber states that our evaluation of the importance and status of science and/or scientific proofs is itself historical (a product of the "rationalization" of everyday life). What, then, does Weber

mean by "valid proofs," etc.? It appears that Weber might have two views on this issue.

It seems, first, that Weber wants to argue that "the Chinese" would accept the validity (despite supposedly distanced cultural norms) of rational methods (e. g., rules for logical inference, rational thought, i. e., an appropriate methodology), but might well reject the interpretive framework, the explanation, the explanans of a Western advanced, industrial, and scientific culture. "The Chinese" might prefer and argue instead for accounts and explanations of the (social) world underpinned by, for example, moral or religious standpoints. In other words, "the Chinese" might accept the validity claims generated by an established and intersubjectively recognized procedure but not necessarily the explanation. (We will call this "position one.")

But a question arises: why would the Chinese accept the methods of inquiry? Why are such methods exempted, in Weber's view, in their acceptance or rejection from the process of rationalization? They clearly are not trans-historical and inter-subjectively recognized across cultures.⁶⁰ Weber offers no elaboration of this point, and, as with so many of his positions, they are simply stated and assumed. Elsewhere he states that:

The means available to our science offer nothing to those persons to whom this truth is of no value.

It should be remembered that the belief in the value of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man's original nature.⁶¹

If by "means" he implies rational methods of inquiry, the position we have just established, viz., the Chinese, is contradicted, making the acceptance of scientific procedures itself also historically and culturally relative. (We call this "position two.")

Both views, it should be noted, also suggest that given at least some cultural heterogeneity within a supposedly, predominantly, scientific culture, there is no ultimate justification for (a) in position one, scientific explanations qua explanations, and (b) in position two, for scientific methods and explanations.

Each position has its difficulties and its tensions. In the first (position) scientific procedures are assumed to be inter-subjectively recognized as valid and in use, productive of truths and proofs that are said to be valid cross-culturally. Yet, it is also suggested that the explanations of these "proofs," etc., need not entail inter-subjective agreement. What then is the status of the proofs? What can they be said to be proofs of? Furthermore, in what sense can Weber now maintain that science is a rational and systematic means to acquire truths about empirical reality? On this conception of science we risk a relativism, a science that is capable of producing a multitude of competing explanations, all generated by rational

methods and all at some level claiming the status of truths. The tensions and issues that are raised here need further explication. But before doing so, let us look briefly at position two.

In the second position Weber argues more generally that one cannot justify the "strange intoxication" with science and scientific practice within its own terms of reference. There is a form of "irrationality," the motivation base, behind those that utilize the "rational method." In this context we can see why Weber quotes Tolstoi with appreciation and approval:

Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important to us: "What shall we do and how shall we live?"⁶²

Thus here, acceptance of the authority of science to establish truth claims is dependent on prescientific value choices and dependent for acceptance or rejection on, ultimately, individually chosen values. Science, then, rests its authority on individual decision and, like all value choices, such a decision is, in the last analysis, based on faith. This position, it might be noted, is very close to that of the thoroughly anarchistic views of the philosopher of science, Paul Feyerabend.⁶³

Yet Weber also wants to say (if we take him to be holding position two and given we accept the role of science) that science is uniquely constituted by a rational method productive of valid,

objective claims! Such a view would not be accepted by Feyerabend, who would note that the logic of position two cannot generate a single justification for science. Science, on this account can have no more claims to be offering an "objective" analysis of the social (or natural) world than other methods and accounting schema that subsume alternative rationalities.

So the authority of science is (in position one), on the one hand, legitimated by rational method, its products are independent of value-judgments, but on the other hand, explanations are culturally and historically relative and might well differ. In position two, science's authority rests on a decision and is dependent (wholly) on values. But given a decisionistic commitment to science, valid and objective claims are (said to be) generated. Scientific claims are partial and one-sided because in position one, different explanations are legitimate for a given and established social phenomenon, and in position two, because both scientific practice and explanatory claims have no privileged status unless accepted individually and thereby legitimated.

Of the positions, position one finds stronger support throughout the texts and appears to be Weber's essential argument for demarcating science from faith. This view is (very importantly) consistent with Weber's arguments, viz., the dichotomy between

value-judgments and objective knowledge (facts). It is also consistent with our arguments that Weber subsumes a particular form of rationality and practice in his view of science. In fact, his very emphasis on and taking-for-granted of the centrality of method might well be explained by his implicit evaluation and subsumption of formal rationality in science. If he held to position two, he would be risking a view of complete and utter relativism and would not be able to defend science, as he clearly did, as a special area of human endeavor productive of "objective" knowledge (i. e., knowledge free of value-judgments).* The issues raised by position two (which can be used as a basis for a critique of position one) will be taken up again later in the text.

As we previously suggested, textual readings provide evidence that Weber most wanted to hold to position one. It is this position that we will assume and further explore for the remainder of this chapter. As Weber put it in "Objectivity in the Social Sciences,"

*It should be noted that position two does not necessarily imply a general critique of the notion of objectivity. Rather, that several methods, e. g., of a scientific, moral, critical, or religious kind might be defended as equally productive of objective knowledge (e. g., each subsuming a different form of rationality).

The objective validity of all empirical knowledge rests exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are subjective in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the presuppositions of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the value of those truths which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us.⁶⁴

"The criterion of scientific knowledge," Weber declares, "is to be found in the 'objective' validity of its results."⁶⁵ A delicate balance is struck? Weber deliberately opposes the minimizing of the role of "subjectivity," and deliberately attempts to take into account and emphasize that which is scientifically undemonstrable. Here Weber is "fundamentally attacking . . . the belief of science in objective norms in general and their scientific demonstrability in particular."⁶⁶ The argument (developed above as position one and suggested in the quote above), however, seeks to balance "subjectivity" with a value which no longer refers to "value-orientation" but to the universal value of scientific method. The argument for "objectivity" rests, in the last analysis, on the capacity of certain procedures to generate "valid" proofs, i. e., on Method.

The position is a logically necessary one for Weber. For once it is admitted that subjective value-orientations constitute the "object of investigation" and the social facts explored; and that there exists no alternative grounding for our knowledge, then, if the conclusion that social science can only produce competitive explanations

of the social world to those of the laymen and holders of other procedures and rationalities, is to be avoided--the argument necessarily tends to a strong emphasis in epistemology on methodology.⁶⁷

Weber's position in respect to method can also be clarified with reference to the Heidelberg neo-Kantians of his time.^{68, 69}

In his highly influential rectoral address, Gesichte und Naturwissenschaft,⁷⁰ Wilhelm Windelband rejected the distinction between Natur/Geisteswissenschaften as a distinction that can be made on the basis of two different objects of inquiry.⁷¹ Rather, he argued, that any such division must be based on a purely formal or logical statement.⁷² The address, in part, centers on a discussion of the status of psychology and in the ensuing analysis and comparison of psychology and the natural sciences, he concludes that a "reconstruction of their logical similarity . . . must rest on a formal or methodological distinction with the historical sciences."

The principle of division is the formal character of their ends of knowledge (Erkenntnisziele). The one seeks general laws, the other particular historical facts: expressing this in language of formal logic, the end of one is general, apodictic judgments (the end) of the other is singular assertoric sentences.⁷³

The distinction is between nomothetic and ideographic sciences, a distinction that classifies only the "methodological treatment . . . not the content of the knowledge itself."⁷⁴

In the closing sections of the speech Windelband calls for logicians to recognize that there are other logics than that of the natural sciences and asks them to begin an inquiry into ideographic analyses, specifically the work of historians, to uncover all that is involved. "Of no less importance," Windelband says (bearing the natural sciences in mind) "is an understanding of historical evolution." His argument about logics and methods rests finally on the granting of equal status to the different ends, interests, and goals that guide the two (potential) major scientific enterprises. He saw both of these as necessary for the bildung (cultivation, education) of man and German society.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to show how Heinrich Rickert's position (in his important Kulturwissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften)⁷⁵ developed from and differed with Windelband's, but one or two points--which offer insight into Weber's own work--may be noted. Rather than speaking of nomothetic and ideographic sciences, Rickert stressed the fact that there are generalizing and individualizing tendencies within all sciences, and saw these tendencies as determined by the goals toward which the sciences aim.⁷⁶ Maintaining Windelband's stress on the nature of the distinction, he argued that it was purely logical and "in no way concerned . . . the content peculiar to the various branches of the

natural or cultural sciences."⁷⁷ The theme can be illustrated well by his discussion of the concerns of the Kulturwissenschaften;⁷⁸ which he argued were and should be concerned with "the interpretation and transmission of an historical acquisition," i.e., with Kultur, and thus are compelled to employ the historical or individualizing method because of the ends they seek. The distinction between the natural and social sciences is not, however, for Rickert, an absolute one.

It is in this light that we can further understand Weber's stress on method--a stress typical in certain philosophical circles of his time. It was unnecessary for him to locate his early methodological essays: the discussion of method per se. The location was, of course, taken for granted. His methodological writings can be seen as an excursion into historiography and the social sciences; a response to the call for an investigation made by the neo-Kantians.

Weber's methodological preoccupations follow, then, from Kantian and neo-Kantian and epistemological presuppositions. They provide the framework in which his work is to be understood. Our discussion of Weber's epistemology and methodology can now also be seen to be a discussion that extends into this framework.

However, in many respects, Weber's claims about the role of the human sciences went beyond that envisaged by Windelband and

Rickert. Weber's claims about what social science could tell us extended the logic of a discipline offering an account of Kultur, an interpretation of past traditions, an historical hermeneutics. In order to explicate these claims we must first make one further set of distinctions: namely those that, in Weber's view, separate the natural from the human sciences. It is only by reference to Windelband and Rickert's positions that we can gain insight into Weber's own.

As it was unnecessary for him to "locate" his stress on method, he likewise essentially presupposed the neo-Kantian position here as well. But there were certain differences and one major change. The neo-Kantian account of the natural sciences was subsumed, but he both extended and altered the neo-Kantian view of the human sciences.

At the turn of the century in German universities there were extensive debates about the status and differences between the natural and cultural sciences--the famous Methodenstreit.⁷⁹ Many joined the debate, including economists (Schmöller, Menger), psychologists (e. g., Wundt), historians (E. Meyer, Lamprecht), philosophers (Dilthey, Windelband, Rickert), and several others.⁸⁰ The center of controversy was the cultural sciences. Should they, as the positivists agreed, be assimilated into the natural sciences, or should they remain "cultural sciences" or "cultural sciences"?

employing the same methodologies? This position was rejected completely by the neo-Kantians. Dilthey held that there was an ontological disjunction between the natural and social sciences. There was a fundamental difference in the respective objects of each science; "a classification . . . being drawn between the kingdom of nature and that of the human mind."⁸¹ Windelband and Rickert, as we have seen, rejected this ontological claim. For Rickert, the infinite flux of reality could be broken down according to the different goals of the respective sciences, which forced on those sciences particular methodologies.

Rickert (also) argued that the distinction between the natural and social sciences was not an absolute one. For Weber, following Rickert, the distinction was also not a "distinction in principle." But Weber's remarks on the differences between the natural and cultural sciences were, as we shall see, all too brief.

In his critique of Roscher and Kneis, the first of his methodological essays, he suggests that "the supposed distinction between natural and social sciences may be used to support a "spurious intuitionism."^{82, 83} The writings of Roscher, Weber argues, hold the view that the universe of human action is not one in which natural scientific methods apply. According to Weber, the Roscher distinction of natural and social sciences "introduce an overriding component

of semi-mystic idealism into the . . . analysis . . . and consequently . . . inexact intuitive procedures. . . . The human world is thus an 'irrational' one, which is epitomised by the Volksgeist or Volksselle. . . . It is impossible, Weber points out, to reconcile the use of such notions as this with the claim, which is advanced by this same author, that vigorous historical research is an end which should be striven for."⁸⁴ Weber argues that the social sciences are necessarily concerned with "spiritual" or "ideal" phenomena and that there is a qualitative difference between the subject matter of the natural and social sciences, but argues--in this paper--that this does not imply or involve the sacrifice of objectivity nor the substitution of replicable causal analysis by intuitionism.⁸⁵

In "Objectivity in the Social Sciences," Weber maintains that "whereas in astronomy, the heavenly bodies are of interest to us only in their quantative and exact aspects, the qualitative aspect of phenomena concerns us in the social sciences."

To this should be added that in the social sciences we are concerned with psychological and intellectual (geistig) phenomena the empathic understanding of which is naturally a problem of a specifically different type from those which the schemes of the exact natural sciences in general can or seek to solve. Despite that, this distinction in itself is not a distinction in principle, as it seems at first glance. Aside from pure mechanics, even the exact natural sciences do not proceed without qualitative categories.⁸⁶ [Emphasis added.]

If it is not a distinction in principle, one may well ask what kind of qualitative distinction is being made? A precise answer is not easily found in Weber's writings.

Weber recognizes, of course, as the remarks and quotations above suggest, that there is a qualitative difference between the subject matter of the natural and social sciences. There are two points that can be noted here. First, there is a sense in which Weber differentiates the natural from the social sciences which refers back to our previous comments on Weber's conception of value-orientations. The object domain of all sciences was seen to be the result, for Weber, of a process of constitution. In the case of the social sciences he felt that there was a multiplicity of possible value-orientations that could determine the objects of investigation. (This was because of, amongst other reasons, (a) the different interests of historians, economists, and psychologists, etc., in the social world; and (b) because the objects these people would regard as culturally significant and consequently worthy of study, changes over time with historical developments and as a result of enhanced knowledge.) The complex and changing nature of the social scientist's value-orientations is held to be in marked contrast to much less varied value-orientations found amongst investigators of the natural world. In a very strong statement of this point, Weber wrote:

This way of being conditioned by "subjective values" is, however, entirely alien in any case to those natural sciences which take mechanics as a model, and it constitutes, indeed, the contrast between the historical and natural sciences.⁸⁷

It appears to be Weber's view that there is (complete?) consensus in the natural sciences informing the natural scientist's value-orientations. (This point, as Weber has developed it is not very substantial. For it can be argued that the differences between, e. g., the physicist and the chemist create fundamentally different interests in the natural world, with the same status as in point (a) above. It can also be argued that the history of these sciences changes and complicates the scientist's value-orientations in the same way as in point (b) above.)^{88, 89}

The second point Weber makes, which is much stronger and more fundamental, is that whereas natural scientists and cultural scientists are concerned with objects as constituted from the standpoint of their value-orientations, the cultural scientist has in addition to be concerned with "objects" that have a self-understanding. In other words, the cultural scientist has to be able to understand his object domain, which consists of social and historical subjects who themselves constitute the world in varying contexts. He cannot offer a scientifically adequate account of this world without taking into consideration these acts of constitution. (This point and its consequences will be

further developed in the next chapter.) This is a dimension of scientific investigation which rarely, if ever, exists for the natural scientist.⁹⁰

However, Weber offers no argument that dwells on the difference between the natural and social sciences being essentially one of subject matter. It seems that he saw in this distinction primarily methodological considerations.

With Rickert he rejects the attempt to rigidly classify the sciences. He accepts and recognizes the distinction between generalizing and individualizing methods, the "'abstract'-theoretical method" and "empirical historical" techniques of research.⁹¹ The natural sciences are seen to be characterized by the former, but not restricted to this methodological stance (e. g., some natural sciences might use different methods to explain unique occurrences). With the social sciences it was significantly different--for Weber establishes a major "generalizing and individualizing" tendency within the human sciences. Sociology and even history are seen to employ and utilize causal explanations and generalizing laws. There is a complex interplay, between the respective methods, that develops in Weber's writings. How he establishes this position we explicate at length in the following chapter. All that need be noted here is that in making these fundamental changes in the neo-Kantian position he takes the

cultural (or human) sciences beyond the logic or goals of those envisaged for these sciences by Windelband and Rickert. For Rickert, for example, the study of history through culture was thoroughly hermeneutic in intent: it was to be an analysis and interpretation of tradition that would yield and enhance our understanding of the socio-cultural life-world. Weber's position was and is not simply hermeneutic in implication. As the human sciences embodied a generalizing and individualizing tendency, so they also embodied more complex goals. As we have previously noted and as we shall see in more detail, Weber's extended conception of the human sciences and their roles implies an alternative conception of their logic that both extends and changes the neo-Kantian position we have discussed here.

Weber was much more explicit in his views about what the sciences could tell us, than about the nature of the distinction between them. However, as we point out below, there is more to his view than he, in fact, even here makes explicit.

"In the natural sciences, the practical evaluative attitude," Weber thought, "toward what was immediately and technically useful was closely associated from the very first with the hope . . . of attaining a purely 'objective' . . . monistic knowledge of the totality of reality in a conceptual system of metaphysical validity and

mathematical form."⁹² Those natural sciences which became closely bound to evaluative attitudes (Weber names clinical medicine and "what is conventionally called 'technology'") lose, for him, their scientific status--becoming "purely practical 'arts'."⁹³ Natural science cannot tell us whether we ought to master life technically or whether such a pursuit is "meaningful." Natural science can only gather knowledge of reality and tell us how to master life technically. It cannot tell us whether to "master life technically" nor what ends to pursue to achieve technical mastery.

The social sciences, Weber points out, "first arose in connection with practical considerations."⁹⁴ Tracing its origins to state economic policy, he goes on to say that as such:

. . . It was a "technique" in the same sense as, for instance, the clinical disciplines in the medical sciences are. It has now become known how this situation was gradually modified. This modification was not, however, accompanied by a formulation of the logical (prinzipielle) distinction between "existential knowledge," i. e., knowledge of what "is," and "normative knowledge," i. e., knowledge of what "should be."⁹⁵

Such a distinction is "absolutely" necessary for, as we have already seen, despite the partiality, one-sidedness of knowledge, knowledge is "objective" and, Weber states countlessly, it is logically impossible for an empirical discipline to establish, scientifically, ideals which define what "ought to be," i. e., which (and to what purpose)

an end should be pursued. What then can social sciences tell us?

Weber argues that while value-judgments concerning what "ought to be" cannot be validated by science, "the question of the appropriateness of means for achieving a given end is undoubtedly accessible to scientific analysis."⁹⁶ Scientific analysis can allow us to determine the applicability and suitability of a given range of means, by examining the chances attached to each "means" for the realization of an end. Furthermore, the social scientist can examine the full range of consequences, advantages, "costs," entailed by the selection of a particular means to a given end.⁹⁷ The costs analyzed can be of two sorts: (1) the partial rather than the complete realization of a chosen end, or (2) the bringing about of additional consequences which might have negative effects on other ends held by the individual. In this way it is also possible, Weber claims, that we can "indirectly criticize the setting of the end itself as practically meaningful (on the basis of the existing historical situation) or as meaningless with reference to existing conditions."^{98, 99}

"The contribution of science does not reach its limits with this . . . ¹⁰⁰ if we are competent in our pursuit (which must be presupposed here), we can force the individual or at least we can help him, to give an account of the ultimate meaning of his own conduct."¹⁰¹ Science is also, therefore, able to assess the internal

and external consistency of conduct, to make frequently presupposed ideals explicit and, in other words, to be "in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts."¹⁰² Weber sees scientific activity as an important agent in the demystification of the world, not an end itself. Yet again, it can be said, his views are not without difficulties and tensions.

Science, on Weber's account, can be critical of the suitability, coherence, completeness, etc., of an end or ideal. Science can evaluate means, suggest which are most appropriate to a given end, and also ("indirectly") assess the "practicality" of ends with reference to existing historical conditions. In fact, on Weber's view, science is able to establish "means" in a hierarchy of "costs," practicality, etc., and, therefore, specify accomplishable ends. Science on this account, despite Weber's claims, is evaluative and judgmental. The practical consequences of Weber's view of science become more explicit here and bring many of our previous themes to a head. These points are worthy of further consideration.

The assessment of means etc., according to the criteria of practicality, is to appraise these empirical possibilities with a value that is, in Weber's works, ambiguous and much in need of absent elaboration. For the question arises: From whose standpoint do we judge practicality? The businessman's, the revolutionary's, the

social scientist's? Weber's view also establishes a dichotomy that is, at best, weak. The relationship between means and ends is not a rigid and distinct relation. After all, what are means? They can easily be regarded as short-run ends. And ends? Are they not long-run means? The relationship, as Hegel would argue, is an identity of identity and difference, i. e., a dialectical unity, a differentiated interacting unity.¹⁰³ To evaluate ends even "indirectly" according to the "practicality" etc. of means (albeit in an historical context), is to beg the question as to whether or not means are ends and vice-versa and for whom our criteria of assessment are valid.

Given Weber's views on value-orientations, he might well have responded to these questions by saying that since the disenchanted world can find no ultimate justifications for deciding between competing irreducible ideals, then, what we mean by practicality or, for example, an end, will of course differ. And this is how it should be. So long as the adherents to different conceptions of practicality etc. utilize the rational method, then we have no means available, in the last analysis, to choose between them other than personal decision. Just as science has the capacity to produce "objective" competing explanations of the social world, so the role of science can produce a plethora of different accounts of the practicality of ends, each having equal claim to validity.

The tensions entailed in this view were pointed to in our earlier discussion of Weber's position (see pp. 58-60 above, the discussion of position one). They can be further elaborated. Weber's account of science and "objectivity" admits, we have suggested, of the possibility of a multitude of competing explanations of the social world all claiming validity. Given different value-orientations and adherence to the norms of rational method, it would seem possible for there to be mutually incompatible, perhaps contradictory, knowledge claims. If this is the case, then science is open, incomplete, and necessarily relative to the point of being potentially constitutive of incompatible validity claims that find no possible resolution within scientific practice. Weber's conception of science embodies incompleteness and openness in the sense that:

- a. true statements about reality are said to be without limit,
- b. all knowledge is held to be potentially falsifiable, and
- c. scientific knowledge is seen to be cumulative.¹¹⁰⁴

But although it admits of incompatible knowledge claims, it does not lead to contradiction. Larry Simon has pointed out that it does not lead to contradiction because there

. . . is a form of incommensurability inherent in Weber's position. All scientific truths are partial and relative to their value-orientations. Truths have to be understood in terms of this relativity. Seemingly incompatible claims cannot be juxtaposed to produce a contradiction because, in the final

analysis, they are not talking about the same identical objects or events. Each is true of a particular portion of the flux of reality as illuminated or abstracted according to a particular criterion of significance. Since they are not strictly talking about the same identical thing, they are not technically contradictory. 105

Instead, they are best conceived as truths of reality which are illuminating of it, but inherently partial and never, by definition, in strict correspondence to it. The Chinese or Western social scientist can claim objectivity and validity for an analysis of Z, even though the former might explain it by A and the latter by B. If Q is constituted from different value-orientations, there is no contradiction between the respective accounts. In Weber's conception one can only have contradictory claims if a given analysis of Q is constituted from the same value-orientations, uses the same intersubjectively recognized methods of inquiry, and then produces incompatible statements. Scientific practice, therefore, can result in a multitude of competing explanations of the social world, all illuminating reality, all adding to our stock of knowledge. There may not be contradiction but there is an inherent relativism. For, in the last analysis, there are no criteria to judge between competing explanations other than those based on individual value-orientations. This same argument obviously applies to Weber's conception of science's capacity to address "means," "ends," and "ideals."

Having said this, however, it is crucially important to realize that in Weber's account of the role of science, the tolerance of relativism as regards to value and consequently theory and validity, might be thought of--to use Marcuse's famous phrase--as a "repressive tolerance."¹⁰⁶ For although we have competing explanations all justly claiming validity, they are in competition within a fixed framework, a specific form of rationality, a specific schema of values that consequently sanction a particular form of practice. They are differentiated views, but differentiated within the same fundamental framework. As our previous discussion of these issues pointed out, it is a framework delineated by formal, means-ends rationality, a decisionistic ethics and practice. It is in this framework that Weber grounded his science. Although not recognized as such, an interest in technically useful knowledge and the rationality which embodies it are values assumed by this conception of science, for science, on this account, has an inherent potential and subsumed interest in providing technically useful information. Science lends itself to technical recommendations and has an in-built potential for becoming little more than a technical critique. As we noted earlier, in the name of value-freedom (i. e. , freedom from value-judgments), Weber smuggles in a value-laden, evaluative concept of rationality and as such sanctions what he hoped to challenge: the spread of

formal rationality. Weber takes for granted that which he most sought to limit.

The "logic" and "goals" of the human sciences are no longer, as they were for Windelband and Rickert, "simply" hermeneutic in intent. Weber's concept of science is deeply embedded in a technical, instrumental interest. This is not to say that Weber's exposition of the human sciences does not embody a hermeneutic dimension. As we shall see in the following chapter, his conception of history approximates the intentions of Rickert, but his conception of the human sciences extends the "goals" of both historical hermeneutics and, as we have just seen, a partiality for the goals of technically useful knowledge.

Interestingly enough, it might be noted, that what we called Weber's second position¹⁰⁷ (i. e., the view that the authority of science's explanations and rational procedures rests on individual decision) is the basis of a potentially strong argument to undermine the first position, which we have taken in this thesis to be the position Weber attempted to uphold. As we know, Weber takes for granted formal rationality as the foundation of science. His claims are essentially unmotivated, they are without (elaborate) justification: they are, for the best part, assumed. But given his own view that value-judgments, evaluations, practical recommendations, etc., are all, ultimately based on faith, there can, within his own terms of

reference, be no justification for the formal rationality of science as a privileged, unevaluative, absolute ground for "objective" knowledge. The commitment to formal rationality involves a substantive choice, i.e., a value-judgment. The option for formal rationality requires a justified practical reason. Since Weber has closed off value-judgments from cognitive resolution, and rules out of consideration the possibility that practical questions admit of truth, he cannot rationally justify his own position. It too, within Weber's own terms of reference, rests on a decision which is, "in the end," based on faith. For there is, in Weber's view, no ultimate justification on which science can be grounded. We are, firmly, in the established relativism of position two. But the question now is: can we avoid this position? Is it the only option and direction we have? In asking these questions we discover another position that Weber implicitly shuts off.

It is often held by the Critical tradition that although Weber, of course, allows (in position one) for the possibility of describing the genesis of our values (e. g. , the Protestant ethic), he does not comprehend the possibility of a critically reflexive understanding of this genesis. Such an understanding of the interconnectedness of values to their social situatedness, e. g. , class structuration,¹⁰⁸ might reveal that certain value-orientations and judgments blind

those who hold them to an adequate conceptualization of the social world, i. e. , might be ideological. It would be ideological in the sense that and insofar as the values project onto the social world a view which is limited, one-sided, distorted, and false, and prevents an adequate confrontation with the nature of its own limited, one-sided, distorted, and false status.

Weber can (attempt to) justify his view with reference to the empirical basis of his epistemological presuppositions. There can be no ultimate arbitration between value-judgments and value-claims; they only admit of individual choice in a "disenchanted" world. But in holding this position, Weber must also uncritically accept a multitude of possible competing explanations and accounts about the world as long as they adhere to the canons of rational scientific method. As such, it could be argued, he closes off the possibility of a critical theory that might explicate the ideological basis of certain accounts of the social world.

Weber's views, as we shall see, are in sharp contradistinction to certain members of the Critical and Marxist traditions, whose writings we explore in the third part of this thesis. It is with the possibility of a critical reflexive understanding, they contend, that we can avoid the inevitable relativism of Weber's second position. In order to establish such a critical understanding, the task, which

Weber cannot conceive within his terms of reference, is to explicate the possibility of a Critical science which is grounded and which recognizes that practical questions admit of truth. This possibility we will begin to examine at the close of the following chapter and in Parts III and IV. However, at this point it should be noted that the criticism of Weber that he closes off the possibility of a Critical theory of society depends for its force on the capacity of the Critical tradition to make good on its claim that a Critical theory is a viable epistemological and methodological project. If such an alternative cannot be sustained we either become once more vulnerable to Weber's position two or we have to rethink possible approaches and structures of questions to the problematics raised.

* * * * *

The issues and critique we have developed so far can be further illustrated in Weber's account of the human sciences, in his approaches to sociology and historiography in particular and in his treatment of their respective methods and approaches to causality. This we attempt to do in the following chapter. But before turning to these further questions, an additional note might be added.

The neo-Kantians did not foresee that in the mid-twentieth century the interest in certainty, prediction, and control, the logic they associated with the natural sciences, would become the general logic and program for most of the social sciences. Weber might be thought of as having anticipated this development in his preoccupation with the process of rationalization and the spreading of instrumental reason. It is paradoxical, however, that given his enormous insights into economy and society that when compared to Rickert's conception of the human sciences, Weber's own contribution can be seen to have added to and confirmed the very social processes he wanted to limit. The "fate of the modern world" did indeed show a cunning that he himself was blind to. Weber's conception of science, given all his insights, is also ideological.¹⁰⁹ The question must be asked why Weber remained satisfied with the view of science he expounded.

Any attempt to provide an adequate answer to this question would require an analysis of the stature of Lucien Goldman's study of Kant.¹¹⁰ It would require a study in the sociology of knowledge that was not just concerned with Weber's life and work, but the epoch from whence he emerged. It is obviously an unthinkable task in the bounds of this thesis. We can only note a few brief points.

It is clear that Weber took for granted the philosophical context of his methodological writings and, consequently, epistemology

did not directly preoccupy him as it did others of this time. Other clues can be found in Mitzman's work that we earlier referred to:¹¹¹ still others, in his acquiescence and capitulation to the rationalized world as it appeared. For ultimately this was a world in which formal rationality also made possible a development of social institutions strongly tending toward law and justice that would free the arbitration of civil society from collective and individual substantive interests. A world of universal, technically trained officials and organizations that becomes the "absolutely inescapable condition of our existence." It is in this context that we may note the force of Marcuse's comment that:

Weber's concept of fate . . . generalizes the blindness of a society which reproduces itself behind the back of individuals, of a society in which the law of domination appears as objective technological law.¹¹²

The very concept of rationalization is also ideological. For it glosses social processes, reifies social life, and consequently depersonalizes and depoliticizes history. But for Weber, we must remember, this process also brings in its wake an intellectualization of the social world, a new freedom for thought and inquiry. Its institutions offered a new impartiality and individuals enhanced choice. It was a world in which each person was, in the end, best able to be the master or the mistress of his or her life. The emphasis, as we have seen, in Weber's discussion of values is on individual freedom and choice and

on the capacity of individuals to choose. In a disenchanted world man finds a new freedom from dependence on unreflected Weltanschauung, and a new freedom to will his life his own.

For Weber, the modern democracy is a means to an end.¹¹³ His political writings are deeply intertwined with the values of European liberalism.¹¹⁴ and its ultimate value: the individual's autonomy. The classical tenets of bourgeois, liberal individualism, and its vision of freedom are constantly upheld. These values, Weber argued, could only be defended and furthered by the development of the German nation-state. But the State is always a means for Weber, for he saw modern bourgeois democracies as the "only modes," as Giddens put it, "of partially releasing modern man from the 'iron cage' of the bureaucratized division of labour."¹¹⁵

Weber also saw the need and the possibility to supplement the new democratic order with the value-creative properties of charismatic political leadership. Weber sought decisionistic self-assertion in the midst of a rationalized world. In politics he favored, as Habermas wrote, "scope for a leader, strong-willed and with an instinct for power,"¹¹⁶ who could accommodate and use the expert civil servant. Weber's political vision was thoroughly intertwined with the bourgeois vision of the freedoms of possessive individualism.¹¹⁷

There are further consequences which should not and cannot

be overlooked. If we may quote Habermas once again:

At the time of the First World War he [Weber] outlined a sketch of Caesar-like leader-democracy on the contemporary basis of a national-state imperialism. This militant latter-day liberalism had consequences in the Weimar period which we, and not Weber, must answer for. If we are to judge Weber here and now, we cannot overlook the fact that Carl Schmitt was a "legitimate pupil" of Weber's. Viewed in the light of the history of influences, the decisionist element in Weber's sociology did not break the spell of ideology, but strengthened it.¹¹⁸

The same can be said of Weber's conception of science. It subsumes and reflects the bourgeois vision of Rationality, Freedom, and Democracy. There is little self-consciousness of this in Weber's methodological writings.

NOTES

- ¹Weber, M. S. S., p. 72.
- ²D. Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity of the Social Sciences," in History and Theory (1973), pp. 2-4.
- ³Weber, M. S. S., p. 72 (first emphasis mine).
- ⁴Ibid., p. 78.
- ⁵Ibid., p. 60.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 72.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 78.
- ⁹Ibid., p. 72.
- ¹⁰A. Saloman, "Max Weber's Methodology," Social Research 1 (1934): 157; quoted in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 12.
- ¹¹Weber, M. S. S., pp. 110-11.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 1 (my emphasis).
- ¹³Ibid., p. 19.
- ¹⁴Ibid., pp. 1-50.
- ¹⁵See especially Ibid., pp. 1-47.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 8.
- ¹⁷Cf. Mitzman, The Iron Cage, chaps. 3-9. Also, Giddens, Politics and Sociology.
- ¹⁸Weber, M. S. S., pp. 46-47. More will be said about Weber's conception of the State and politics at the end of this chapter.

¹⁹Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in From Max Weber, pp. 77-128.

²⁰Weber, M. S. S., p. 63.

²¹See p. 30.

²²Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity of the Social Sciences," p. 2.

²³Weber, M. S. S., p. 72.

²⁴Cohen, "Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination," p. 67.

²⁵Weber, M. S. S., p. 64.

²⁶Ibid., p. 76.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 84.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 105-6.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., pp. 32-33.

³³Ernest Nagel, The Structure of Science (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), pp. 492-93. For an elaboration of the proposed distinction, cf. Nagel's The Structure of Science, pp. 485-502. This distinction and its weaknesses will be discussed at several points in chaps. 4 ff.

³⁴Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity of the Social Sciences," p. 14. The nature of this tension is discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

³⁵Jürgen Habermas commenting on a paper by Parsons on Weber in Max Weber and Sociology Today, ed. Otto Stammer (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 65.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷The concept of totality in Weber is discussed on pp. 130-33.

³⁸Cohen, "Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination," p. 69.

³⁹The doctrine of decisionism in ethics is here taken to imply that choice between ethical standpoints belong solely to the individual. It is the responsibility of each person to decide, and the decision rests, ultimately, on faith. For an elaboration of this viewpoint cf. my exegesis of Weber's position in the closing two pages of the previous chapter.

⁴⁰Cf. Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pt. 2. Also Jürgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). Habermas' discussion of positivism is itself discussed in chap. 4 and in pt. 4.

⁴¹The term "positivism," as a label for a particular form of knowing and self-understanding, has been much abused and subjected to seemingly endless polemic. It is frequently used with wholly pejorative connotations. My understanding of the term and the schools of thought with which it can be justifiably associated, is expounded in chap. 4.

⁴²The following remarks follow those of a section of chap. 2 of a jointly written paper by Larry Simon and myself, "Understanding Habermas" (unpublished).

⁴³Cf., for example, his critique of Roscher and Knies: "Subjectivity and Determinism," in Positivism and Sociology, ed. Giddens.

⁴⁴I discuss Weber's explicit views on the role of science toward the end of this chapter.

⁴⁵Gerard Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience (Chicago: Henry Pegnery, 1970), p. 325.

⁴⁶Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 272.

⁴⁷Habermas, in Max Weber and Sociology Today, ed. Stammer.

⁴⁸It should be noted that my knowledge of Kant rests too heavily on secondary sources. Important for the views that are expressed above were Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests; Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity of the Social Sciences"; Robert P. Wolff, ed., Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968); Lucien Goldman, Immanuel Kant (London: New Left Books, 1971).

⁴⁹Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity in the Social Sciences," p. 12.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 14 (my emphasis).

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 14-15 (my emphasis).

⁵²Ibid., p. 15.

⁵³Weber, M. S. S., p. 90.

⁵⁴Goddard, "Max Weber and the Objectivity in the Social Sciences," p. 15.

⁵⁵Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, p. 143.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Weber, M. S. S., p. 58 (my emphasis).

⁵⁸Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, p. 143.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Cf. Claud Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), pp. 15-17.

⁶¹Weber, M. S. S., p. 110.

⁶²Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, p. 163.

⁶³Paul Feyerabend, Against Method (London: New Left Books, 1975).

⁶⁴Weber, M. S. S., p. 110. (second, fifth, and sixth emphases are mine).

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 51.

⁶⁶Karl Löwith, "Rationalization and Freedom," in Max Weber, ed. D. Wrong (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 106.

⁶⁷For an elaboration of this theme, see Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 67-186. We explore this theme further in the following pages, especially in pts. 3 and 4.

⁶⁸The Heidelberg school was only one of seven general tendencies within neo-Kantianism. See T.K. Oesterreich, Die deutsche Philosophie des XIX Jahrhunderts und der Gegenwart (Berlin: E.S. Miller, 1923).

⁶⁹The two Heidelberg philosophers, Wilhelm Windelband and (especially) Heinrich Rickert, were central figures in the shaping of Weber's work. See Andrew Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," Telos 21 (1974); and H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (Saint Albans, England); Paladin Frogmore, 1974), pp. 287-96.

The following nine references were brought to my attention by James Schmidt, in an unpublished paper, "The Tragic Vision In Neo-Kantian Philosophy and Sociology." Translations are his unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁰Wilhelm Windelband, Gesichte und Naturwissenschaft (1894), 3rd unaltered ed. (Strasbourg: J.H.E. Heitz, 1904).

⁷¹Windelband was speaking essentially to the early work of Dilthey.

⁷²Windelband, Gesichte und Naturwissenschaft, pp. 9-10.

⁷³Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁵Heinrich Rickert, Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft (Science and History), ed. A. Goddard, trans. Geroge Reisman (Princeton: D. VanNostrand, 1962).

⁷⁶Ibid., p. xii.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁹See Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, trans. Mary Ilford (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), pp. 37-41.

⁸⁰For a brief overview of the debate, cf. Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 38.

⁸²Giddens, Capitalism and Social Theory, p. 134, and quoting from Max Weber, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre (Turbingen, 1968), p. 9ff (my emphasis).

⁸³At the time of writing the passages immediately above, I had not read this essay and relied entirely on Giddens, Capitalism and Social Theory, p. 134, for a summary. Since then this important essay has been translated. Cf. Weber, "Subjectivity and Determinism," in Positivism and Sociology, ed. Giddens.

⁸⁴Weber, "Subjectivity and Determinism," in Positivism and Sociology, ed. Giddens, p. 134.

⁸⁵Weber's methodological writings attempt, of course, to show how this is possible. The following chapter is concerned to show how Weber proposed we proceed and what kind of detailed methodological apparatus he recommended.

⁸⁶Weber, M. S. S., p. 74 (my emphasis).

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 160.

⁸⁸This last point, with respect to the changing nature of natural scientists' value and cognitive interests, will be taken up again in the discussion of the work of Thomas Kuhn in chap. 4, pp. 208-17.

⁸⁹I owe the above point about Weber's differentiation between the natural and social sciences on the line of value-orientations, and its critique, to Larry Simon (from an unpublished paper entitled "A Discussion of Some Issues in Max Weber's Methodological Writings").

⁹⁰It might exist in zoology and biology, in attempts to comprehend, for example, advanced primates. But, obviously, to sustain this point we need a very broad conception of Language and Communication that transcends ordinary language.

⁹¹Weber, M. S. S., p. 87.

⁹²Ibid., p. 85.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁵Ibid. (first emphasis mine).

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 52.

⁹⁷Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 135.

⁹⁸Weber, M. S. S., p. 53.

⁹⁹For an illustration of these points see Weber's discussion of Socialism, Economy and Society, vol. 1, pp. 65-68, 100-7, or Weber, M. S. S., p. 8, for a discussion of Anarchism.

¹⁰⁰Weber, From Max Weber, p. 151.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Cf. J.N. Findlay, The Philosophy of Hegel (New York: Collier Books, 1966), pp. 70, 251-54; and Stanley Rosen, G. W. F. Hegel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), chap. 3, for a discussion of the concept of "an identity of identity and difference." See also pp. 330-36 for an elaboration of the concept.

¹⁰⁴Weber, "Science as a Vocation," From Max Weber, p. 138 ff.

¹⁰⁵Simon, "A Discussion of Some Issues in Max Weber's Methodological Writings," pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁶Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," in A Critique of Pure Tolerance, ed. Robert P. Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

¹⁰⁷See pp. 61-62.

¹⁰⁸For a discussion of the concept of class structuration, cf. Anthony Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies (London: Hutchinson, 1973).

¹⁰⁹I am using the same definition of ideology as on p.84.

¹¹⁰Goldman, Immanuel Kant.

¹¹¹See p. 23.

¹¹²Cf. Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in Max Weber," in Negations (London: Allen Lane, 1968), p. 215.

¹¹³For an elaboration of this theme, Giddens, Politics and Sociology.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 56.

¹¹⁶Habermas, in Max Weber and Sociology Today, ed. Stammer, p. 64.

¹¹⁷Cf. C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), chap. 6, for an excellent discussion of the tenets of possessive individualism.

¹¹⁸Habermas, in Max Weber and Sociology Today, ed. Stammer, p. 66. Habermas later modified his statement by saying that Carl Schmitt was the "natural son" of Weber rather than "legitimate pupil."

CHAPTER III

WEBER'S APPROACH TO METHOD IN HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY

Having located the roles of value and method in Weber's work, we are brought to Weber's analysis of causation and method. In attempting to unravel these often misunderstood areas, we can pursue the themes of the last pages to the inner mechanisms of Weber's conception of the human sciences.

We have seen that it was Weber's view that the analysis of "infinite reality" which the "finite mind" can conduct rests on the assumption that only a finite portion of this reality can be constituted as the object of scientific investigation, and only it, once delineated by the social scientist's value-orientations and considerations of cultural significance, can be "objectively" known. Weber did not believe, however, that this segment of "reality" should be selected without aid and consideration of existing empirical studies and a variety of empirical sources. In "Objectivity in the Social Sciences" and Economy and Society, he points to criteria for selection. These include the results of functional analysis, the usage of laws, psychological insights, and statistical facts.

The specific reference to organicist sociology--a "classical example" Weber cites as "Schäffle's brilliant work Bau und Leben des Socialen Körpers"¹--reveals that he considered it as a means of "practical illustration and for provisional orientation, . . . not only useful but indispensable."² "But," and in contradistinction to one of his most well-known interpreters,³ Weber immediately adds:

. . . at the same time if its cognitive value is over-estimated and its concept illegitimately "reified" it can be highly dangerous. . . . In the case of social collectivities precisely as distinguished from organisms we are in a position to go beyond merely demonstrating functional relationships and uniformities. We can accomplish something which is never attainable in the natural sciences, namely the subjective understanding of the action of component individuals. . . . We do not "understand" the behaviour of cells, but can only observe the relevant functional relationships and generalize on the basis of these observations. This additional achievement of explanation by interpretive understanding, as distinguished from external observation, is of course obtained only at a price--the more hypothetical and fragmentary character of its results. Nevertheless, subjective understanding is the specific characterization of sociological knowledge.⁴

Weber differs strongly with Schäffle in his estimation of the logical status of functional/holistic concepts. These, he argued, could easily engulf sociologists into the hypostatization of concepts. It was a "spectre of collective conceptions" which he sought "to exorcise."⁵ None of this, of course, implies that Weber thought it unnecessary and undesirable to use collective concepts, e.g., the

"State," but he always reminds one, in his methodological treatise, that it must not be forgotten that these collectives are "solely the resultants and modes of organization of the specific acts of individual men, since these alone are for us the agents who carry out subjectively understandable action."^{6*}

For Parsons it is given in the possibility of analytic science (natural or social), the capacity to generate laws (statements that formulate constant and empirically regular relationships between the values of at least two variables). Parsons also believes, therefore, that "Weber should have gone all the way to the view that in a purely logical aspect there is no difference whatsoever [between social and natural sciences],"⁷ and adds critically that "Weber does not even consider the possibility of formulating laws of the latter type, essentially because he does not develop social theory explicitly in the direction of setting up a system of independent variables, but confines it to the ideal type level."⁸

Weber did not, indeed, consider the possibility of formulating laws for the social world which were logically akin to those of the natural world; but this was by no means an oversight. He was deeply

*The point is made by Weber with considerable force. It might also be noted in this context with some irony given the "implicit" status of such concepts as "formal rationality," the "fate" of the modern world, etc.

critical of all such enterprises:

It has often been thought that the decisive criterion in the cultural sciences, too, was in the last analysis, the "regular" recurrence of certain casual relationships. The "laws" which we are able to perceive in the infinitely manifold stream of events must-- according to this conception--contain the scientifically "essential" aspect of reality. . . . Accordingly, even among the followers of the Historical School we continually find the attitude which declares that the ideal which all the sciences, including the cultural sciences, serve and towards which they should strive even in the remote future is a system of propositions from which reality can be "deduced."⁹

The goal of these cultural scientists was, Weber argued, ". . . however far it might be from realization . . . to construct a closed system of concepts, in which reality is synthesized in some sort of permanently and universally valid classification and from which it can again be deduced."¹⁰ Weber rejected such a goal and frequently attacked this view. John Eldridge has assessed succinctly Weber's view on this issue: "This position identified by Weber as the naturalistic viewpoint (or prejudice!) is rejected by him fundamentally because he does not accept that the cultural scientists can have a direct awareness of the structure of human actions in all their reality."¹¹ The point is well illustrated by Weber's consistent critique of those who made the "fantastic claim" for "economic theories--e. g., abstract theories of price, interest, rent, etc.--that they can, by ostensibly following the analogy of the physical science propositions,

be validly applied to the derivation of quantitatively stated conclusions from given real premises, since given the ends, economic behaviour with respect to means is unambiguously 'determined'.¹²

This does not mean, Weber asserts, that nomothetic propositions are inapplicable or impossible in the human sciences: "a valid imputation of any individual effect without the application of 'nomological knowledge, '-i. e., the knowledge of recurrent causal sequences--would in general be impossible."¹³ In fact, Weber maintains:

Wherever the causal explanation of a "cultural phenomenon--an "historical individual" is under consideration, the knowledge of causal laws is not the end of the investigation but only a means. It facilitates and renders possible the causal imputation to their concrete causes of those components of a phenomenon the individuality of which is culturally significant. So far and only so far as it achieves this, is it valuable for our knowledge of concrete relationships. And the more "general," i. e., the more abstract the laws, the less they can contribute to the causal imputation of individual phenomena and, more indirectly, to the understanding of the significance of cultural events.¹⁴

The extent to which a cultural scientist can reach a valid causal imputation with either the aid of "concretely established generalisations" and/or "with his imagination sharpened by personal experience and trained in analytic methods" always depends for Weber, as Giddens has written, "upon the particular case in question. But it is always true that the more precise and certain our knowledge of relevant

general principles, the more certain the causal imputation we can make."¹⁵

At the opposite pole, Weber also maintains, that the practitioners of psychology may offer the social scientist insights.¹⁶ He deals swiftly, however, with those who propagate a simple psychological reductionism. As an analytic tool, the analysis of psychological factors would, he suggests, "be as useful as a textbook of organic chemical combinations would be for our knowledge of the biogenetic aspect of the animal and plant world. . . . Concrete reality cannot be deduced from 'such' factors."¹⁷ Weber's view of the role of psychology is worth quoting at length, especially in light of the growing status and popularity of psychology and the stress some schools of social science have placed on micro-sociology, etc.

. . . the partly brilliant attempts which have been made hitherto to interpret economic phenomena psychologically, show in many cases that the procedure does not begin with the analysis of psychological qualities, moving then to the analysis of social institutions, but that, on the contrary, insight into the psychological preconditions and consequences of institutions presupposes a precise knowledge of the latter and the scientific analysis of their structure. In concrete cases, psychological analysis can contribute then an extremely valuable deepening of the knowledge of the historical cultural conditioning and cultural significance of institutions. The interesting aspect of the psychic attitude of a person in a social situation is specifically particularized in each case, according to the special cultural significance of the situation in question. It is a question of an extremely heterogeneous and highly concrete structure of psychic motives and

influences. Social-psychological research involves the study of various very disparate individual types of cultural elements with reference to their interpretability by our empathic understanding. Through social-psychological research, with the knowledge of individual institutions as a point of departure, we will learn increasingly how to understand institutions in a psychological way. We will not however deduce the institutions from psychological laws or explain them by elementary psychological phenomena.¹⁸

The social scientist can also glean a great deal from "statistics," "statistical uniformities," "facts," e. g., death rates, suicide rates, immigration patterns, life chances, etc.¹⁹ These are data to be "taken into account." But however important, Weber clearly distinguishes the techniques of data collection from the construction of analytic sociological types (which we have hitherto referred to as ideal-types). The collection of statistics are "treated by a different method from the other; they become conditions, stimuli, furthering or hindering circumstances of action."²⁰ John Rex has made a similar point when he observed, "research into what Weber called the 'life chances' of human beings strictly speaking forms no part of sociology. True it poses a problem for the sociologist who asks whether the differential distribution of life chances is indicative of a particular power system or whether it means the emergence of segregated ways of life. But by itself it is simply a part of the study of human biology in which exact descriptive and mathematical techniques have been developed to a high level."²¹

Having pointed to guidelines for investigation, to signposts for the social scientific enterprise, we have, of course, as yet said nothing of how, concretely, Weber suggests we establish the existence of a causal relationship and how one might employ his guidelines, concepts, and methods. It is to these issues that we must now turn.

In his critique of Edward Meyer's methodological writings,²² Weber makes both a crucial and central distinction. Meyer, he points out, is in "danger of confusing two fundamentally different but often identified categories: the ratio essendi and the ratio cognoscendi."²³ The distinction is between two forms of analysis and it is explicated, albeit in embryonic form, three pages later. Weber talks of

. . . this division of the logical use of data given by cultural reality into (1) conceptualization with the illustrative use of "particular fact" as "typical" instances of an abstract "concept," i.e., as an heuristic instrument on the one hand--and (2) integration of the "particular fact" as a link, i.e., as a real causal factor into a real, hence concrete context with the use among other things of the products of conceptualization on the one hand as exemplificatory and on the other as heuristic devices--entails the distinction between what Rickert called the "natural scientific" and Windelband the "nomothetic" (ad 1) and the logical goal of the "historical cultural" sciences (ad 2). It also implies the only justified sense in which history can be called a science of reality (Wirklichkeitswissenschaft). For the meaning of history as a science of reality can only be that it treats particular elements of reality not merely as heuristic instruments but as the objects of knowledge, and particular causal connections not as premises of knowledge but as real causal factors.²⁴

The methods of analysis of the form of ratio cognoscendi are said to have a different logical structure from that of ratio essendi. The former represents the scientist's attempt to construct type concepts (of man, of organizations, of authority, of culture, of socio-economic structures) which are developed and elaborated as heuristic devices. The latter form represents the attempt to establish causal linkages in explaining historical events. Both moments of the neo-Kantian distinction of "generalizing and individualizing tendencies"²⁵ are present but in a form that would have surprised Rickert. For as we have seen, he associated the Kulturwissenschaften with the predominant use of the historical or individualizing method, whereas Weber has located within the human sciences the applicability of both forms of analysis. Furthermore, it is our contention that by the time of Economy and Society, Weber's fully developed work embodies these two modes of analysis as two distinct types of causal analysis. That is to say that ratio cognoscendi no longer can be understood (as in the Methodology essays) as being only concerned with the construction of (ideal) type concepts for heuristic purposes. The distinction between the two modes of analysis, their development, and their consequences need careful attention.

The treatment of these two forms of analysis differs in the methodological works over time. In "Objectivity in the Social

Sciences"²⁶ both are present; the major discussion evolves around concept formation but, when Weber talks of causality, he is talking about the method of ratio essendi.

To the extent that our science imputes particular causes--be they economic or non-economic--to economic cultural phenomena, it seeks "historical" knowledge.²⁷

In "Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences,"²⁸ the distinctions between modes of analysis are again present, but here the primary concern revolves around causal analysis and the extension and elaboration of the techniques of ratio essendi. In Economy and Society there is a significant shift in emphases. He moves the focus of attention toward the establishment of uniformities of social and economic organization, to the problems underpinning the formulation of general principles, generic types, ideal-types; toward sociology. Let us proceed more slowly and examine each position in turn.

The determination of (hypothetical) "laws" and (psychological) factors is only the first of many operations which lead us to the desired type of knowledge; it is a preliminary task. The essential stages of analysis include:

The analysis of the historically given individual configuration of those "factors" and their significant concrete interaction, conditioned by their historical context and especially the rendering intelligible of the basis and type of this significance would be the next

task to be achieved. This task must be achieved, it is true, by the utilization of the preliminary analysis but it is nonetheless an entirely new and distinct task. The tracing as far into the past as possible of the individual features of these historically evolved configurations which are contemporaneously significant, and their historical explanation by antecedent and equally individual configurations would be the third task. Finally the prediction of possible future constellations would be a conceivable fourth task.²⁹

In "Objectivity in the Social Sciences" this "entirely new and distinct task" and the "third task" are early expressions of the two modes of analysis. Weber offers an example in a discussion of exchange and the market. Here he clearly distinguishes between the analysis of general aspects of exchanges (a "highly important task") and the application of the concepts which we are provided by the investigation. The application entails their use as heuristic devices for historical, causal analysis.³⁰ The constituent elements of causal analysis are given in the techniques of ratio essendi.

Although both moments of the investigatory procedure are inadequately developed and little discussed in this essay (ratio essendi receiving fuller theoretical treatment in the critique of Edward Meyer), one topic does attract Weber's attention: the specification and usage of ideal-types. Weber does not consider his discussion of ideal-type concepts original, a new form of conceptual method. Rather he feels he is making explicit what was always implicit in past procedure and practice.³¹ Since the status

of these concepts has already been discussed, it is sufficient here to sharpen the context of their usage.³²

The interpretation and explanation of an historical configuration requires the construction and elaboration of concepts which are specifically delineated for that purpose and which, as we have seen, cannot and do not reflect "universally 'essential' properties of reality."³³ As "mental constructs," these concepts are not "descriptions" nor are they "hypotheses." But they can assist and further both description and explanation.

Ideal-types are not created in and for themselves. Their utility can be judged only in relation to a specific concrete problem. For example, in formulating an ideal-type of a phenomenon such as rational capitalism the "social scientist attempts to delineate, through the empirical examination of specific forms of capitalism, the most important respects (in relation to the concerns which he has set himself) in which rational capitalism is distinctive."³⁴ The ideal is created and developed with empirical analysis and it, in turn, sharpens that analysis. As Giddens has noted, "Weber concentrates his discussion upon the formulation of ideal types which relate to the elucidation of specific historical configurations, since this presents the clearest differentiation of descriptive and ideal-types. But ideal-type concepts are not solely limited to this objective, and

there are various kinds of ideal-types which, without being simple descriptive concepts, nevertheless are generic in character."³⁵

The question arises, then: when does a descriptive classification of phenomena become an ideal-type?

Ideal-types (the "one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view") are to be distinguished from the descriptive-type which involves "the abstract synthesis of those traits which are common to numerous concrete phenomena."³⁶ "The transition from descriptive to ideal-types takes place when we move from descriptive classification of phenomena towards the explanatory or theoretical analysis of these phenomena."³⁷ Once again this can be illustrated in reference to the discussion of "exchange." Weber holds that the notion of "exchange" is descriptive to the extent that we observe that a large number of human actions may be labeled and classified as exchange transactions. "But if we attempt to make the notion an element in marginal utility theory in economics, we construct an ideal-type of 'exchange' which is based upon a purely rational construct."³⁸

The role of ideal-types and concept formation is central to Weber's early methodological essay. Its exposition highlights his stress on the importance of the process of their formation as an independent (yet obviously interlinked) stage of analysis. The emergent concepts (a type of man, authority, economy, etc.) as

heuristic and/or expository instruments are argued to provide increasing clarity and precision for historical causal analysis.

This procedure gives rise to no methodological doubts so long as we clearly keep in mind that ideal-typical developmental constructs and history are to be sharply distinguished from each other, and that the construct here is no more than the means for explicitly and validly imputing an historical event to its real causes while eliminating those which on the basis of our present knowledge seem possible.³⁹

As yet our discussion of "ratio cognoscendi" has not shown it to be a separate stage of causal analysis (although types such as "hand-craft economy," "early Christianity," "rational capitalism," the "modern state" have potential explanatory power and usage). Weber was to develop this initial discussion of types and concept formation several stages further: before doing so, his whole conception of ratio essendi was to be explicated.

Since "the meaning of history as a science of reality can only be that it treats particular elements of reality not merely as heuristic instruments, but as the subject of knowledge and particular causal connections not as premises of knowledge but as real causal factors,"⁴⁰ the question arises as to how one can establish the validity of "real causal" factors, causal linkages.

Obviously not by the simple "observation" of the course of events in any case, certainly not if one understands by that a "presuppositionless" mental "photograph" of all the physical and psychic events occurring in the space-time region in question--even if such were

possible. Rather does the attribution of effects to causes take place through a process of thought which includes a series of abstractions. The first and decisive one occurs when we conceive of one or a few of the actual causal components as modified in a certain direction and then ask ourselves whether under the conditions which have been thus changed, the same effect (the same, i. e., in "essential" points) or some other effect "would be expected."⁴¹

Here, in "Critical Studies in the Logic of Cultural Sciences," Weber is introducing a key notion, the notion of "objective possibility." The category was derived by Weber from a study of certain theories of criminal law. The reasons for and significance of this position are well brought out by Andrew Arato:

Objective necessity has no place in criminal law, because it does not leave room for a dimension of subjective knowledge; foreknowledge and intention. But a criminal case must be ultimately decided according to evaluations of this subjective dimension. Thus criminal cases must be reinterpreted according to an objective dynamic that allows for more than one possibility, even if we know that only one of these was realized. In other words, a man can be punished for his subjective role in an event only if the event was influenced by this role. But that means that without that role other possible events could have taken place instead of the event that did.⁴² Weber adopts this principle for historical research. The adoption means, among other things, that the interest of law to locate a subjective dimension in the past is replaced by the (contemporary) interest of the historian. The stress on a prior interest is important because Weber rejects the possibility of (1) the synthesis of a historical totality in itself and (2) the presuppositionless photographic observation of facts. The a priori interest of the historian isolates and generalizes individual components of events to locate the possibilities within the dynamic of the past.^{43, 44}

The analytic technique is a means whereby one can discriminate between factors which are relevant and those which are not, in accounting for certain observed events and effects.⁴⁵ In his classic example, Weber recasts Edward Meyer's treatment of the significance of the outcome of the battle of Marathon for the consequential development of Hellenic and Western European culture.

The historian's interest in the battle, itself a "relatively" small and contained event, is precisely in its consequences for later developments and with the thought of what might have been had the Persians won.⁴⁶ In order to demonstrate that the battle was "causally significant" in a particular way, we are asked to consider alternative possible outcomes. Two possible courses of events are presented (i. e., the effects of Greek versus Persian influence over the development of the Western World). The procedure in this kind of causal analysis is necessarily one of abstraction, involving "imaginative reconstruction"; the projection of what would have occurred if events had been qualitatively and quantitatively different.⁴⁷

The assessment of causal significance of an historical fact will begin with the posing of the following question: in the event of the exclusion of that fact from the complex of factors which are taken into account as co-determinants, or in the event of its modification in a certain direction, could the course of events, in accordance with general empirical rules (Erfahrungsregeln), have taken a direction in any way different in any features which would be decisive for our interest?⁴⁸

In the case of the battle of Marathon, the consequences of Persian victory would have been decisive for the subsequent formation and advancement of Hellenic and, therefore, Western European culture. One can conclude that had the battle taken a turn to the Persian advantage, the outcome would have been "adequate" to produce a qualitatively different pattern in the development of the Western World.⁴⁹

This method of "imaginative reconstruction" is the process whereby the historian can attribute significance to causal factors and establish "adequate causation" through "judgments of possibilities." Furthermore, Weber argues, "we can . . . well enough estimate the relative 'degree' to which the outcome is 'favoured' by the general rule by a comparison involving the consideration of how other conditions operating differently 'would' have favoured it. When we carry through this comparison in our imagination by a sufficiently numerous conceivable modifications of the constellation of conditions, then a considerable degree of certainty for a judgement of the 'degree' of objective possibility is conceivable, at least in principle."⁵⁰

Despite the familiar and fully justified notice which warns against the transference of the calculus of probabilities into other domains, it is clear that the . . . case of favourable chance or "objective probability" determined from general empirical propositions or from empirical frequencies, has its analogues in the sphere of all concrete causality, including the historical.⁵¹

But we cannot, Weber immediately adds, assign a numerical measure of chance, because what is "wholly lacking" in historical analysis is what would have to be presupposed in order to assign quantitative measures--"the existence of 'absolute chance' or certain measurable or countable aspects of phenomena." If we ask about the possibility of predicting an event, it is given in the historical enterprise to attempt answers which may vary depending upon "the degree of knowledge of empirical regularities"--ranging from the unpredictable to various degrees of objective possibility and objective probability.⁵² These answers, however, cannot be quantified.

(It should be noted that Weber does not mean to imply that this "thought experiment" should take place without consideration of past relevant studies and existing empirical knowledge. "The simplest historical judgement represents not only a categorically formed intellectual construct but it also does acquire a valid content until we bring to the 'given' reality the whole body of our 'nomological' empirical knowledge.")⁵³

* * * * *

From the early methodological essays to Economy and Society, Weber shifts the (methodological) emphasis from ratio essendi to ratio cognoscendi; from history to sociology. The philosophical backdrop and underpinnings of this method remain unrelinquished. The same basic positions are taken for granted. The concern for sociology is also not "new." For in its fundamental conception, it is an extension of the earlier focus on ratio cognoscendi, etc.⁵⁴

Thus Weber states bluntly:

It has continually been assumed as obvious that the science of sociology seeks to formulate type concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical process. This distinguishes it from history, which is oriented to the causal analysis and explanation of individual actions, structures, and personalities possessing cultural significance.⁵⁵

The full text reveals that the envisaged sociological project is both involved and complicated. In what is by now a classic passage, entitled "The Definitions of Sociology and Social Action," Weber says:

Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects.⁵⁶

Sociology is, on this conception, as Weber says, "highly ambiguous." For it is conceived to involve (1) interpretive understanding of social action in order, Weber suggests, to arrive at (2) a causal explanation.

However, a question arises: Does Weber mean (a) that sociology is just concerned with (1) interpretive understanding which would provide empirical information about general principles, etc., as a basis for (2) causal analysis, which would be the sole province of the methods of ratio essendi (as it has been so far in our exegesis)? Or does he mean (b) that sociology itself involves a form of analysis capable of causal explanations (of social action)? Weber's stated position is not transparent between these two alternative positions, although it will be argued here that despite the fact that discussions and analyses at the level of ratio essendi always take their point of departure from analyses and formulations at the level of ratio cognoscendi, textual analysis suggests strongly that ratio cognoscendi itself embodies position (b) above. In other words, whereas history is seen as primarily involving analysis to establish causal linkages between "historical individuals," sociology is conceived as also embodying the capacity to offer a causal account of social action. Weber's position needs careful explication. We can begin by asking what Weber means by social action.

"In 'action' is included," he contends, "all human behaviour when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. . . . Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it

takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course."⁵⁷

"Meaning," Weber envisages, may be of two kinds:

The term may refer first to the actual existing meaning in the given concrete case of a particular actor, or to the average or approximate meaning attributable to a given plurality of actors; or secondly to the theoretically conceived pure type of subjective meaning attributed to the hypothetical actor or actors in a given type of action.⁵⁸

The line between meaningful action and behavior (which is reactive and nonreflexive) "cannot be sharply drawn." Many areas of human activity--important for sociological investigation--lie between the two, e. g., traditional behavior, mystical experiences ("which cannot be adequately communicated in words") and many psycho-physical processes ("discernible" at best "by the expert psychologist"). However, empathy and/or a "complete" recapitulation of an experience, "is not a prerequisite to understanding": "one need not have been Caesar in order to understand Caesar."⁵⁹

Interpretative sociology, Weber argued, must be based on inter-subjectively recognized methods of procedure, for verifiable, reproducible accuracy, if it is to be counted amongst the sciences. There was no doubt, Weber believed, that the canons of scientific wisdom would be met. "The basis for certainty in understanding can be either rational, which can be further subdivided into logical or

mathematical, or it can be of an emotionally empathic or artistically appreciative quality.⁶⁰ The latter is attained when, through sympathetic participation, we can adequately grasp the emotional context in which the action took place. Rational understanding is most complete when we attain an intellectual grasp of the "action elements in their intended context of meaning." It is best illustrated by reflecting on an individual's use of mathematical reasoning or formal logic. "We have a perfectly clear understanding of what it means when somebody employs the proposition $2 \times 2 = 4$, or the Pythagorean theorem in reasoning or argument, or when somebody correctly carries out a logical train of reasoning according to our accepted modes of thinking."⁶¹ Likewise, we also understand what a person is doing "when he tries to achieve certain ends by choosing appropriate means on the basis of the facts of the situation as experience has accustomed us to interpret them."⁶² An interpretation of this type of rationally purposeful action (reminiscent of the Aristotelean idea of "practical syllogisms")⁶³ possesses the highest degree of verifiable certainty.

On the other hand, much human activity is not oriented to such explicitly given ends or values. Furthermore, the more these ends and values differ from our own, the more cultural distance between investigator and the subject of study, "the more difficult it is for us to make them understandable by imaginatively participating in them."

Empathy, Weber tells us, is an important means of obtaining understanding of social action but is only one technique to help us achieve such understanding. Understanding requires of the sociologist both emotional sympathy (if possible empathy) and an "intellectual interpretation," i. e., an intellectual "grasping" and "catching," of the "subjective intelligibility" of action.*

Given our "basis for certainty in understanding," Weber subdivides further the two essential types of Verstehen he distinguished. The first, "direct understanding" (the grasping of the meaning of an action through direct observation), may be subdivided according to whether it involves rational or emotive actions. Both are simply illustrated. "We understand perfectly" what it means when somebody "employs the proposition $2 \times 2 = 4$." Likewise, we "understand an outbreak of anger as manifested by facial expressions, exclamations, or irrational emotional reactions." The second type of Verstehen, "explanatory understanding" (erklärendes Verstehen) is more complex and difficult and it is this form that occupies Weber's

*However, Weber briefly notes, "understanding" might fail due to major cultural differences, etc. Then, he states, "we must simply accept them [the ends and values to which action is oriented] as given data." If this should prove to be the case, Weber says, "we can try to understand the action motivated by them on the basis of whatever opportunities for approximate emotional and intellectual interpretation seem to be available at different points in its course." (T. S. E. O., p. 91.)

attention the most. Here a particular act is placed:

. . . in an understandable sequence of motivation, the understanding of which can be treated as an explanation of the actual course of behaviour. Thus for a science which is concerned with the subjective meaning of action, explanation requires a grasp of the complex of meaning in which an actual course of understandable action thus interpreted belongs.⁶⁴

However, what Weber means by placing an act in a "sequence of motivation" or by grasping the "complex of meaning" in which an action belongs, is by no means straightforward. On Weber's account "a motive is a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the conduct in question."⁶⁵ There are essentially two difficulties here. The first is that Weber's concept of "motive" (or complex of "subjective meaning") appears as a "catch-all" category for a subject's intended or unintended meanings, reasons, commonsense knowledge, and procedures. We briefly discuss some of those concepts, insufficiently distinguished by Weber, at the end of this chapter. Secondly, what Weber means by an "adequate ground" for the conduct in question, for the actor or observer, is not clear and raises a number of questions. As we will see in our discussion in this chapter, and in the discussion of hermeneutics (Chapter 5) and critical theory and psychoanalysis (Chapter 11), the respective "weights" one grants to the actor's account of his or her own action, against the observer's

account, raises very complex considerations.

For Weber if the action is rational we are able to grasp the content without difficulty. "Thus we understand the chopping of wood or aiming of a gun in terms of motive in addition to direct observation if we know that the woodchopper is working for a wage or is chopping a supply of firewood for his own use or possibly is doing it for recreation."⁶⁶ If the action is emotive we may attain a similar "motivational understanding." For example, we may understand an outburst of anger if we know that it has been provoked by "jealousy, injured pride, or an insult."*

We can apply the term "adequacy on the level of meaning" to "the subjective interpretation of a coherent course of conduct when and insofar as, according to our habitual modes of thought and feeling, its component parts taken in their mutual relation are

*Weber recognized, of course, that "in a large number of cases" it is extremely difficult to arrive at a "satisfactory interpretation of motives." He argues that "verification of subjective interpretation by comparison with the concrete course of events is, as in the case of all hypotheses, indispensable." A few cases are "susceptible to psychological experimentation." "For the rest there remains only the possibility of comparing the largest possible number of historical or contemporary processes which, while otherwise similar, differ in the one decisive point of their relation to the particular motive or factor the role of which is being investigated. This is a fundamental task of comparative sociology. Often unfortunately . . . we are left to the 'imaginary experiment' . . . to arrive at a causal judgement." (T. S. E. O., p. 97.)

recognized to constitute a 'typical' complex of meaning."⁶⁷ However, such adequacy is not to be taken as having synonymity with causal adequacy. There is, of course, in Weber's opinion no simple and direct relationship between motives, "complexes of meaning," and action. But there is scope to explore whether or not there are systematic interconnections between motives, etc., and action. In order to demonstrate such interconnections and, therefore, "explanatory significance," we must, Weber contends, establish "empirical generalizations" which relate an understandable sequence of motivation to a specified class of assessible consequences.⁶⁸ An alternative form of causal analysis to that subsumed by ratio essendi seems to be suggested.

A correct causal analysis, Weber states, pivots on our capacity "to determine that there is a probability, which in the rare ideal case can be numerically stated, but is always in some sense calculable, that a given observable event (overt or subjective) will be followed or accompanied by another event."⁶⁹ Therefore, a correct causal interpretation of a concrete course of action is arrived at when the relationship between overt action and motives has become meaningfully comprehensible and at the same time shown to be typical.

A correct causal interpretation of typical action means that the process which is claimed to be typical is shown

to be both adequately grasped on the level of meaning and at the same time the interpretation is to some degree causally adequate. If adequacy in respect to meaning is lacking, then no matter how high the degree of uniformity and how precisely its probability can be numerically determined, it is still an incomprehensible statistical probability, whether dealing with overt or subjective processes. On the other hand, even the most perfect adequacy on the level of meaning has causal significance from a sociological point of view only insofar as there is some kind of proof for the existence of a probability that action in fact normally takes the course which has been held to be meaningful. For this there must be some degree of determinable frequency of approximation to an average or pure type.

Statistical uniformities constitute understandable types of action . . . and thus constitute "sociological generalisations" only when they can be regarded as manifestations of the understandable subjective meaning of a course of social action.⁷⁰

In sociology, if we are applying the methods of explanatory understanding, a correct causal analysis of social action is stipulated to require adequacy at the level of meaning and causation. It is crucially important here to note Weber's remarks on causality. For what Weber seems to be suggesting is that given one adequately grasps "the level of meaning," a correct analysis also depends on our capacity to show causal significance, i. e., that the relationship between "motives," complexes of subjective meaning, and a given action, is empirically significant (i. e., typical). This will be the case if there is proof "for the existence of a probability that action in fact normally takes the course which has been held to be meaningful." If an "empirically significant" relationship can be established

between "motives," etc., and overt action, we have established adequate grounds to ascribe typical causation, i. e., "motives" can be causes. On the basis of such an analysis of experiences in particular situations with particular outcomes, we can make "sociological generalizations" about understandable, regular types of actions. An example of such an analysis is Paul Walton's and Laurie Taylor's study of industrial sabotage. The study attempts an analysis of "the meanings or motives which lie behind such action,"⁷¹ (i. e., industrial sabotage) within the context of "an imaginative reconstruction of the contextual situation in which the actor performs."⁷² They find three pure types showing that individuals attempt "to destroy or mutilate objects in the work environment in order (i) to reduce tension, or (ii) to facilitate the work process, or (iii) to assert some form of direct control."⁷³ The types that are presented are pure in that they do not reflect the actual behavior of any person, but rather reflect generalized courses of action and as such may be thought of as "conditional generalizations."

It is important, John Eldridge has pointed out, "to distinguish between two kinds of probabilistic statement, both of which can properly be thought of as conditional generalizations. The one we might term an empirical tendency statement based upon statistical knowledge--for example, the tendency of certain groups of people to

be located in the commanding position in a society. The other we might term ideal typical constructions with built-in statements about probability, which may be utilized as a benchmark against which to analyze the actual course of behaviour."⁷⁴ However, these (ideal-typical) conditional generalizations (of courses of action) may also be thought of as providing a causal explanation of typical social action. For example, the three constructed types of industrial sabotage are an attempt to give a causal account in motivational terms, of typical sabotage action patterns. These types do not explain an individual's action, but rather attempt to get at the basis of typical and probable social action, i. e., generalized courses of (mass) action. Such constructed types can be best comprehended as an attempt to advance concept formation beyond the stage of description and empirical generalization to the construction of explanatory devices.⁷⁵

For Weber the methods of ratio cognoscendi have as an essential task the establishment of types. These methods, we have argued, can be applied at two levels. First, they can be used for the empirical study of social action where the sociologist attempts to explore and elaborate relationships between motives and actions, which may then serve to explain typical and probable courses of behavior. Secondly, they can be used for the construction of types which can

then be employed purely for heuristic purposes in the application of the methods of ratio essendi. (In the following discussion we will refer to these two levels of application as position A and B, respectively.)

If there is to be a scientific analysis of social action--an analysis that proceeds beyond description--it has, Weber argues, to construct ideal types. Through the use of such types (constructed on ideals of rational, or value-oriented, or emotive, or traditionally oriented action), "it is possible to compare with this the actual course of action and to arrive at a causal explanation of the observed deviations," which can be "attributed to the influence of" "logical fallacies, personal factors, and a host of other possible elements. Although "as in the case of every generalizing science the abstract character of the concepts of sociology is responsible for the fact that, compared with actual historical reality, they are relatively lacking in fullness of concrete content. To compensate for this disadvantage, sociological analysis can offer a greater precision of concepts . . . by striving for the highest possible degree of adequacy on the level of meaning. . . ."⁷⁶ And if our pure action concepts are only constructed on the basis of "direct understanding" (or if we cannot demonstrate causal adequacy in an attempted explanatory understanding), adequacy on the level of meaning is the only way we can

compensate for the lack of fullness of our generalizations. These generalizations, nevertheless, add very important precision to any historical analysis (which might employ a whole range of types) that we might make.

In all cases, rational or irrational, sociological analysis both abstracts from reality and at the same time helps us to understand it, in that it shows with what degree of approximation a concrete historical phenomenon may be in one aspect "feudal," in another "patrimonial," in another "bureaucratic," and in still another "charismatic." In order to give a precise meaning to these terms, it is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms of action which in each case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration, by virtue of their complete adequacy at the level of meaning. But precisely because this is true, it is probably seldom if ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to any one of these ideally constructed pure types.⁷⁷

To briefly summarize we should note that Weber's emergent methodological position is one that combines and locates the two moments of the neo-Kantian view of the methods of the sciences within a single framework. Both ratio cognoscendi and ratio essendi provide us with a form of causal analysis. Ratio cognoscendi also generates heuristic instruments, formulations that ratio essendi embraces as a point of departure. It is sociology and history that provide the developed methodological position for investigation. Weber thus distinguishes sciences oriented toward generalization and individuation, toward sociology and history, but distinguishes

only one methodological framework for the human sciences as a whole.

* * * * *

The tensions we have discerned and discussed so far revolved around Weber's account of the relationship between fact and value, theory and practice, and that which he took for granted and assumed. Our present account of his methodological procedures highlights a further central issue: that the very logical structure of Weber's approach to the human sciences and theory formation, predetermines the possible applications of the knowledge generated by such sciences. In other words, that the very structure of knowledge generated by Weber's conception of rational method is restricted in its potential usage, in its capacity to conceptualize historical and social action, and that the investigatory procedures structure this bias. The suggestion needs careful explication. Let us begin by looking at the application of the methods of ratio cognoscendi: (with respect to position B) and ratio essendi.

To begin with it can be noted that these investigatory procedures are representative of more than is made explicit; they are a "consistent expression of a quite definite attitude of man to reality."⁷⁸ In

a comment that summarizes many of our themes to date, Loewith has said:

The ideal-typical construct has as its foundation a specific "illusionless" man who has been thrown back upon himself alone by a world become objectively meaningless and sober, and therefore, to that extent, emphatically "realistic." He is therefore forced to forge by himself any objective meaning and a meaningful relationship to things, and in particular the relationship to reality, as one specifically his own: in short "to create" a meaning, practically and theoretically. People, state, and individual therefore can no longer be regarded and integrated as uniform substances with deeper backgrounds--not merely because it would be unscientific but because such an attitude would be marked by transcendental prejudices and ideals, and the world view into which "we have been placed" no longer justifies such prejudices. ⁷⁹

In a world that has eaten of the tree of knowledge, that "suffers the fate of the modern era," it is the individual who alone is sanctified.

A pivotal presupposition, which Weber tries to justify through empirical reference is, as Loewith has written, that

. . . since all kinds of objectivities, as a result of their disenchantment (through rationalization) can no longer be imputed an independent meaning, it is only the "individual," the single man dependent solely upon himself who is truly real and justified in his existence. ⁸⁰

Weber asserts the purely methodological meaning of "individualistic" and "rational" definitions, types, and constructs and denies their substantive character and value-relatedness. ⁸¹ However, his method entails, as we have shown, an evaluation of a mode of

rationality and practice, a commitment to the production of certain forms of knowledge, which alone are considered objective.

As such, his work is also ambiguous between an explicit atomistic and rationalistic conception of the totality and an implicit organicist or formalist conception.⁸² In the former case, the whole is the sum of simple elements or elementary "facts." We can only know the "whole" through its elements and in Weber's view even these form only a partial and one-sided view. This conception of the totality seems to be the view that Weber explicitly holds. In the "rationalized" social world the "simple elements" are individuals, only the individual is truly real. The patterns of individual acts and attitudes are the elements occurring in social institutions and collective conceptions. It follows that for Weber, all such concepts can--in principle--be defined in terms of individual behavior. If one wants to understand what passes, for example, under "collective" conceptions, then according to Weber "the clear-cut sharply defined analysis of the various possible standpoints is the only path which will lead us out of verbal confusion."⁸³ "Collective" conceptions are important and useful for an initial orientation to an issue, but should always be superseded by analytical and individualistic concepts which can put the research topic into perspective.

But if Weber maintains an individualistic theory of the totality,

and ontology, this does not necessarily imply that he believed one could (a) in practice, define all institutional and collective concepts, e. g. , Reformation, Capitalism, in terms of individual behavior; and that he thought (b) it was a priori inappropriate to use such (institutional) concepts in the social sciences. Weber himself uses such concepts throughout his work. But it must not be forgotten that for Weber these "collective" conceptions are "solely the resultants and modes of organization of the particular acts of individual persons, since these alone can be treated as agents who carry out subjectively understandable action."^{84, 85}

However, Weber's approach also embodies an implicit reference and commitment to a formalist conception of the totality (although he explicitly rejected such an approach in his methodological writings). His work embraces interpretations of the whole of society and the totality of tendencies, and often, we have suggested, entails "a more pretentious concept of sociology." Here the conception of the whole appears to imply the view that there are properties of "wholes," "emergent," as May Brodbeck has expressed it, "from properties of parts," but which cannot be defined in terms of the parts (i. e. , the individuals') interactions. (This view is called "descriptive emergentism" by Brodbeck.)⁸⁶ In a formalist conception of the totality, these "emergent" properties of the "whole" or "collective,"

are held to take on a dynamic of their own to shape and dominate the dimensions of the parts. When Weber talks of the extension of the process rationalization as the "absolutely inescapable condition of our existence," he is no longer just referring to an atomistic conception of the totality, but rather to a formal or organicist-dynamist conception. Rationalization, the "fate of our times," appears as the essential defining force of what we understand and can understand by social reality.

It is, in fact, Weber's implicit conception of the nature of totality as a formal whole which becomes the empirical basis and hence partial justification for his individualistic ontology and atomistic conception of the totality. But before we can develop this point it is necessary to direct further attention to Weber's explicit methodological commitments (and then come back to his implicit methodological "interests").

The establishment, application, and use of ideal types is central to Weber's study of history and the working out of historical explanations and "real" causal factors. The nature of the role of ideal-types has been well summarized by Arato:

In the first instance, the concept of ideal type seems to methodologically negate the historicity of the spectacle it constructs.⁸⁷ However, Weber considered ideal typic analysis only a means toward (and not the whole of) historical analysis. He believed that the same problem complex can be, and must be,

cut into from the points of view of several (at times opposing) ideal types. But the aim of this procedure is the imputation of the "adequate causation" of a unique cultural event, or rather the reconstruction of the "objective possibilities" of the unique cultural problem complex.⁸⁸ The adequate cause is comprised of all the elements (each formulated as ideal types: e. g., "Puritan ethic," "rational law," "modern science," "free labor," "bureaucratic state") which made the emergence of a unique cultural complex (also formulated as an ideal-type, e. g., "capitalism," "the spirit of capitalism," and ultimately Western rationality) objectively possible.⁸⁹

The results of Weberian analysis are an account/explanation of an aspect of the historical social world, which is always partial and one-sided, and takes place through concepts which capture an aspect of this world but cannot grasp it in itself. Weber explicitly rejects the possibility of knowing the historical totality or any of its parts in themselves. The analysis is always external to the object of investigation because this object, ultimately, cannot be known. The social scientist imposes order on the "infinite cultural manifold," in his/her attempts to account for a segment of this "flux." In other words, the social scientist gives and imposes form and categories on the social world and creates valid representations. But a plethora of forms, types, and explanations are, of course, legitimate and valid (so long as the procedures and canons of rational method are adhered to).

Central to Weber's methodological position are the dichotomies

between the world that can and cannot be known, between the knowing subject and the ultimately unknowable object. Weber attempts to locate all cognition and rationality on the side of the knower. There is an empirical basis and justification for this view and these dichotomies; they reflect the diremption of man and the world in the age of disenchantment and, consequentially, new-found autonomy. There is also a crucial epistemological foundation. It is clearly Kantian. For Weber ultimately reproduces the Kantian dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds; the worlds we can know and that which exists in itself and is unknowable. We say ultimately because Weber has his own version of this position. First, its genesis is to be accounted for historically. It is an historical derivation and product (the result of rationalization and disenchantment). Secondly, the outcome of these historical processes was held to be the realizations that reality is an objectively meaningless, valueless, infinite flux, the overcoming of which Weber saw as possible only through individual commitment and decision which could create and impose form and potentially "objective" and valid knowledge.⁹⁰ These issues raise a number of points which are deserved of closer consideration. We can usefully begin by examining the nature of the Kantian dualism

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The Kantian doctrine of transcendental categories serves, it has been argued, to bring and tie together two realms or levels of phenomena:

. . . (1) the cognitions, perceptions, intuitions, feelings, etc., of the particular individual, which are commonly referred to through the use of terms such as Erlebnis (lived experience) or simply Leben (life in the sense in which German Lebensphilosophie developed the term; as human life and experience . . .) and (2) categories, forms, means of expression, and symbols which are universal in some fashion, and shared by a community of individuals, thus making possible transpersonal, inter-subjective discourse about the contents of Erlebnis and Leben.⁹¹

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason brought these two levels together and attempted to bind them into an indisputable unity.

If the receptivity of our mind, its power of receiving representations insofar as it is in any wise affected, is to be entitled sensibility, then the mind's power of producing representations from itself, the spontaneity of knowledge, should be called the understanding. Our nature is so constituted that our intuition can never be other than sensible; that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects. The faculty, on the other hand, which enables us to think the object of sensible intuition is the understanding. To neither of these powers may a preference be given over the other. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without contents are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.⁹²

As James Schmidt has pointed out:

With the requirements that empirical knowledge must be viewed as consisting of both a general, inter-subjectively shared power of producing representations ("the spontaneity of knowledge") and a specific, intuited,

personal experience ("the receptivity of our mind") Kant has given a solution to the problem of knowledge which neither sacrifices the individual's experience to the dictates of a higher or more enlightened intuition (such as a wisdom which can only be achieved by a limited group within the society) nor dissolves the general images and representations of discourse into a babel of competing claims and descriptions. Disagreements may arise between individual experience, but there exist reasonable ways of settling them, since both the spontaneity of knowledge and the receptivity of mind are general species traits of all human beings. Kant is able to win this battle, however, only at the cost of the problematic Ding an sich.⁹³

Weber follows this Kantian position very closely. For, as we have seen, he provides a solution to the problem of knowledge which also grants central importance to the individual's experience, and yet also does not dissolve general forms and representations into solipsism. In the human sciences Weber both preserves the autonomous constituting role of the individual and the possibility of rational, inter-subjective discourse. We are prevented from collapsing into a "babel of competing claims" by adherence to the canons of rational scientific method. But Weber wins this battle only at the cost of reproducing Kant's dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal realms and establishing "the problematic Ding an sich." Even if the object of investigation is another subject or oneself, there is a noumenal realm, which we cannot know.

It is very important to realize the consequences of this view for the human science. This further dualism ensures that a critically

reflexive understanding of the genesis of different values, value-orientations, etc., which we referred to at the end of the previous chapter, cannot become part of the human sciences program. Weber's approach and methods, with their "individualistic" and "rational" definitions, structure the world as to make such a project anathema. Why this is so needs careful explication.

It has already been shown that Weber's attempt to maintain the dualisms of fact and value and theory and practice masks a commitment to a particular schema of values and practice. It has also been argued that Weber's methodological position embraces an evaluation of the meaning of the rationalized world, as it subsumes formal rationality as a position supposedly free of evaluations and value-judgments (from which it criticizes all other views of science as ideological, i. e., embodying commitments to practical and value-judgments). It can also be noted, as previously pointed out, that on this view reality is both the object of analysis and the guiding thread for the interpretation of this reality. This is because Weber claims the disenchanted, rationalized world, or totality, to be of a particular quality and kind, i. e., meaningless, etc., and therefore can only be given scientific meaning and known if one pursues a particular form of method, etc. But now we should note that we are in a circle. For what is (claimed to be) known has become the standard of what can

be known. It is like Kant's demand, as Hegel expressed it, "that we should know the cognitive faculty before we know."

Even if we leave aside this last point, the consequences of the dualism between the world of appearances that we can know and the essence that we cannot, can be seen to have further implications. For since the world (or an aspect of it) cannot be known in itself, there is no justification available, no privileged standpoint, etc., which can claim access to it. Quite literally, in the end, one man's value-orientations, concepts, etc., are able to shed as much light on this world as another's (so long, of course, as they employ the rational method). For historical reasons, there now exists a philosophical position that can justify the inapplicability of a critical reflexive understanding of the "social world."

In Weber's view we can give a partial description of the processes whereby people acquire their values, world-views, etc., but we cannot give a critical account of these. Weber can help give an individual an account of the ultimate meaning of his or her own conduct and even point out the one-sided, limited nature of this person's views and orientations. But Weber can only do so (that is, if he is doing more than exposing the internal inconsistencies of these views) by pointing out the legitimacy of competing claims, explanations, and by arguing that the totality is objectively meaningless, etc., outside

individually grounded characterizations. He cannot, in the end, arbitrate between claims and claim the ideological nature of certain values, standpoints, etc., i. e., that they are not only limited and one-sided but also false and distorted. He cannot do this because he has no conception of a false and distorted view of the world (given we follow the correct methodological procedures). He only claims ideology when value-judgments enter into the doing of science. The philosophical justification of this position is, of course, that since we cannot know the object of investigation in-itself, we cannot ground any privileged access to this world. As we have seen and see again here, Weber's position condones a situation of theoretical relativism, a pluralism in the human sciences and allows no objective ground for discriminating amongst competing accounts and explanations and voicing a preference. Weber's methods and concepts remain external to the world in-itself and in so doing find a philosophical ground and justification for relativism.

Hence inquiry into the conditions of possible knowledge can only be meaningfully pursued in the form of methodological inquiry into the rules for the construction and corroboration of scientific theories. Weber's methodological "discussions" with his contemporaries should be seen in this light (for example, his critique of Meyer). The subjects that proceed according to these rules lose

their significance. But this view, first, as we have already repeatedly noted, makes a dogma of method and masks a commitment to the values and consequences of formal rationality, which cannot be justified within its own terms of reference, i. e., requires a practically reasoned justification which is not made. Secondly, it rests on a philosophical argument that dirempts the world into phenomenal and noumenal realms. The question remains: is this view and argument justified?

To answer this question fully and adequately is beyond the bounds of this work. It would require "nothing less" than a recapitulation of Hegel's critique of Kant. Here we can only suggest a number of points and arguments that point to the inadequacy of the Kantian dualism and Weber's seeming failure to grasp the dialectic of experience. These points and arguments highlight an alternative program for the social sciences, a critical program that becomes plausible when it is seen that this final dualism breaks down.

* * * * *

In the Phenomenology⁹⁴ Hegel sought to demonstrate that any methodological procedure that concentrates exclusively on either the subject or object of investigation breaks down through immanent contradiction--likewise any epistemology that hopes to establish and delineate the knowing process in abstract philosophical reflection. Writing of Kant's circular reasoning, Hegel points out that:

What is demanded [by Kant] is thus the following: we should know the cognitive faculty before we know . . . The investigation of the faculty of knowledge is itself knowledge, and cannot arrive at its goal because it is this goal already.⁹⁵

Weber's reasoning, we have already seen, embodies an analogous circle.

We cannot, Hegel contends, restrict our attention to concepts, forms, and categories, but rather must concentrate on the explication of the knowing process that gives rise to new conceptual forms. Such a process Hegel finds is a continuous dialectic of subject and object in which both terms are constantly changing, developing, and being redefined. It makes no sense to talk of an unknowable object, a distinct noumenal realm, because to posit such a realm is to make a cognitive claim. Summarizing an important part of Hegel's argument, Marcuse writes:

When experience begins, the object seems a stable entity, independent of consciousness; subject and object appear to be alien to one another. The progress of knowledge, however, reveals that the two

do not subsist in isolation. It becomes clear that the object gets its objectivity from the subject. "The real" which consciousness actually holds in the endless flux of sensations and perceptions, is a universal that cannot be reduced to objective elements free of the subject (for example, quality, thing, force, laws). In other words, the real object is constituted by the (intellectual) activity of the subject. The latter discovers that it itself stands "behind" the objects. . . . 96

We cannot obviously follow at any length Hegel's account, in the Phenomenology, of a subject's (or as Hegel puts it, a "consciousness") journey of discovery. We can, however, and this is crucial for our argument, say a little about Hegel's analysis of the dialectical nature of experience.

In the Introduction of the Phenomenology Hegel wrote:

The dialectical movement, which consciousness exercises on itself--on its knowledge as well as its object--is, insofar as the new, true object emerges to consciousness as a result of it, precisely that which is called experience. . . . Consciousness knows something, and this object is the essence or the in-itself. But this object is also the in-itself for consciousness; and hence the ambiguity of truth comes into play. We see that consciousness now has two objects; one is the first in-itself and the second is the being for consciousness of this in-itself.

(These two objects, in the above and following passages, can be thought of as Hegel's equivalent conception of what Kant had called the noumena (the being in-itself) and phenomena (the being for consciousness of this in-itself.) Hegel continues the passage by saying that:

The latter seems at first to be merely the reflection of consciousness into its self, a representation, not of an object, but only of its knowledge of the first object. But as already indicated, the first object comes to be altered for consciousness in this very process; it ceases to be the in-itself and becomes to consciousness an object which is the in-itself only for it. And therefore it follows that this, the being-of-consciousness of this in-itself, is the true, which is to say that this true is the essence or consciousness' new object. This new object contains the annihilation of the first; it is the experience constituted through that first object.⁹⁷

The necessity to discuss the nature of the true in-itself becomes redundant and left to the medium of philosophical abstraction. The result of Hegel's decision to attempt to explicate the process of knowing reveals that consciousness can come and can only come to know the world as it appears. The knowledge we have of the world is our knowledge, in its being for us. As Kenley Dove wrote, "Since the object of our inquiry is knowing, any distinction on our part between subject and object would be playing with mere abstractions. Our object is at once and inseparably both the object-knowing subject and the object known-by-the-subject. Thus our object, consciousness or Spirit, contains this subject-object distinction within itself and requires no further distinction by us."⁹⁸

The "supra-phenomenal" constructs of Kantian philosophy are unnecessary since the "experiences of consciousness itself" lead to the discovery and uncovering of a more concrete distinction.

Natural consciousness will show itself to be merely the concept (Begriff) of knowledge, or unreal knowledge. But since it immediately takes itself to be real knowledge, this pathway has a negative significance for it, and what is actually the realization of the Concept is for it [for consciousness] rather the loss and destruction of its self. The road may thus be viewed as the way of doubt or, more properly as the way of despair. For what happens here is not what is usually understood by "doubt," i. e., entertaining a disbelief in this or that presumed truth only to return to that same "truth" once the "doubt" has been appropriately dissipated. . . . On the contrary, this road is the conscious insight into the truth of phenomenal knowledge, a knowledge for which that is most real which is in truth only the unrealized Concept.⁹⁹

Phenomenal knowledge shows its incompleteness, one-sidedness, limitedness, and falseness at the phenomenal level. The development of the knowing subject is not epistemological activity per se, for that process cannot be severed from the historical struggle between man and his world, "a struggle that is itself a constitutive part of the way to truth and of truth itself."¹⁰⁰ It is struggle along a road of doubt and despair where the subject is continually continually confronted with the inadequacy of its concepts. But the question arises: do we not risk skepticism or solipsism in this process? For what standards or criteria reveal incompleteness or the inadequacy of our concepts?

For Hegel it is, of course, of central importance to realize that standards are always our standards--"consciousness provides

itself with its own standard, and the investigation will accordingly be a comparison of consciousness with its own self."¹⁰¹ Dove has elucidated this process well:

To understand how this comparison takes place we must observe that, just as consciousness or Spirit was seen to be at once both "subjective" and "objective," this same duality holds true for the Concept: consciousness itself distinguishes between (a) the Concept qua knowledge and (b) the Concept qua object. Hence there is with consciousness not only something which is taken to be for it; consciousness also assumes that which is for it, is in-itself or has an independent status as well. Accordingly, we see that the Concept has two moments. If we take the Concept to be knowledge, then the standard for this Concept qua knowledge will be its object or what is said to exist in-itself. In this case the comparison will consist in seeing whether the Concept corresponds to the object, i. e., truth. But, on the other hand, if we take the Concept to be the object as it is essentially or in-itself, then the Concept itself will be the standard for the Concept qua known, i. e., the Concept qua object of knowledge. Here the comparison consists in seeing whether the Concept qua known or qua object corresponds to the Concept itself.¹⁰²

Furthermore, as Dove points out, it must be noted that (a) both these aspects of the Concept must be taken into account in any attempt to describe the knowing process and (b) it must be realized that both these aspects embody, in fact, the same process. "The standard is selected by consciousness itself and, since both moments of the process fall within our object, i. e., knowledge as it appears, any selection of standards on our part would be superfluous."¹⁰³ The movement and development of consciousness depends then on the process

whereby "consciousness not only selects its own standard but is also the comparison of its knowledge with its own standard."¹⁰⁴ And if, as happens continually in the subject's struggle in the world, consciousness finds that its criteria or standard and its knowledge do not match, it will, "on the basis of its own assumptions, have to change its knowledge in order to make it correspond to its standards."¹⁰⁵ But as consciousness' knowledge changes, it follows from what we have said above, that consciousness' standard changes, "for the standard was based upon the object and, indeed, upon the object qua known."¹⁰⁶

Consciousness thus discovers that the process in which it placed its knowledge in doubt, all the while certain that it held a firm criterion for what the object of its knowledge was in-itself, turns out to be a movement in which it loses its own truth; the "path of doubt" (Zweifel) is transformed into "the way of despair" (Verzweiflung). . . . Moreover, this despair is not something arbitrarily imposed on consciousness from without; it is immanent in the very movement of consciousness itself. Thus, in Baillie's poignant translation, consciousness "suffers this violence at its own hands."¹⁰⁷

Experience is, therefore, a dialectical process to the extent to which "new objects" are generated and established for itself. It is a process in which consciousness negates the appearance of the first object of consciousness' experience and in this process uncovers a new object and a new standard. The negation has a content, it is a determinate negation.¹⁰⁸

Hegel speaks of the Concept (Begriff), where Kant spoke of categories, forms, intuitions, etc. And where Kant speaks of a phenomenal and noumenal world, a given diremption between subject and object, Hegel argues we can only speak of an interaction and tension between subject and object in the process of knowing, out of which the concept arises. This concept cannot be identified with the subject or object. It is neither simply a subjective creation and representation nor an objective structure. Rather, it is temporal and variable and is given subjectively, but dependent for its realization and validity on concrete human, inter-subjective, history, in which man interacts with the world that he is conscious of. To speak of two worlds, as Weber did, is to gloss the complexity of man's self-formative process and his constitution of the world. How we might further conceive these processes will be taken up again later in the thesis. It is important here, however, to note the consequences of Hegel's critique of the Kantian dualism for Weber's own approach to the human sciences.

First, we must note that where Weber claims discontinuity, we can only find continuity. The dualism that Weber subsumes cannot be maintained. Secondly, we must notice that the formal rationality of Weber's method structures the object of investigation in such a way as to perpetuate this dualism. The true-in-itself cannot be

known. We can only make valid claims about an object from our own individual standpoints and if we utilize the rational method. Our concepts will then capture parts of this object and render valid knowledge. But since the true in-itself cannot be grasped, any number of points of view can formulate starting points of investigation. We, therefore, have a conception of the human sciences, previously noted, that sees relativism as an essential feature.

But, and in light of our above discussion of Hegel, we must note that Weber's position is a curious one for the social scientist to accept. For the objects of the social world are our objects. Following Hegel, we can note that objects of investigation are always objects for us, the being for consciousness of an in-itself. As such the interesting question becomes how a given body of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge comes to be established as and in social reality. Indeed, it is only through an account of the knowing subject (and the constitutive presuppositions of knowledge) that the human sciences (in fact, all sciences) can render themselves comprehensible. What is required, initially at least, is an account of the human subject, of the subject's knowledge, values, and interests; an analysis and account of the constitutive elements that are at the base and roots of the production of different (world-)views of social phenomena. It should, of course, be noted that such a study is itself only free from the thrust of Weber's

concerns with the role of the constituting subject and that subject's value-orientations, if it can successfully ground the basis of its own approach. The nature of this problematic is still to be explored. (It is defined at some length in the introduction to Chapter 6.)

The process of knowing cannot, then, be severed from the historical struggle between man and his world. The process of knowing becomes the process of history in which consciousness discovers the world as its own new and real world. "The subject conceives the world as its own 'presence' and truth; it is certain of finding only itself there."¹⁰⁹ To uncover this process of knowing and, therefore, to uncover man's constitution of the world, is to necessitate an historical reconstruction of the self-formative process of man and of the social situatedness of all human thought.

On this account the formal rationality of Weber's methodology is seen to be inadequate to the task of conceptualizing the historicity of the knowing process and the development of man. The method of ratio essendi, despite its important stress on the necessity of historical, interpretative analysis, ultimately emancipates itself from history. As Merleau-Ponty observed, "Historical epochs become ordered around a questioning of human possibility, of which each has its formula, rather than around an immanent solution, of which history would be the manifestation."¹¹⁰ Weber's types and concepts

grasp at the world and offer us a series of representations, the relationship between which can only be established through the imputation of adequate causes, etc. But these methods cannot grasp the self-formative process of man as process, for Weber's representations bracket this process in a presentation of types and categories which impose form and, therefore, order on the "cultural manifold" in a series of interrelated one-sided categories, which seek to analyze unique historical configurations. This analysis, restricted to a causal analysis of historical individuals, cannot provide us with a sufficient method to uncover the self-formative struggles of man. This process can only be understood in the attempt to explicate man's reality as a self-structured, self-unfolding, and forming whole. The method must be historical, but as historical also dialectical. It must proceed:

a. through the explication of the actual constitution of ideas in consciousness and interaction, in the dialectics of experience;

b. through the analysis of the creation, maintenance, and change of man's inter-subjective, historical Concepts;

c. by refusing to ignore and smooth over contradictions and contradictory claims at the phenomenal level, by appealing to an unknowable noumenal world as the justification for differences, etc. For this view, as we have seen, embodies a false dualism and in

Weber's justification of it a dogmatic conception of the totality.

Instead our task here is--along with Hegel in the Phenomenology--to observe and explicate "determinate and historical acts of negation" and grasp the dynamic movement of the subject; and finally

d. it must leave open the possibility of a critically reflexive understanding of history and tradition. It must not only accept the importance of a hermeneutical understanding of the communicative structure of tradition, but also recognize that this tradition must not be idealized. For it might also embody interaction based on deception, distortion, i. e., ideology. As Habermas has put it, it is necessary to go beyond a limited hermeneutical perspective to uncover "what lies behind the consensus, presented as a fact, that supports the dominant tradition of the time, and does so with a view to the relations of power surreptitiously incorporated in the symbolic structures of the systems of speech and action."¹¹¹

The formal method Weber defends glosses these processes and as such reifies the social world. Despite the fact that the method of ratio essendi is hermeneutic in intent, its tools of analysis are insufficient for hermeneutic understanding. In fact, this whole application of Weber's methodology is ambiguous between a hermeneutic and, as previously noted, a technical intent. For the methods of ratio cognoscendi when applied at the level of position B are productive of

knowledge suitable to the rôle Weber allots to science. Sociology on this account is concerned with the establishment of generalities, empirical regularities, and with the expansion of knowledge of behavioral uniformities that can provide a basis for conditional prognosis and/or causal explanation. On this level Weber's conceptual apparatus objectifies the social world and renders it open to instrumental action and manipulation.¹¹² The idea that knowledge could be produced to emancipate people from hypostatized forces and processes is ruled out as Weber closes off the dimension of critically reflexive understanding. How we might reconceptualize those processes and a method suitable to their analysis and comprehension is a topic we will take further in Parts 3 and 4 of this thesis. Until then, it should be remembered that certain of the criticisms we have made, in connection with the possibility of a critically reflexive understanding, must be regarded as tentative. For as we previously noted, they depend for their force on the critical tradition making good on its claim that a critical theory is a viable epistemological and methodological project. (A similar tentative status should also be given to the following remarks.)

Before closing our discussion of Weber with a few concluding statements, a number of further points can briefly be made. These will be brief since many of the points we make are in need of extended

discussion and will be taken up more systematically in our discussion of hermeneutics. Many of the remarks above about Weber's conception of diachronic analysis may also apply to the methodology of synchronic analysis and its application to the empirical study of social action (position A, see p. 126). In this context Alfred Schutz's critique of Weber's treatment of subjectivity is apposite.¹¹³

Schutz argues that Weber's exposition of interpretative sociology is a contribution of enormous importance to the human sciences, but doesn't go far enough.

Never before had the project of reducing the "world of objective mind" to the behaviour of individuals been so radically carried out as it was in Max Weber's initial statement of the goal of interpretative sociology. This science is to study social behaviour by interpreting its subjective meaning as found in the intentions of individuals. The aim, then, is to interpret the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which individuals give meaning to social phenomena.¹¹⁴

However, Schutz adds that

He [Weber] breaks off his analysis of the social world when he arrives at what he assumes to be the basic and irreducible elements of social phenomena. But he is wrong in this assumption. His concept of the meaningful act of the individual--the key idea of interpretative sociology--by no means defines a primitive, as he thinks it does. It is, on the contrary, a mere label for a highly complex and ramified area that calls for much further study.¹¹⁵

Weber's project of understanding social action falls short of its interpretative intentions. For example, when Weber speaks of "Direct

Understanding," Schutz argues, he conflates important constitutive elements of social action, rather than clarifying them. The procedure of "Direct Understanding" is equivalent to "methods of understanding employed in everyday life" and while these methods are satisfactory for the purposes of everyday accomplishments they gloss, Schutz suggests, a series of factors and influences which themselves have to be explored.¹¹⁶ The two crucial sources of difficulty in Weber's work are, according to Schutz,

1. his reference to meaning as simply constituted subjectively, rather than inter-subjectively, and

2. his consequential conflation of action as a "completed" or "objectified" act, and action as a series and flow of events.

Weber fails to grasp the temporality of action, the process of constituting. (These remarks, it should be noted, have close affinity to our previous criticisms of the application of Weber's methods to position B.)

Considerations of space make a lengthy analysis of Schutz's critique of Weber impossible. I would, however, like to extrapolate a few points from the issues Schutz raises (leaving aside Schutz's own solution to the problems of studying the social world which are not without their own difficulties).¹¹⁷

It is necessary, we can argue from Schutz's critique, to go

beyond Weber's conception of social action and to inquire into the commonsense world of everyday life. This can only be done by exploring the processes that are taken for granted and presupposed by a subject who attempts the execution of a projected act¹¹⁸ and by showing how social realities are created, constructed, sustained, and changed by interacting subjects.

"Efficiency, efficacy, effectiveness, intelligibility, consistency, planfulness, typicality, uniformity, reproducibility of activities"--i. e. , the rational properties of practical activities--cannot be "assessed, recognized, categorized, described . . . outside actual settings within which such properties are recognized, used, produced . . . Structurally differing organized practical activities of everyday life," can and must be "sought out and examined for the production, origins, recognition, and representations of rational practices. All 'logical' and 'methodological' properties of action, every feature of an activity's sense, facility, objectivity, accountability, communality," must be treated--as Garfinkel put it--"as a contingent accomplishment of socially organized common practices."¹¹⁹ Social reality can only be known from within social situations constituted through the interactional use of language. Social structures are generated by means of interaction, they are the product of "organic self-mobilization,"¹²⁰ in inter-subjectively

constructed organizations of interaction. Weber's conception of "subjective meaning;" considered to be the irreducible element of social phenomena, glosses the complexity of this social interaction and as a consequence cuts short the (conceptualization of the) inquiry into social action.¹²¹

What appears to be required in an empirical analysis of social action is:

- a. an explication of the procedures and methods used by members of a society, i. e., their conventional practices, in constituting their communicative relationships;
- b. an explication of the processes whereby social realities are maintained and sustained;
- c. an explication and understanding of members' reflexive accounts of their experience, i. e., their "intentional descriptions," (which would entail a study of their expressed intentions, goals, reasons, or motives); and
- d. very importantly, the placement of these intentional-descriptions within the context of a critically reflexive understanding of their social situatedness. Such an understanding would attempt to avoid idealizing such descriptions and would (a) test the consistency of meaning between verbal and nonverbal expressions and actions; (b) check the possibility of systematically excluded meanings which

might inhibit self-expression and communicative interaction and, therefore; (c) assess the possibility of a deceptive self-understanding,¹²² i. e., as we have discussed it hitherto, the possibility of ideological distortion.

This account which is suggestive of the enormous complexity of issues embraced by Weber's concept of "subjective meaning" makes, of course, no claims to completeness. Rather, the account is intended to show the limitedness of Weber's conception of the analysis of social action and the multitude of questions which he does not address. How we might systematically conceptualize these issues and develop a method suitable to their analysis is a topic we take further in Part 2, chapter 5.

It goes without saying that Weber's analysis of social action was an outstanding contribution. That it did not go far enough in its intent to provide a groundwork and methodological basis for an hermeneutic account of social action is less significant perhaps than the long distance it did take us toward such a goal. But that his program for the social sciences did not include the possibility of critical reflexive understanding was not, as we have seen, because Weber did not go far enough. His epistemology and approach to the human sciences close this dimension off.

* * * * *

In conclusion we can note that where a dichotomy and discontinuity were claimed by Weber between fact and value, theory and practice, essence and appearance (the two-world theory), we have found certain definite relationships. Where Weber claimed a diremption between fact and value, we found an unexplicated attachment to a mode of rationality that subsumed a schema of values that could not be justified within its own terms of reference. Where Weber claimed a diremption between theory and practice, we found an immanent commitment to decisionism, the freedoms of possessive individualism and the practice of science envisaged as a "technical critique" of the choice of means (as well as the commitment to a hermeneutic practice). Where Weber claimed a diremption between essence and appearance, we found a commitment to a particular conception of essence, i. e. , a conception of the unknowable.

Our discussion of Weber has served purposes other than an assessment of the difficulties, ambiguities, and tensions in Weber's work. For it has helped to make explicit the questions, issues, and problems which a more adequate epistemological and methodological framework would have to (attempt to) contend with.

In Part 2 we will examine how the positivist and hermeneutic traditions have dealt with these issues.

NOTES

¹Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 102-3.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Cf., for example, Talcott Parson's Introduction to T.S.E.O., pp. 18ff.

⁴Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 103-4 (my emphasis).

⁵From a letter to R. Liefmann quoted by W. Mommsen in "Max Weber's Political Sociology and His Philosophy of World History," International Social Science Journal 17 (1965): 25. Quoted in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 25.

⁶Weber, T.S.E.O., p. 99.

⁷Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, p. 595, quoted in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 15.

⁸Ibid. (My discussion of the status of laws in Weber's thought follows the useful exegesis of Weber's views on this issue by Eldridge, Max Weber, pp. 15-17.)

⁹Weber, M.S.S., pp. 72-73.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 84.

¹¹Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 16.

¹²Weber, M.S.S., p. 84.

¹³Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Giddens, Capitalism and Social Theory, p. 140, from Weber, M.S.S., pp. 82ff.

- ¹⁶Weber, M.S.S., pp. 74-75, and Weber, T.S.E.O., p. 94.
- ¹⁷Weber, M.S.S., p. 75. (Given the current state of biology, the analogy is unhelpful and very weak.)
- ¹⁸Ibid., pp. 88-89.
- ¹⁹Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 94, 100.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 100.
- ²¹John Rex, Key Problems of Sociological Theory, p. 189, quoted in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 19.
- ²²Weber, M.S.S., pp. 113-88.
- ²³Ibid., p. 132.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 135.
- ²⁵See p. 66.
- ²⁶Weber, M.S.S., pp. 50-113.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 66.
- ²⁸Ibid., pp. 113-88.
- ²⁹Ibid., pp. 75-76.
- ³⁰Ibid., pp. 76-77.
- ³¹Ibid., pp. 92-93.
- ³²The "specification" of ideal-types was made on p. 56.
- ³³Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 140. Giddens' discussion of ideal-types is extremely helpful. Cf. pp. 141-44. My analysis of ideal-types follows, in large part, this analysis.
- ³⁴Ibid. p. 142.
- ³⁵Ibid.

- ³⁶Weber, M.S.S., pp. 90-92, 100.
- ³⁷Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 143.
- ³⁸Ibid.
- ³⁹Weber, M.S.S., p. 102.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 135.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 171.
- ⁴²Ibid., pp. 168-69.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 177.
- ⁴⁴Andrew Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," Telos 11 (1972): 62.
- ⁴⁵For a contemporary restatement and elaboration of Weber's account of causality, cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, "Causation and History" (unpublished paper).
- ⁴⁶Weber, M.S.S., pp. 174-75.
- ⁴⁷Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 140.
- ⁴⁸Weber, M.S.S., p. 180, quoted in Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory.
- ⁴⁹Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 140.
- ⁵⁰Weber, M.S.S., p. 183.
- ⁵¹Ibid.
- ⁵²As pointed out in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 21.
- ⁵³Weber, M.S.S., p. 17.
- ⁵⁴In fact, Economy and Society was written as part of an ambitious, large work on aspects of political economy. The project was one in which several authors collaborated, or were to have collaborated (including A. Weber, Schumpeter, and Sombart), parts

of which were published between 1914 and 1930. Weber conceived his contribution to be comparable in intention to the writing of a Preface (!), a preparation and establishment of types, concepts, etc., essential to the study of historical individuals.

⁵⁵Weber, T.S.E.O., p. 109.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 88.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 90, quoted in Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 147.

⁶⁰Weber, T.S.E.O., p. 91.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³For an elaboration of this point, cf. Georg H. von Wright, Explanation and Understanding (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), chaps. 1, 2.

⁶⁴Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 95-96.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 98-99 (my emphasis).

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 95.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 99.

⁶⁸Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, p. 149. This position is developed below.

⁶⁹Weber, T.S.E.O., p. 99.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 99-100.

⁷¹Laurie Taylor and Paul Walton, "Industrial Sabotage: Motives and Meanings," in Images of Deviance, ed. Stanley Cohen (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 220.

⁷²Ibid. p. 226.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Eldridge, Max Weber, pp. 22-23.

⁷⁵Carl G. Hempel has developed this point in a general critique of the whole conception of ideal-type analysis. Cf. his "Typological Methods in the Natural and the Social Sciences," in Carl G. Hempel, Aspects of Scientific Explanation: And Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 152-72.

⁷⁶Weber, T.S.E.O., pp. 109-10.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 110.

⁷⁸Karl Löwith, "Weber's Interpretation of the Bourgeois-Capitalistic World in Terms of the Guiding Principle of 'Rationalization'," in Max Weber, ed. Wrong.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 108.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²The distinctions being used here between types of totality are based on those made by the Czech philosopher, Karel Kosík, in Die Dialektik des Konkreten, trans. from Czech, by Marianne Hoffman (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 45, who distinguished three notions of totality in the history of philosophical thought:

"1. the atomistic-rationalistic conception, from Descartes to Wittgenstein, which understands the whole or totality as simple elements or facts;

2. the organicist or organicist-dynamicist conception, which formalizes the whole and raises the priority of the whole to a position of domination over the parts (Schelling, Spann);

3. the dialectical conception (Heraklitus, Hegel, Marx), which grasps the reality as a structured, self-unfolding and forming whole."

We will discuss the third conception of totality in Part 3 of the thesis.

For additional and very helpful analysis of the concepts of totality cf. Bertell Ollman, "Marxism and Political Science," Politics and Society 3 (1973): 491ff; Paul Diessing, Patterns of Discovery in

the Social Sciences (Chicago: Aldine, 1971), chaps. 9, 20.

(The above passage from Kosík was translated by James Schmidt.)

⁸³Weber, M.S.S., p. 110. Cf. Weber's discussion and consideration of "the interests of agriculture," M.S.S., p. 109ff.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 101.

⁸⁵The relationship of Weber's work to the doctrine of methodological individualism is by no means, like the doctrine itself, straightforward. For a useful discussion of the doctrine cf. Steven Lukes, "Methodological Individualism Reconsidered," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Alan Ryan (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 119-30. Also cf. May Brodbeck, "Methodological Individualism: Definition and Reduction," in Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences, ed. May Brodbeck (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), pp. 280-304.

Weber's relationship to the doctrine has yet to be systematically worked out.

⁸⁶Brodbeck, "Methodological Individualism," pp. 282-94.

⁸⁷Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Crises of the Understanding," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 11.

⁸⁸Weber, M.S.S., pp. 92-93.

⁸⁹Andrew Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," Telos 21 (1974): 135.

⁹⁰Weber sometimes also suggested that the rationalized reality could also be overcome by a return to religion and/or mysticism.

⁹¹James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics: On the Theoretical Significance of Lukács' Path from Simmel to Marx" (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1974), p. 11.

⁹²Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 93. Quoted in Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," pp. 11-12.

⁹³Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," p. 12. For an elaboration of these issues, see Goldman, Immanuel Kant, pp. 152-66.

⁹⁴G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baille (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

⁹⁵G. W. F. Hegel, from lectures in the history of philosophy, quoted by Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 7.

⁹⁶Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 94.

⁹⁷Hegel, "Introduction" to the Phenomenology, trans. Kenley Dove, in Martin Heidegger, Hegel's Concept of Experience (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 23-24. Dove's translation is more accurate to the "spirit" of Hegel's work.

⁹⁸Kenley Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," Review of Metaphysics 23 (1970): 618.

⁹⁹Hegel, "Introduction" to the Phenomenology, in Heidegger, Hegel's Concept of Experience, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁰Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 95.

¹⁰¹Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," p. 619.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 620.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 621.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 622.

¹⁰⁸For an elaboration of the concept of determinate negation, cf. Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, ed. Alan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969), chaps. 1 and 7 especially.

¹⁰⁹Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 120.

¹¹⁰Marleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, p. 17.

¹¹¹Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 12.

¹¹²Cf. our earlier discussion of these issues on pp. 48-53. and pt. 2, chap. 4.

¹¹³Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1967), especially chap. 1.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹¹⁶For a useful summary of Schutz's views cf. Giddens, ed. Positivism and Sociology, pp. 7-11.

¹¹⁷Some of Schutz's own solutions to these problems will be discussed in chap. 5.

¹¹⁸In Schutz's view, a "project is the intended act imagined as already accomplished, the in-order-to motive in the future state of affairs to be realized by the projected action" (quoted in Eldridge, Max Weber, p. 30). If we seek to know why an actor carries out one project rather than another, Schutz argues that we must refer to the actor's past experiences to furnish a "reason" or "cause," a "because-motive." Schutz ultimately follows Weber in holding that actions can be causally explained by reference to "motives" (albeit "because-motives") but warns against any attempt to ascribe "invariant motives." There are many, however, who would not agree that we can treat reasons (or Weber's conception of "motives") as themselves a species of cause. This issue is too extensive a topic to be dealt with here, but see Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy, pp. 45-50, 111-20; Jeff Coulter, "The Ethno-methodological Programme," Human Context, vol. 6, no. 1 (1974); Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Mistake About Causality," in P. Laslett and W. Runciman, Philosophy, Politics and Society (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, 2nd series), pp. 48-70, for arguments against and references. For arguments for and references, Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, supplementary vol. 41 (1967); Richard Bernstein,

Praxis and Action (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pt. 2.

¹¹⁹Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 33.

¹²⁰Coulter, "The Ethnomethodological Programme," p. 103.

¹²¹For an elaboration of one aspect of this theme (that takes the critique in the direction of ethnomethodology), cf. E. Bittner, "The Concept of Organization," in Ethnomethodology, ed. Roy Turner (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, Books, 1974).

¹²²Points (a) to (c) are drawn from Habermas' and Wellmer's critique of H. G. Gadamer. Cf. Albrecht Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, trans. J. Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), pp. 31-41. These points will be discussed at greater length in pt. 2, chap. 5.

PART II

ON THE TENDENCY TO THE REDUCTION OF PRACTICE
TO THEORY, AND THEORY TO PRACTICE

CHAPTER IV

A CRITIQUE OF POSITIVISM: ON THE TENDENCY TO THE REDUCTION OF PRACTICE TO THEORY

Introduction

There has been a seemingly endless debate over the nature of "positivism." It is a term that has been deeply embroiled in polemics. This chapter begins with a discussion of the term as it has come to be associated with certain positions in epistemology and and Philosophy of Science. These positions are then discussed.

The themes of this chapter are essentially as follows. Starting with certain theses of the French Enlightenment¹ and developing in the 19th century in the writings of Comte and Mach, positivism reached its zenith in the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle. With the rise of positivism, epistemology lost sight of the significance of the role of the epistemic subject and of the moment of reflection by the subject on his and/or her own activities. Knowledge became equated with that form of knowledge generated by the methods of the natural science. In the name of objectivity, epistemology, reduced for the most part to an elucidation of the methodology of science, faced the danger of falling into subjectivism and even solipsism. As such,

positivism lost the capacity to understand itself and, therefore, social practice. Theory was dirempted from practice and the former became unable to comprehend and thematize the latter. These themes are illustrated in a discussion of the relationship between explanation and understanding, and in a discussion of a position that might be called one of positivism's "theoretical opposites."² In this context the work of Thomas Kuhn is addressed.

From the point of view of traditional philosophy, the loss of the moment of reflection entailed the loss of a critical perspective. Philosophy followed science into a type of scientism which, in the name of instrumental reason, increasingly dominated modern thought and activity. Today, if emancipation from domination, in all its multifarious forms, is to remain a project for humanity, it is essential to counter this tendency. Positivism closes off the possibility of a Critical Science. If such a project is to remain a possibility and if a critical perspective is to be reestablished, it is necessary we argue following Habermas, to recover the moment of self-reflection and of self-understanding.

The relationship between the structure of knowledge and structure of action is also examined, as is positivism's appearance of "passive contemplative scientific reason," and its underlying unexplicated level of committed reason. Positivism's epistemology has certain

social, political, and moral implications.

The critique developed below draws many of its ideas from the work of Habermas and those who have associated with him, specifically, Karl-Otto Apel, Albrecht Wellmer, Trent Schroyer, and Gerard Radnitzky.³ However, the positions developed below are by no means restricted to the considerations of these authors.

It will be noted, finally, that our critique is itself limited in its applicability to contemporary Philosophy of Science. It is recognized that today Philosophy of Science cannot be equated with a form of scientism.

Positivism, Defined and Criticized

What is positivism? One of the central aims of positivism, in its various forms from Comte to the Logical Positivists, was to construct a demarcation line between what it considered legitimate and illegitimate knowledge claims. Given positivism's location within the empiricist tradition, this aim amounted to providing a ". . . criterion for a strict separation between science and metaphysics . . . ,"⁴ metaphysics being taken as speculative knowledge; that is, a mode of thought that placed itself beyond the possibility of empirical test and decidability. In its concern to separate knowledge from dogma, positivism can be seen to have had an initially progressive and liberating intent. There was, as Israel Scheffler

has written, an:

underlying moral impulse of positivism, the conviction that our assertions impose upon us the responsibility to satisfy relevant independent controls . . . to affirm the responsibilities of assertion no matter what the subject matter, to grant no holidays from such responsibilities for the humanities, politics, or the social sciences in particular . . ."⁵

Likewise, science, and in particular, natural science, was in the 19th century generally thought to be the most systematic source of the type of knowledge which could be utilized to liberate humanity from natural necessity and domination by the forces of nature.⁶

Much attention was focused, therefore, on the nature and methodology of natural science. Physics, as the most developed, advanced, and prestigious natural science, increasingly took center stage. The other sciences, both natural and social, were regarded as poor "seconds" and less developed. However, it was generally assumed by the (very) late 19th century, that all these other sciences essentially admitted of the same structure and procedures as physics.

Certainly in the 19th century, this tendency to equate knowledge with science in the effort to free science from dogma appeared to have some justification. Science appeared to be progressing at such a rapid rate and with such spectacular results that it seemed only to be burdened by metaphysical theories. It is particularly with the 20th century that it became apparent that scientific knowledge,

while a necessary condition, is certainly not sufficient for human liberation and that epistemology's exclusive concern with an examination of the methodology of science impairs philosophy's ability to understand the "meaning" and "import" of knowledge.

"Positivism" is a term which is used to cover a range of philosophical positions. Hence it is often difficult to reach a clear understanding of the term's meaning in a particular context. Here I will take positivism to be a general philosophical orientation which maintains at least the three following theses:*

1. All knowledge which is not analytic (i. e., where the predicate is not contained in the subject) must have a basis in sensory experience.
2. The methodology of the natural sciences provides the only valid procedure for establishing knowledge claims which extend beyond immediate experience.
3. Normative statements have no empirical content and therefore no cognitive validity.

The goal of positivism is to construct an objective, empirical, and systematic foundation for knowledge. Given the above three

theses, it follows that positivists would hold that:

*This definition of positivism is adapted from a paper written jointly by Larry Simon and myself, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 2, pp. 4-5. The following six pages draw extensively from this jointly written paper, as do pp. 186-91, 217-24.

theses, it follows that positivists would hold that, ontologically, the world is composed of "facts," or "sense data" (or "atoms"). These facts are given, directly or indirectly, in sensory experience and are the only objects of knowledge. It also follows that positivism is normally nominalist, that is:

It recognizes only the particular given. Reason becomes extensional logic; logic turns to manipulation of symbols and symbolic equivalents; and general ideas, as Hume says, can serve only to represent the particulars from which they have been abstracted.⁷

A further point should also be noted concerning the third of the above theses. Postivists argue that it (the third thesis) follows from the first two theses with an additional claim, viz., that values are not facts, and hence values cannot be given as such in sense-experience. Since all knowledge is based in sensory experience, value judgments cannot be accorded the status of knowledge claims. This thesis amounts, in effect, to separating theoretical reason from practical reason and restricting knowledge solely to the sphere of the former. Ethics becomes, as it was ultimately for Weber, noncognitive and all scientific or methodical links between theory and practice are severed. Science can, perhaps, then guide, inform, or recommend practical measures and decisions, but it cannot be used to confirm or reject value judgments or questions of practice as such.

The definition of "positivism" here chosen is fairly broad.

"Positivism" is sometimes taken to have a more restricted denotation and the term "empiricism" then used in the wider sense here attributed to "positivism." The more limited definition of the term is given in an essay by Robert Cohen on Carnāp. There he takes "positivism" to refer to ". . . the phenomenalist tendency within the empiricist tradition: 'neo-positivism' refers to those recent views whose consequences may be shown to be phenomenalist."⁸

I have chosen to use the less restricted definition of "positivism" in order to better draw out and show the implications of the critique presented, for a larger range of theorists within the empiricist tradition. While Habermas has discussed positivism in its specifically phenomenalist form, with special reference to Mach, the hope here is to show that his critique extends beyond phenomenism to encompass broader but related positions. A more general materialist empiricism or physicalism can avoid some of the subjectivist pitfalls of phenomenism. But as long as it adheres to some version of the above three theses, physicalism cannot escape the charge of being unable to understand, within the terms it has set itself, its own activity (e. g., as involving reflection) and the activity of science generally. Such an empiricism would be as susceptible to critique as the more narrow version and would prove equally insufficient as a basis for understanding the human or cultural sciences (and for

establishing a critical science).

In Knowledge and Human Interests, Habermas begins his critique of positivism with a critical examination of the works of Comte and Mach.⁹ He then attempts to show, through a discussion of Peirce, how, by systematically exploring certain questions within the philosophy of science, positivism can be brought to the point of transcending its limitations (although Peirce, it is claimed, failed in the end to do so). It is worth exploring Habermas' discussion of Comte and Mach, specifically his critique of the objectivism inherent in their positions. We will then be in a position to understand systematically why positivism is incapable of understanding science as a human activity.

In Comte's writings, as Habermas points out,¹⁰ positivism did not appear in its purest form. Rather it was overlaid and "burdened" with a philosophy of history. Such a philosophy of history, which placed the development of science within the context of the evolution of the human species, was held to be necessary in order to ". . . interpret the meaning of positive knowledge. . . ." ¹¹ In this way, Comte was able to justify and ground his belief in science and scientific progress. But as science continued to advance and develop in the 19th century, it became less of a necessity to justify its status. Positivism "shed" and rejected its philosophy of history and

increasingly became scientific. In this context, scientific refers to ". . . science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science."¹²

The rise of a scientific orientation in philosophy resulted in the deemphasis of what had been the central concern of traditional critical philosophy; namely, the attempts to establish the conditions for the possibility of objective knowledge. This occurrence, in turn, resulted in the loss of the moment of reflection; that is, of the act of reflection in which the scientist qua philosopher turns into himself in order to gain an understanding of the nature of the epistemic subject and of scientific activity.

Epistemology, as a justificatory enterprise, became increasingly restricted to an examination of questions internal to methodology. There developed essentially two tasks for such an epistemology. The first was to examine the methodological procedures of science in order to understand how knowledge was generated by science. The second was to analyze scientific knowledge itself to demonstrate how such knowledge was actually constructed out of sensory experience. Frequently these two tasks were attempted together, but in neither case was concern created for the role of the epistemic subject. As Habermas put it:

For an epistemology restricted to methodology, the subjects who proceed according to these rules [of scientific procedure] lose their significance. Their deeds and destinies belong at best to the psychology of the empirical persons to whom the subjects of knowledge have been reduced.¹³

With the lapse of epistemology into methodology and with the abandonment of the enterprise of systematic self-reflection on the part of the epistemic subject, the possibility of philosophy being critical of knowledge dissolved. From an epistemological point of view, there could be no attempt to question the meaning or function of sciences because there was no source of knowledge held to be independent of science by which to criticize its results. Nor was there a privileged standpoint from which one could make an evaluation of scientific knowledge. Any attempt to provide an account of the constitution of the world was blocked by the presuppositions of positivism, which ruled out of consideration the activity of the epistemic subject. As Habermas points out, "the meaning of knowledge itself becomes irrational--in the name of rigorous knowledge."¹⁴ Positivism, which began as a critique of ideology (e. g., of religion, dogma, speculative metaphysics, etc.), as scientism became itself an ideology.¹⁵ It became ideological insofar as it prevented an adequate confrontation with the nature of its own status.

Ernst Mach, in his writings on phenomenalism, provided such an epistemology; although it should be noted that in Mach's overall

work there is a tension between his adherence to phenomenism and a certain evolutionism.¹⁶ However, it is his discussion of phenomenism that most interests us here, since it was this aspect of his thought which was so very influential on positivist thought.

Mach's phenomenism provided an epistemology for a science, a new science, "energetics." For those who adhered to this "new" science it was of considerable importance that

. . . natural phenomena might be described as varying appearances of energy. No need to seek the causes of apparent motion; and also, no need to restrict the entities (which undergo motions) to material particles or rigid bodies, so long as there are observed numerical correlations between the energy manifestations.¹⁷

Following this science of correlated observation, Mach argued, that a scientific object exists if "its symbol is the name of a set of particular perceptions; for it to persist as an entity, the perceptions must persist as a correlated set through the observer's flux of sensations."¹⁸ Scientific entities were ordered bundles of sensed perceptions. The ordering process was held to be potentially describable by laws of physiological psychology which were regarded to be largely unexplored.

This phenomenistic foundation for scientific statements served to aid both the elimination of previously cherished metaphysical (unobservable) aspects of scientific theories and to provide a basis for the unification of various sciences into a general science

of sensed experiences.¹⁹ However, there were several other important, but unexplicated, consequences of this claimed phenomenalist basis for science.

Mach's phenomenalist positivism conflated appearance with reality. "'Essential' reality is the totality of facts as they are immediately given; there is nothing hidden that only philosophical reflection can penetrate."²⁰ Science can help us learn about the world, but since science can ultimately reduce all its knowledge claims to its sensory base, all knowledge is there to be had in experience. As we have seen, in Mach's view, "for a scientific object to exist meant . . . that its symbol is the name of a set of particular perceptions. . . ."²¹ Facts (Mach's term) are what is given in sensory experience. If science is held to merely describe and correlate these facts, as it was (but not continuously and consistently)²² by Mach, it is objectivistic; that is, ". . . the model sciences," about whose scientific character consensus was claimed to prevail, "adequately describes reality as what it is. This is the basic assumption of objectivism."²³

But the facts which constitute the world according to Mach's positivistic objectivism have an ambiguous status. On the one hand, they are potentially subjective. They are given in sensory experience and expressed in terms of individual observation reports. On the

other hand, if science is to be viewed as objective, they must be established as intersubjectively valid. This ambiguity was reflected in the fact that Mach regarded psychology and physics as complementary sciences. The ambiguity was not resolved by Mach. For if the objective, intersubjective

. . . aspects of the basic facticity of the world is stressed, then positivism falls into a circle. If science describes facts and their relations, and if we use this criterion to demarcate science from metaphysics, then we need a criterion of facticity in order to know if a science is genuine. One way to avoid this demand is to ontologize facts or sensations and, with Mach, make them the given in experience.²⁴

Solipsism is then ruled out a priori.

It should be noted, however, that Mach did not simply claim that scientific objects have an independent existence, which sensations show. Rather, through his doctrine of elements (facts) Mach claimed that knowledge is always provisional, but is nevertheless to be understood as

. . . constructed upon an indubitable and elementary base--indubitable, that is the sense of being unavoidable, not in any sense of being unalterable. All conceptions which fail to relate ideas to that base are thereby suspect; their meaning ultimately unclear . . .²⁵

In Mach's words, "bodies do not produce sensations, but complexes of elements make up bodies . . . all bodies are but thought symbols for complexes of elements." And "sensations are not signs of

things; but, on the contrary, a thing is a thought-symbol for a compound-sensation of relative fixedness."²⁶

Mach clearly wished to distinguish between a phenomenalist confirmation base and any dogmatic claims to certitude about the fundamentals of the world. But his ardent phenomenalist epistemology and methodology will not permit, as Cohen put it, "even such minor irresolution about ontology,"²⁷ although his intent was clear.

If science is distinguished principally as a methodological procedure for correlating assortments of facts, what can be the status of our ontology? It is certainly not something that science can provide evidence for, since science requires, on this argument, an ontology of facts as a presupposition. Nor is it something that we can arrive at through metaphysical reasoning, since metaphysics was initially rejected as being nonempirical, that is, as being beyond the realm of facts and therefore "beyond" the realm of knowledge. Any debate about the status of our ontology of facts, on this account, must, therefore, include nonfactual, i. e., metaphysical, i. e., meaningless statements.

Habermas expresses the circle involved in Mach's phenomenism as follows:

How, then, prior to all science, can the doctrine of elements [facts] make statements about the object domain of science as such, if we only obtain information about this domain through science?²⁸

In order to guarantee the objectivity and intersubjectivity of science Mach was led to assume (an admittedly ambiguous) objectivistic perspective and to posit an ontology of facts. But if we cannot justify this assumption (except circularly), then we cannot in the end justify science. If our ontology is arbitrary, so is our science.

If the subjective, sensorial nature of facts is stressed, the danger of lapsing into egocentric solipsism emerges. If an ontology of facts is accepted and solipsism a priori dismissed, the cognitive import of the knowing subject is denied and the epistemic subject falls from consideration. If science is essentially held to record facts, the problem of perception becomes reduced to the problem of how one actually constructs the world out of sensory givens (a process said to be describable by laws of physiological psychology). The subject, on this account can be dealt with purely on the level of imputed existence to which all facts are relegated.

If reality is the totality of all facts, then we must conceive the ego as a relatively constant, although accidental complex of sensations, which originates in elements just as much as do all things existing independently of us.²⁹

Mach himself saw that a theory of history must supplement epistemology in order to give a sufficient account of what is allowed or ranked as the totality of facts or fundamental facts. It is interesting (but not surprising in light of our earlier remarks on

the prestige of 19th-century science) that this aspect of his thought was the least remembered amongst the early logical positivists in their phenomenalist phase.³⁰ They stressed the wholly phenomenalist aspects of Mach's thought. The phenomena with which science dealt was presumed to be the isolated sensations of single observations.

The relations among the given phenomena were subjective matters of efficient but arbitrary ordering of the data; hypothetical entities and relations were viewed as fictions or as shorthand; and the monadic character of atomic sensations was assumed a priori: but made empirically plausible by a programme of reductive definition of scientific concepts in terms of individual observation reports.³¹

While stressing the subjective nature of facts, it was also recognized that the subject cannot be reduced merely to an accidental bundle of sensations; all sensations, it was stressed, which are known to exist (by myself as epistemic subject) must be treated as my sensations. I can perhaps wonder and speculate about other people's sensations and minds. I can utilize the argument from analogy (or the like) to try to establish their existence, but I can only have, know, and only be said to know, my own sensations.

But if all knowledge is founded on sensations and if all sensations are mine,

. . . it becomes impossible to establish a world independent of my sensations. Objectivity and knowledge collapse into the pure subjectivity of solipsism.

Furthermore, it becomes impossible to make sense of sensations as being mine in a world in which all sensations belong to me. In such a world, sensations are, they are not owned, for to make sense of ownership requires the possibility of more than one subject.³²

And as we have noted, the possibility of this requirement being met is beyond the limits of our solipsistic world. The result is that

. . . to press the highly subjective nature of knowledge, conceived thus, meant to reinstitute ego-centric solipsism, and indeed to deny cognitive import to the knowing self as much as to the known object.³³

This is the rarified world of Wittgenstein's Tractatus, a world of brute facticity "supported by a metaphysics which cannot even be legitimately stated, no less proven."³⁴ As Cohen has pointed out, as a consequence of such a position, "both the subjective world and objective world would disappear, and knowledge with them."³⁵ The world of intersubjectivity and social practice remain unthematized by theory, no less accounted for. Theory has absorbed both the subject and object of knowledge and, as a result, can no longer even account for itself.

Our (essentially Habermasian) critique of phenomenalist positivism implies, then, that the objectivistic stance of phenomenalist positivism generates inherent difficulties which render it incapable of understanding science. On the one hand, phenomenalist positivism faces a danger of falling into a destructive

solipsism. If, on the other hand, it attempts to avoid solipsism through an ontologizing of facts, the foundation of science cannot be justified.

However, it is of course not sufficient to found a critique of positivism on the charge of subjectivism and then to proceed to argue this case merely through an examination of phenomenalist positivism. As previously noted, not all positivist programs are phenomenalist. While it might be contended that phenomenologists represent the "high priests" of positivism and that their work crystallizes some of positivism's chief tendencies, e. g., the search for a basis in pure experience and the quest for certainty at the foundations of science, it must be recognized that phenomenism has been demonstrated to be inadequate. In fact, it has been argued that phenomenism, through its tendency to conflate appearance and reality, could not possibly serve to characterize correctly the nature of science. Phenomenism stays on the level of appearance and of immediate experience. This level is not adequate for science: "With its ability to go beyond appearances, scientific explanation rejects the allegedly ultimate authority of presently contingent facts as we experience them."³⁶

Historically, the Logical Positivist tradition soon realized the inadequacies of its early phenomenism. "At least since 1925, an

alternative has been an attempt to place the basis

objectivist realism has been an alternative to phenomenalist positivism."³⁷ Although in Der Logische Aufbau der Welt (written in 1922-1925) Carnap took a subjectivist and phenomenalist orientation,³⁸ by the mid-thirties he had developed a physicalist position. This position allowed for observation reports to be made in terms of physical objects and coordinates which were purportedly intersubjectively available. Thus it could avoid a lapse into subjectivism and solipsism. The goal of this program was to reconstruct a language which was adequate for science. In order to construct such a language, a distinction was made between an observational, or experiential, language and a theoretical language. It was argued that the observational language would consist of basic protocol sentences (i.e., direct reports of the given and justified with reference to the given).³⁹ These sentences, it was held, could be used to make statements reporting direct experiences of the physical world. The theoretical language, in contradistinction, would contain the basic postulates of the science as well as theoretical terms (typically postulating unobservables and functions). Correspondence or bridge principles were argued to link the two languages, i.e., connect certain theoretically assumed entities with directly observables and/or measurables. Most importantly, the meaning of statements which may possibly fall within the realm of science was taken to be given in the "verifiability theory of meaning." Generally, it

prescribed that "a statement is to be taken as meaningful only if it is capable of empirical verification, and its meaning is the mode of its verification."⁴⁰

This program upheld the tenets earlier identified as pivotal to positivism. In addition, it maintained the unity of science doctrine. Its essential thesis was the identity of knowledge with that form and structure of knowledge generated by the (natural) sciences. The methodological procedures of physics were taken as "paradigmatic" for the procedures of all science. All other sciences were to be fashioned after the model of physics.

The program maintained the required intersubjectivity of protocol sentences, through an objectivistic presupposition, namely, "that there is a world of facts which can be described unequivocally."⁴¹ Through observational language, it was thought, we could formulate the common facts, neutral to theoretical debate.

Differing theorists . . . can step outside their theories during the process of testing, and engage in a common check of their respective observational consequences through a shared observational language. They can agree, furthermore, to assess their own theories through reference to common observational findings. . . .⁴²

This objectivistic presupposition was gradually undermined and weakened as the program was pursued.⁴³ It was also realized that there was no one unique formal language which could be constructed in accord with the stipulated criteria.⁴⁴ As Sir Karl Popper pointed

out, such a language is impossible and its very idea, within the terms of reference of the program itself, absurd. If verifiable and tautologous assertions alone are thought to be meaningful, then any discussion or debate about the concept of "meaning" must itself contain meaningless statements.⁴⁵

It was soon realized that the philosopher was faced with a choice among various contending theoretical languages. The recognition of this fact led to the formulation of a principle of tolerance and opened the study of the formal syntax of scientific languages to conventionalism.⁴⁶ However, a conventionalist turn introduced a relativism into the foundations of science. For to regard scientific theories and laws as justified by appeal to methodological or pragmatic criteria according to which they are chosen, cannot but beg the question as to the justifiability of the choice.

The conventionalist criteria of choice are, in themselves, logically as arbitrary as the laws they legitimate, with the result that the system of propositions which describes the cosmic order is merely the preference of the scientific temperament, itself determined, we may surmise, by personal and historical facts.⁴⁷

In order to overcome this arbitrariness, what would seem to be required is for science to understand itself, its constitution, precisely in terms of these personal, social, and historical "facts." But positivism, by uncritically accepting science, by attempting to direct reflection from society and history and by restricting itself

to an internal analysis of methodology, is unable to even conceive such a task. How we might conceive this task is discussed below.

Karl-Otto Apel, in his article, "The A Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities,"⁴⁸ has attempted to demonstrate the limits of the positivistic logic of a unified science. His critique is worth outlining at some length since it highlights and systematizes many of the points we have made to date. Apel's central argument is that the "metaphysical" presuppositions and assumptions of the "neo-positivists" have prevented them from realizing that they were unable, within their own terms of reference, to understand the activity of scientists. Apel does not elaborate what he understands by the term "neo-positivism." But he uses the term in a manner that is not incompatible with the definition that was presented at the outset of this chapter. This is how we will read the term here.

The fundamental shortcomings of neo-positivism spring, Apel argues, from a lack of reflection "upon the fact that all cognition of objects presupposes understanding as a means of intersubjective communication."⁴⁹ Science, Apel contends, is unintelligible qua human activity, if one cannot understand the implicit and explicit conventions or rules, and the communication community or language game, it presupposes. On this account, even tacit conventions about the use of words--"not to mention explicit conventions about definitions,

theoretical frameworks, or statements of facts in empirical science"--imply:

. . . an intersubjective consensus about situational meanings and the aims of practical life which can only be achieved by a mutual understanding of intentions and motivations as the very sense of the conventions.⁵⁰

Science, in its adoption of procedural conventions, as a communication community, goes beyond the ". . . scientific rationality of operations on objects which could be performed in a repeatable way by exchangeable human subjects . . . and passes into the realm of a ". . . pre- and meta-scientific rationality of intersubjective discourse mediated by explication of concepts and interpretation of intentions."⁵¹ The added dimension of rationality needed by science to understand itself requires the presupposition of what Apel calls the "a priori of communication," that is, the pre-existence to any scientific activity of a dimension of communication that is both a condition of the possibility of science, and the basis and frame for the understanding of science as a particular mode of activity.

The principal metaphysical presupposition of positivism that prevented the recognition of the a priori of communication was, Apel maintains, that of methodical solipsism. Any philosophy which postulates a physicalistic-behavioristic language for objectifying human intersubjectivity involves methodical solipsism--"to no less

an extent than a philosophy that starts from the assumption that meaning and truth are matters of introspective evidence of private experiences of consciousness." Methodical solipsism, according to Apel's understanding, amounts to ". . . the tacit assumption that objective knowledge should be possible without intersubjective understanding by communication being presupposed."⁵² The communicative function of language is ignored, or rather "leapfrogged," by the postulation of a language which would be a priori intersubjective by virtue of its possible universal application.

Methodological solipsism, Apel points out, amounts to the suggestion that the idea of one person following a rule in isolation from social contexts and all possible contact with others is coherent. Given this way of stating the position, it is hardly surprising that the argument against methodical solipsism is, as we see below, directly influenced by Wittgenstein's private language argument.⁵³

Apel contends that methodical solipsism was assumed by positivism in its phenomenalist and in its physicalistic phases. The formalized language which positivists were concerned to construct was, in theory, to be used by scientists observing and recording states of affairs. Any scientist was thought to be able to observe the same states of affairs, and to be able to record those observations in the same theoretical terms. This assumption

ensured the intersubjectivity of the language used and guaranteed the objectivity of the states of affairs as observed. But, Apel argues, the formalized languages of science cannot, in principle, be used for intersubjective communication between persons, e. g., scientists.

It is only sentences about states of affairs and logical connections between sentences that can be formulated in these languages, but not "utterances" or "speech acts" because these units of ordinary language do not get their meaning exclusively from the syntactical and semantical rules of a formal system, but only from the context of the pragmatical use of language in concrete situations of life.⁵⁴

A formalized language could only be employed by one scientist to describe the observed verbal behavior of another. Strictly speaking, it could not be used to "express an understanding of the intentions of the persons speaking," of one scientist by another. This follows as a consequence of the use of a formalized language which makes anyone applying it unable to conceptualize a misunderstanding of intentionality (within the terms of that language). According to the structure of such a formalized language, the intersubjectivity in use which is assumed implies that all meaning is revealed in observational terms.

The language of science as conceived by the neo-positivists excludes, in principle, the existence of a language game common to objects as well as the subjects of science. The very point of

constructing a formalized language for scientific use was to rule out of consideration hermeneutical problems, that is, problems of interpreting intentions and meanings. The questioning of, for example, a scientist's meaning, of what a person meant, goes beyond the procedures of mere observation of a world of pure objects. It implies and involves an irreducible moment of hermeneutics, the interpretation and analysis of intentions and meanings. This moment cannot be subsumed completely under the "categories appropriate to the methods of observation."⁵⁵ N. B. Formalized languages are, then, not suited to express the intersubjective dimension of language. As conceived by the neo-positivists, formalized languages were applicable only to the observation by a subject of an object, i. e., a monologic situation. They are not applicable for a dialogic situation where two subjects interact, in which a counderstanding might be disturbed and the question of the (mis)understanding of meaning might arise.

Apel concedes that the logic of the positivist conception of science would not have implied methodical solipsism if it recognized and reflected upon two things. First, that the use of a formalized language of science already presupposed a language which could be used for the communication needed for the adoption of the conventions and the testing of the formalized language. Secondly, that

human beings, to the extent that they are considered as partners in a dialogic situation, in communication and hence in interaction, cannot be reduced to objects that can be described and/or explained within the terms of reference set by a formalized language.⁵⁶ The logical positivists, Apel admits, "would presumably not deny the first of these two points." In fact, in the schools more recent past, they did conceive of ordinary language as the metalanguage of scientific language. On the second point, Apel argues, there were intrinsic reasons to the logical positivist program that blocked them from realizing the full consequences of the a priori of communication. The essential reason was given in their program of a unified science.⁵⁷

The idea of a unified science implied, as we noted earlier, that there was a world of facts which could be described unequivocally. All objects in the world, including human beings, could be explained, it was maintained, at least in theory, by reduction to one underlying science. This idea of a unified science was originally connected with the idea of a universal language which was necessary in order to establish the relation of knowledge claims to reality. But, as we have seen, the positivists' ideal of language could only be used to describe and account for human actions under the categories of observational procedures. Within the terms of reference that were set, positivism was incapable of conceptualizing human actions under

the public concepts and meanings of partners engaged in a dialogue aimed at mutual understanding and successful social action.

At this juncture and with this challenge to their program, positivists had essentially two alternatives. First and obviously, they could ignore the challenge to a notion of a unified science, in which case they would risk dogmatism and could not refute the charge that they were incapable of understanding science within the terms of their own program. Or they could reject the challenge on the grounds that a dialogic situation did not involve categories which could not be reduced to those of an empiricist, formalized language. However, in order to make good on this latter position, they would have to successfully complete their project; that is, they would have to demonstrate that communicative practice could be reduced to the categories appropriate to observation and experimentation in the natural sciences. Such a demonstration has yet to be successfully accomplished.⁵⁸

In short, we may note that the nature and structure of intersubjectivity cannot be adequately thematized by positivism. The formal requirements of scientific knowledge laid down by the positivists blocked positivism's ability to understand itself as a form of social practice. Not only is theory disempered from practice, but the latter made inaccessible by the former. The program with its use

of a formalized language and implication that all meaning and scientific knowledge is revealed in observational terms, has an immanent tendency to reduce practice, or rather what we understand by practice and what we can understand by practice, to theory. The shortcomings of the positivists "spring," as Apel put it, "from a lack of reflection upon the fact that all cognition of objects presupposes understanding as a means of intersubjective communication."⁵⁹ If the neo-positivists had reflected on the need for a presupposition concerning the a priori of communication they would have had

. . . to acknowledge that behind the construction of semantical frameworks there stands not just irrational ad hoc conventions, but long chains of rational discourse mediated by interpretation and criticism of the tradition of philosophy and science. And by reflecting on this fact they would, furthermore, have to acknowledge that there are "sciences" in a broader sense of the word which make up a continuum with their own meta-scientific language analysis by understanding and interpreting the form and the context of traditional languages.⁶⁰

A Logical Empiricist's Account of Explanation

The arguments above can be illustrated through a discussion of a classical, logical empiricist's formulation of the logical structure of explanation. The formulation to be discussed is that of Hempel and Oppenheim's "covering-law model."⁶¹

The fundamental idea in the covering-law analysis of explanation is that an event is explained if, and only if, the statement asserting

its occurrences (E) can be logically deduced from two sets of premises. Thus, the logical form of an explanation can be explicated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} C_1 \dots C_n \\ L_1 \dots L_m \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{r} C_1 \dots C_n \\ L_1 \dots L_m \end{array}} \right\} \text{The explanans}$$

$$E \qquad \text{The explanandum}$$

where $C_1 \dots C_n$ are a set of singular statements, describing relevant initial conditions, and $L_1 \dots L_m$ are a set of general laws. The explanandum, E, must be a logical consequence of the Cs and the Ls. According to the deductive-nomological model (the name given to this variant of the covering-law model), "a description of one phenomenon can explain a description of a second phenomenon, only if the first description entails the second."⁶²

It should be noted that the structure of an explanation is held to be identical to the logical structure of a prediction. If one has the knowledge contained in the explanans prior to the occurrence of the event delineated in the explanandum, then the deduction of E is the deduction of a statement about a future occurrence, and E is, therefore, predicted.

Laws of universal form are required in the explanans of a deductive explanation. These are rare, especially in the social sciences, and frequently the laws available and employed are of a

statistical nature. Therefore, if statistical laws are to function as explanations, the deductive-nomological model has to be, as its theorists recognized, revised. The revision is presented as the inductive-probabilistic model.

A simple statistical law has the following form: "The statistical probability (roughly, the long-run relative frequency) of the occurrence of an event of the kind G under the conditions of F is r (briefly $p(G, F) = r$) where $0 \leq r \leq 1$."⁶³ Thus, a simple probabilistic explanation has the following structure:

b is an F (briefly, Fb)
 $p(G, F) = r$

b is a G (briefly, Gb)

where b is some individual case. It is important to note here that the explanans of a probabilistic explanation do not entail the explanandum. The explanans only give a certain degree of inductive support or confirmation to the explanandum. As a consequence, the truth of the explanans is not incompatible with the explanandum being false. A probabilistic explanation effects a weaker explanatory connection than that effected by a deductive explanation.

A fundamental question needs to be asked: In what sense, if at all, could the deductive-nomological model be said to explain? It seems that "what makes a deductive-nomological explanation,

explain, is, that it tells us why E had to be (i. e., occur), why E was necessary once the basis is there and the laws are accepted. "64 But it is, of course, essential to an inductive-probabilistic explanation that it leave open the possibility that E might not occur. "Failing such additional information which gives us a deductive-nomological explanation of E, we have not explained why E occurred," but, as von Wright has written, "only why E was to be expected."65 It seems that all the inductive-probabilistic model does is justify certain expectations and predictions. What of the original model itself?

Hempel et al. aim to explicate the nonpragmatic aspects of explanation, "the sense of explanation on which A explains B simpliciter and not for you or for me."66 Friedman points out in his discussion of "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," that Hempel attempts to ignore the pragmatic dimensions of explanation and such concepts as "understanding" and "intelligibility" when delineating his theory of the explanation relation. Hempel does this because he fears entanglement with the claimed "subjectivistic" connotations of these terms.67 But as we have seen in our discussion of the a priori of communication, it is not adequate to think of these terms as merely subjectivistic; they have also to be seen as intersubjective, i. e., as public concepts and meanings of

persons (potentially) engaged in a dialogue. To ignore their role in explanation, or more generally, the role of communicative practice, is to put oneself in the position of being unable to give a coherent account of explanation. For it is to risk making unintelligible the process of explanation itself, i. e., not being able to explain explanation (or the emergence of the theory of explanation itself). It is to close off the explanation of hermeneutical aspects of practical life; the dimensions of which we argued were both the condition of the possibility of science and the basis and frame for the understanding of science as a mode of activity. Hempel closes off the thematization of the pragmatic aspects of explanation only at the cost of being unable to give an account of the process of explanation qua social activity. Hempel's theory of explanation is an insufficient framework to explain the nature of its own achievements.

However, Hempel cannot ignore the relation of his model of explanation to a notion understanding. For to do so would be to risk not telling us what it is about the explanation relation that makes the world more intelligible, that gives us understanding of the explanandum. "Understanding," as Apel points out, "must be presupposed in order to describe the experienced data of the world as something, that is for answering the question what a thing is."⁶⁸

What is it about an explanation that provides our understanding?

In a few brief passages, Hempel does, in fact, attempt to make the connection between explanation and a concept of understanding. For Hempel, an explanation enables us to understand why a given phenomenon occurred, if its occurrence was to be expected.

. . . the [deductive-nomological] argument shows that, given the particular circumstances and the laws in question, the occurrence of the phenomenon was to be expected; and it is in this sense that the explanation enables us to understand why the phenomenon occurred.⁶⁹

However, this will not do as a criterion of sufficient understanding. For understanding and justified expectation are quite distinct notions. We can predict without necessarily being able to understand, and can understand without necessarily being able to predict.⁷⁰ At best, it might be contended, the deductive-nomological model provides only necessary conditions for the explanation of particular events. (We will further investigate this contention.)

Friedman has tried to defend Hempel and counter this insufficiency in the deductive-nomological model by attempting to provide an additional objective criterion that would warrant an explanation sufficient and thereby offer an account of what kind of understanding scientific explanations provide. He does this within the framework of explanation laid down essentially by the D-N theorists. Friedman argues that:

A world with fewer independent phenomena is, other things equal, more comprehensible than one with more.

. . . science increases our understanding of the world by reducing the total number of independent phenomena that we have to accept as ultimate or given.⁷¹

This is in Friedman's view "the essence of scientific explanation."

If we can reduce a "multiplicity of unexplained, independent phenomena" to even greater basic principles (i. e. , more primitive laws), then, the claim is, we have achieved a genuinely scientific understanding.

Friedman's work, however, begs a fundamental question as to the justifiability of equating scientific understanding with explanation according to laws and reduction to ever greater basic principles.

The question, therefore, arises as to whether or not the D-N model is even a necessary condition for explanation. There appear to be many types of explanations in the social science, in which laws do not occur as premises.⁷²

Friedman lists and argues for three desirable properties that a theory of explanation should have.

- a. It should be sufficiently general . . . it must at least square with the most important central cases.
- b. It should be objective[and]. . . not depend on the idiosyncracies and changing tastes of scientists and historical periods.
- c. [It must have a demonstrable connection with understanding]. . . it should tell us what kind of understanding scientific explanations provide and how they provide it.⁷³

But Friedman's properties are compatible with a series of views very different from his own. For example, in Habermas' work differing criteria determining sufficiency of explanation are explicated for three domains of knowledge and are argued to be grounded in his theory of cognitive interests.⁷⁴ In the pattern explanations of, e. g., Schutz and Peter Winch criteria of sufficient explanation are argued by the former to depend on meaning and causal adequacy and for the latter on adequate "identification" of action under rules.⁷⁵ In a pragmatist's position, e. g., in the work of Kaplan, criteria of sufficient explanation are held to be a function of use and purpose. An acceptable explanation is here, one that serves the end of inquiry at a particular time and place--"we have gotten hold of an idea which we can do something with."⁷⁶ In Bromberger's view, a view of an ordinary language philosopher, a satisfactory approach to explanation cannot be specified over and above possible contexts. He argues that a satisfactory approach to explanation would be one that explicates the "truth conditions" that govern the occurrences of "to explain" when the verb functions in various statements. Criteria of sufficiency in explanation depend on contexts. Bromberger is highly critical of the way much of the discussion of explanation is restricted to certain functions of the term, e. g., "giving explanations of." As he correctly points out, the term functions very differently in where,

when, what, etc., questions. 77

Many of these positions will be taken up and discussed at length in the following chapters. It is important to note here though that there seem to be no transcendental criteria, or quasi-transcendental criteria, or ground, to justify the singularity of Friedman's views. There are many types of explanation for which the D-N model is neither a model nor provider of even necessary conditions. Types of explanation, that is, that explicitly attempt to thematize the irreducible moment of hermeneutics we have discussed, e. g., which could explain the social and historical nature of the theory of explanation itself. The D-N model is not a sufficient framework of explanation to make this possible. This is because in equating, in its theory of explanation, scientific understanding with explanation according to laws and reduction of laws to (éver) more primitive laws, it

- a. cannot understand that which it presupposes, i. e., the a priori of communication, and
- b. cannot, therefore, explain itself qua social phenomenon and the process of explanation itself qua social activity.

This is not to say that the neo-Hempelien (e. g., Friedmanite) account of explanation is indefensible as a theory of what would be entailed in the explanation relation for the nomological sciences in certain potentially specifiable contexts. But it is, however, to say that the D-N model is (1) insufficient as the theory of explanation

in these contexts and is (2) not even necessary in certain other contexts. It should be stressed that the former point is made because, as Friedman points out, the theory of explanation should be able to tell us "what kind of understanding scientific explanations provide and how they provide it." (My emphasis.) From the arguments we have made above it follows that "how" must be understood as entailing the requirement that the theory of explanation be reflexive, i. e., be able to stipulate what would be entailed in accounting for itself. For if a theory of explanation claims to be the theory, i.e., claims that all forms of explanation can be reduced to its form (or, as we have been discussing it, to the D-N or inductive-probabilistic model), then--among other things--it must be able to explain itself. And this stipulation, as we have argued, takes us beyond the considerations of the D-N framework per se.

The basis of all understanding, we argued following Apel, is internally connected with the understanding of human language, communication, forms of life, and traditions. Science, we argued, could not be adequately understood, unless social practice could be satisfactorily thematized. Likewise, the theory of explanation cannot be adequately developed in isolation from considerations of social contexts and modes of social practice. However, as we see below, this cannot imply that we simply reflect on traditional modes of practice--a position taken by Thomas Kuhn.

A Digression on the Work of Thomas Kuhn

Arguments that parallel some of those discussed above have provided an impetus to look beyond the philosophy of science for the key to account for science and scientific procedure. A classical position of this type is taken by Kuhn. We will look briefly at Kuhn's work for it has the ironical consequences of making some of the points of criticism we made of positivism applicable to what one might call its "theoretical opposite." It is a position that emphasizes the necessity to explicate social practice, in this case the practice of the community of scientists, i. e., the context of discovery and constitution of science,⁷⁸ in order to give an account of the procedures of verification and justification in science. It is a position, we will argue, that collapses theory into practice. The examination of Kuhn's work also raises a number of important questions, e. g., whether or not we can ground a criterion determining sufficiency of explanation and understanding in science --and whether or not we can ground science itself.

Kuhn's work is riddled with ambiguities, tensions, and even contradictions. His position has also developed and changed over time. For reasons of brevity, I will develop the position of the "early Kuhn" and in criticism of this position, highlight current ambiguities and point to certain revisions Kuhn has made.⁷⁹

Before beginning, it is important to note a distinction held to be central to "traditional" philosophy of science. This is the distinction between the logics of discovery and justification or, as some prefer, the logics of constitution and verification. The distinction implies that the conditions for the control of knowledge are independent of the knowing act. Objectivity is primarily a matter, as Scheffler wrote, of "rational dialogue under authority of observational credibility and logical cogency."⁸⁰ Objectivity is held to characterize the evaluative or justificatory processes of science rather than the genesis of scientific ideas. A parallel position is held by Popper who argues that how one arrives at a theory "has no bearing on its scientific character or logical status. It is in the rational choice of a theory that the rationality of science lies; and rational choice depends on our systematic attempts to falsify a theory in crucial tests."⁸¹

Popper's and Scheffler's distinction between the two "logics" is in Kuhn's view an ideology, rather than a logic. What these philosophers have provided us with, Kuhn suggests, is preferred procedural maxims, rather than methodological rules.⁸² Kuhn argues against the necessity for prescription or therapy in natural science and abstract theoretical reflection. In his socio-psychological historical discussion of science he claims that ("in the absence of

an alternative mode that would serve similar functions") . . .

"scientists should behave essentially as they do if their concern is to improve scientific knowledge." For Kuhn, insights into the sociological history of science reveal that science's practice spans the traditional division between the two logics--without loss of achievement and success. The argument runs as follows:

1. There are two modes and periods of scientific practice, which can be called "normal" and "revolutionary" science respectively.

2. In normal science, the scientific community, a language community, share a "paradigm"; that is, models of research embracing shared rules, epistemological premises, ontological assumptions and standards of work defining coherent research traditions, delineating a series of "puzzles," anomalies, classes of problems yet to be solved. Normal science, what most scientists do, most of the time, is cumulative (because there is a relatively high degree of internal consensus about how to apply the cherished values of "prediction," "accuracy," "scope," "simplicity," "fruitfulness," etc.). But normal science provides few novelties of fact or theory. However, it is, Kuhn states, logically desirable, because science could not continue unless it took certain key questions for granted (e.g., questions about the nature of the world).

3. The puzzle-solving tradition is crucial to the steady, set-by-step development of science. It can also prepare the way for its own displacement. The number of anomalies, puzzles unsolved by the "paradigm" may grow, "carrying with them their own criteria of settlement."

4. The result may be a crisis ("the persistent failure of the puzzles of natural science to come out as they should").⁸³

5. But crises don't automatically give way to critical rationalism and change. (a) Vested interests (in departments

and scientific journals), generation gaps and the position of "marginals," "outsiders," (to the dominant paradigm) block open discourse. However people may begin to "lose faith and consider alternatives,"⁸⁴ possibly leading to a "proliferation of competing articulations" of the problems at hand. (b) The discourse between dissatisfied groups, potentially revolutionary scientists, is itself inevitably marked by "incompleteness of logical contact."⁸⁵ Languages change, language changes, and words change meaning. Successive theories are thus "incommensurable."⁸⁶ (c) Change is largely accounted for by factors of personality, reputation, nationality, and extraordinary research. The process is one of conversion, a "gestalt switch." It is not made step by step--it occurs "all at once" or "not at all."⁸⁷ If it is "all at once," it is revolution.

6. A new period of normal science, under a new "paradigm" begins. Has progress been made? Kuhn is thoroughly ambiguous on this issue. On the one hand he says that the new "paradigm" does not/should not lose (i) previously acquired problem-solving ability, (ii) predictive accuracy, and (iii) the promise to resolve some major and generally recognized problem that cannot be met, in the current opinion, in any other way. On the other hand, he says, paradigms are "incommensurables" and their advocates prone to rewrite history to "show" cumulativeness, etc.⁸⁸

Despite the ambiguity, it would seem then that for Kuhn, the processes of constitution and verification are inextricably intertwined. The development of science depends on a variously specified interplay of psycho-sociological factors and "good reasons" (i. e., reasons which orthodox philosophy of science condone) for the progress it does or does not make

Recent work in sociology of science suggests that Kuhn's juxtaposition of normal and revolutionary science ignores a whole range of intermediate instances.⁸⁹ There is more cross-fertilization (of ideas) across traditions than he suggests. Kuhn seems to exaggerate the internal integration of paradigms and also the held

discrepancy between them. Historically, the discrepancy appears to have been much smaller.⁹⁰

As has been documented at length by Lakatos and Scheffler, Kuhn's epistemological views can be seen to oscillate between a radical relativism and claims that criteria of "progress" can be delineated.⁹¹ In Kuhn's work the tension between problems of radical relativism and a potentially viable epistemology have not been systematically spoken to. As such, and what is of particular interest to us here, Kuhn's position can be seen to be intertwined with a number of paradoxes. The effect of these paradoxes is to lead us back into a methodical solipsism, as the viability of a new theory cannot, within the terms set, be supported by a methodology of justification. There is a strong tendency in Kuhn's work to reduce what we might conceptualize and defend as processes of justification to the solitary practice of individuals, which alone is held to be justified.

These paradoxes have been usefully elaborated by Scheffler and include:

1. The paradox of categorization

"If my categories of thought determine what I observe, then what I observe provides no independent control over my thought. On the other hand, if my categories of thought do not determine what I observe, then what I observe must be uncategorized, that is to say, formless and nondescript--hence again incapable of providing any test of my thought." ⁹²

From the former position it might be concluded that observation contaminated by thought yields circular tests. From the latter position it might be concluded that observation uncontaminated yields no possibility of tests.

2. The paradox of observation

" . . . if perception is theory-laden . . . then proponents of two different theories cannot observe the same things in an effort to resolve their differences, they share no neutral observations capable of deciding between them. To judge one theory as superior to the other by appeal to observation is always doomed, therefore, to beg the very question at issue. "93

The paradox has the effect of isolating each scientist within an observed world uniquely his or her own, a world consonant with that scientist's respective theoretical beliefs.

3. The paradox of common language

Scientists may perhaps share common sounds, but not common meanings. If language communities are incommensurable, then

" . . . there can be no real community of science in any sense approximating that of the standard view, no comparison of theories with respect to their observational content . . . no cumulative growth of knowledge, at least in the standard sense. "94

This paradox has the result of effectively isolating each scientist or language-sharing community within their respective system of meanings as well as within their own observed world.

Given the positions above, we cannot speak of alternative, competing theories of the same object, for the very distinction between the logics of constitution and justification breaks down.

The results of the position lead us back into solipsism and skepticism. But the positions also contain the basis for their own refutation. As Scheffler put it:

. . . to put forth any claim with seriousness is to presuppose commitment to the view that evaluation is possible, and that it favours acceptance; it is to indicate one's readiness to support the claim in fair argument, as being correct or true or proper.⁹⁵

The claim that commitment to intersubjective systematic evaluation is a myth embodies its own self-refutation. "If it is true, there can be no reason to accept it; in fact, if it is true, its own truth is unintelligible."⁹⁶ If the claim is held to be true, there must be reasons to compel and accept it. Then, clearly, not all truths are relative.

It is important to note that Kuhn would, likely, regard the above paradoxes as paradoxes and reject an association with an epistemology that might attempt to place them at its center. However, it is our contention that there is little in his own arguments, as we understood them above, that could provide a justified basis to maintain a firm distance from these (admittedly "reductio ad absurdum") positions.

Further, Kuhn conflates theories of sense and reference.⁹⁷

There is a crucial need to distinguish between the authenticity of paradigms/theories, their variety of senses, and referential rules to an external world. It is the sameness of reference that is of interest rather than synonym. We do not need to claim that the border between languages is constant and given to simple one-to-one translation, nor that a neutral observation language exists, in order to argue that there is a possibility of shared processes of decision (i. e., as a result of dialogue) on the referential force of a term (by reference to cases). Of course, what is decided and deemed decidable by reference to case may change with theoretical traditions, purpose, and history. But to admit this is not to negate the distinction between sense and reference. With a new theory, the questions of reference may become once more thematized. "A new theory arising within a given referential tradition cannot command initial consensus on presumably confirming cases of its own, but must prove itself against the background of prior judgments of particulars."⁹⁸

In all that has been said I do not mean to suggest that Kuhn's stress on language, history, and sociology is unimportant. Rather that his views of science at the level of sociology are inadequate and that his views at the level of epistemology are singularly

inadequate. They do not advance the considerations, concerning the nature of science, scientific explanation, and understanding, with which we concluded the previous section of this chapter. For Kuhn, past and existing practices alone appear legitimate and justified. The role of theory lapses into a descriptivism (as it often does, as we will see, in the hermeneutic tradition). As I will argue in the following chapter, if all that is demanded of the role of theory is that interpretations of the tradition or culture taken as the object of study be purely descriptive and nonevaluative, nothing can be said about the truth-content or possible deception (idology) in that tradition's self-understanding: all is left the same.

Kuhn fails to make the critical distinction between those standards or criteria which are internal to paradigms and those by which we may judge the paradigm itself. On this account he conflates, therefore, considerations of constitution and justification in science-- unjustifiably. In his more recent work, Kuhn himself seems to emphasize several criteria relevant to the evaluation of theories per se, e. g.:

- a. prediction,
- b. the existence of anomalies,
- c. the existence of crises,
- d. the preservation of previously acquired problem-solving ability, and
- e. the promise of solving more problems than could be solved by previous theories.⁹⁹

On these issues his work increasingly approximates that of Lakatos. However, how we rationally justify or ground these criteria is as yet unestablished for the nomological sciences. It is in Habermas' work on Peirce, that we see one attempt to justify a basis, a foundation for science. It is to this work that we now turn.

Structures of Action and Knowledge

In summarizing our argument to date, we can note that positivism can be criticized insofar as it attempts to reduce all knowledge to the conceptual framework of and categories appropriate to the natural sciences. In trying to complete this reduction, positivists must either presuppose as unproblematic the availability of an intersubjectively constituted language or assume a position of methodical solipsism. In either case, positivists are unable, within the terms of their own philosophical understanding, to account for the possibility and nature of this language and of intersubjective agreement in general. While adhering to the program of a unified science, positivists could not recognize that there is a mode of knowledge and methodological procedures appropriate to understanding the basis of communicative interaction and intersubjective agreement, procedures which differ from those utilized to gain knowledge of objectified processes of nature. These differences, it has been argued, arise from a fundamental difference between the interaction of a

subject with an object, which can be regarded as another subject, and that of a subject with an object which cannot be so construed. In the former case, we have dialogic or communicative interaction. In the latter, we have monologic or instrumental activity.

Insofar as the employment of symbols is constitutive for the behavioral system of instrumental action, the use of language involved is monologic. But the communication of investigators requires the use of language that is not confined to the limits of technical control over objectified natural processes. It arises from symbolic interaction between societal subjects who reciprocally know and recognize each other as unmistakable individuals. This communicative action is a system of reference that cannot be reduced to the framework of instrumental action. 101

In Knowledge and Human Interests, Habermas argues that Peirce was one of the first philosophers to realize the need to systematically reflect on science and to go beyond a limited positivist position in order to understand the logic of science, its relation to the logic of action, and to explicate the logic of scientific progress. 102

What separates Peirce from both early and modern positivism is his understanding that the task of methodology is not to clarify the logical structure of scientific theories but the logic of the procedure with whose aid we obtain scientific theories. 103

Through persistent questioning of the meaning of science, of the possibility of scientific progress, and of the nature of scientific inference, Peirce, it is held, laid the groundwork for a pragmatic interpretation of science. The validity of scientific results,

according to Peirce, was dependent on agreement among the community of investigators. For Peirce, this meant that knowledge is scientific, if, and only if ". . . an uncompelled and permanent consensus can be obtained with regard to its validity." ¹⁰⁴ True scientific beliefs were those ". . . interpretations that have stood up to indefinitely repeated tests and are intersubjectively recognized in the long run." ¹⁰⁵

Peirce recognized the need to conceptualize truth in terms of the activity of scientists; that is, in terms of the community and consensus formed through the interactions of scientists. Habermas argues, however, that Peirce, in the end, failed to appreciate that intersubjective agreement could not be understood within the terms of reference of a science that objectifies world processes. The details of Habermas' critique of Peirce are unimportant for our purposes here. What should be noted is that Habermas does not rest his discussion of Peirce at this point, nor his critique of positivism. There is a series of points, he contends, yet to be made, points which elucidate an immanent but unexplicated relationship between theory and practice in positivist thought.

Habermas is in fundamental agreement with the spirit of Peirce's project to connect knowledge, inquiry, and action within a framework of the various functions of the species life processes,

and thus to ground science in the modes of man's practical activities. Central to this view is the idea that science only systematizes and formalizes the procedures required for the successful completion of these activities. On this account, the knowledge generated by the methods of natural science is to be understood as knowledge functional and useful for the successful completion of instrumental actions. Instrumental action is understood as activity used for the "control of the external conditions of existence, which can be acquired and exercised only under the conditions of a cumulative learning process."¹⁰⁶ Inquiry, according to this interpretation, becomes ". . . the reflected form (Reflexionsform) of this pre-scientific learning process that is already posited with instrumental action as such."¹⁰⁷ Inquiry in addition isolates this learning process, guarantees precision and intersubjective reliability and systematizes the progression of scientific knowledge. Thus, scientific inquiry can be understood as systematizing (through methodical reflection) the conceptual framework according to which reality is constituted or objectified in relation to a behavioral framework of instrumental action. That is, science generates knowledge that

" . . . stabilizes purposive-rational, feedback-monitored action in an environment objectified from the point of view of possible technical control. 108

That the human species possesses this learning mechanism is, in turn, to be comprehended, on Habermas' view, in terms of the species' natural situation. In this situation the species ". . . is compelled to reproduce its life through purposive-rational action."¹⁰⁹ The pressures of natural necessity can only be diminished through the exercise of ever greater capacity to control the forces of nature. This requirement of self-preservation, Habermas argues, is reflected in what he calls a "knowledge-constitutive interest in possible technical control."¹¹⁰ This interest, Habermas claims, is inherent to the species. It is to be distinguished from the basic instincts of the species. However, in terms of philosophical anthropology, the interest is to be conceptualized at a level of innateness similar to that of our instincts.

A more complete explication of the nature and role of knowledge-constitutive interests must await Part 4 and our direct discussion of Habermas' work. The interest in technical control will be used by Habermas to help understand, within the terms of his own epistemology, the nature of human knowledge and activity. What should be noted here is that through extending his interpretation of Peirce, Habermas claims to have uncovered an interest in technical control which is an a priori condition for the possibility of knowledge and a basis on which to explain the structure of knowledge. Nomological knowledge is

crucial to providing humanity with the capacity to control the regularities and the irregularities of nature's forces. Yet, if humanity did not possess the imperatives for self-preservation, it would have no need for such knowledge. The nature and structure of knowledge, in Habermas' view, is to be comprehended in virtue of the species' interests (or as he elsewhere expresses them, "generalized motives"). Knowledge, on this account, is inextricably intertwined with human need and the structure of action.

The Implications of Positivist Epistemological Positions
for Social, Political, and Moral Positions

It has been shown that a science cannot be fully comprehended merely as a formal abstract system, but must be understood as a product of concrete, historical activity. To view science in this way, it has been argued, would force us to go beyond the limits of positivist presuppositions. We have also seen that this view of science cannot imply that we simply reflect on the existing practice of scientists. Such a descriptivism we argued closes off dimensions of reflection, e. g., critical evaluation, which one can only close off at the risk of failing to assess the truth-content or possible basis of systematic deception within a tradition (of scientific activity).

The critique of positivism, however, is even more extensive when applied directly to the social sciences. Not only is the

positivistically oriented social scientist unable to understand his own activity qua scientist, he is, in addition, unable to fully understand his subjects qua intentionally acting subjects. That is to say, to the extent that the people observed by the social scientist are self-consciously motivated actors, their activities cannot be reduced to the terms of possible observation, objectified processes, and of experimentation. To the extent, however, that actions are causally produced as the effects of social and natural forces beyond the knowledge and/or control of the actors, it might be appropriate to consider social actors in objectified terms. If human action is viewed in this last manner, an account can be provided of it in causal terms, which are open to external observation and verification. But where human action is the result of conscious decision on the part of rational agents acting within a matrix of intersubjective meaning systems, objectivistic techniques and concepts cannot be used to provide an adequate account of social action and reality. The dimensions of intentionality, rules, and conventions cannot be understood in concepts which are utilized only in procedures of observation aimed at the establishment of causal regularities.¹¹¹ (This position is argued, it should be added, as an empirical, not conceptual, hypothesis by some.)

The respective roles that a nomological social science can

play, along with what we will call a hermeneutical-dialectical science, will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters. Here it should simply be noted that nothing in the above is meant to imply that it is never appropriate to consider human subjects as objects suitable for study using the methods of a causal, nomological science. Rather, the claim is that a social science that restricted itself to this procedure would, according to the arguments above, be incapable of understanding social reality and would itself form a type of positivist ideology.

* * * * *

One central tenet of positivist thought has not yet been discussed, viz., its claim to be value-free. It was previously noted in our discussion of Weber and in this chapter that positivists hold as one of their key tenets that facts have no direct relationship to values. Value judgments are held to have no cognitive basis or ultimate justification. In the positivistically oriented social sciences, this presupposition has important consequences--consequences, that is, not only for the level of epistemology, but more importantly for social theory and for the planning of social life.

We have argued that to believe in an absolutely dichotomous

relationship between facts (knowledge) and values is, in effect, to attempt to dirempt theory from practice. A positivistic orientation encourages social scientists to treat social life, social formations, and history as natural processes which can be studied from a detached, morally neutral standpoint. It is also claimed that application of this knowledge is a wholly separate issue from its generation. This separation of theory and practice can also lead to a decisionistic ethics. Similar points have been noted in our discussion of Weber, but they can here be usefully summarized and developed.

Under the guise of a value-free science, Weber's conception of science masks, we have argued, its nature as a proponent of a quite specific form of rationality and practice: so too with positivist science.

Nagel's distinction between characterizing value-judgments (affirming that "a given characteristic is in some degree present--or absent--in a given instance") and appraising value-judgments (that conclude "some envisaged or actual state of affairs is worthy of approval or disapproval"),¹¹² though it may be useful in certain contexts,¹¹³ is not, as we noted in Chapter 2, an absolute one. Although Nagel insists that certain appraisals may entail certain characteristics and that we can characterize without appraising, a fundamental point to be made is that a characterizing proposition

is not completely separable from an ethical-value judgment if,

1. what is being affirmed is "precisely the value of those values, that is, their validity or worth";¹¹⁴
2. an epistemology and methodology can be shown to presuppose a prior commitment to a particular mode of rationality and practice which is a matter of practical choice, i. e., values.

The former point requires a detailed argument to sustain it, viz., that values have a cognitive content and as such can be treated as facts which are open to empirical validation. This argument cannot be made here, although it will be taken up in the following chapters.¹¹⁵

The latter point, most applicable to our discussion here, maintains that characterizing judgments presupposes a particular practical choice as to what our standards or modes of scientific practice should be. In this case a practical judgment enters into scientific procedures all the way through. Following Habermas, we maintain that this is the case for positivist thought.

In his discussion of Peirce, Habermas attempted to demonstrate that natural science is oriented toward the production of technically useful information; that is, while not reducing science to a simple or crude instrumentalism, the claim is that natural science can be understood as oriented toward the production of knowledge which can be used for the manipulation and control of nature. While not every study or inquiry in the natural or

behavioral sciences need produce technically utilizable results, nor need have as a conscious intent the production of such knowledge,

. . . Nevertheless, with the structure of propositions (restricted prognoses concerning observable behaviour) and with the type of conditions of validation (imitation of the control of the results of action . . .) a methodical decision has been taken in advance on the technical utility of information. . . . Similarly the range of possible experience is prejudiced, precisely the range to which hypotheses refer and upon which they can founder. 116

Although not recognized as such, the interest in technically useful knowledge and the rationality which embodies it are values implicit in the positivist understanding of science. They are not regarded as values which need to be defended by positivists because of a persuasive understanding of scientific rationality which makes such rationality coincide with purposive rational procedures. The methods which positivism considers scientific and therefore rational are those which allow for the gathering of knowledge useful for prediction and feedback control operations.

Theoretical knowledge and questions of scientific inquiry are essentially made co-extensive with useful knowledge. Questions of practical reason are ruled out of the range of science and beyond rational investigation. Not being open to rational solution, practical questions become the province of the private individual and in the final analysis can be justified only by reference to a decision or a

commitment of belief or faith. By confining rational decision procedures to those utilized by the natural sciences, positivism reduces ethics to a decisionism and closes off ultimate principles and values to the possibility of rational justification.

In the name of its own view of science and rationality, positivism launches a critique of ideology aimed at rooting out competing theories which are supposedly value-laden and hence illegitimately used to justify scientific practice. But this form of critique is not, as positivism maintains, itself value-free. For it embodies a formal (means-end) rationality and centers its interests on efficiency and economy of means to given ends. "These values are accorded a privileged status since they are implied in 'rational' procedure itself."¹¹⁷ In the name of value-freedom this criticism of ideologies dictates the value-system for all other modes of scientific practice.

Thus positivism's belief in the fact/value, theory/practice dichotomies has paradoxical results. In the name of value-freedom, a certain value-orientation is championed to the exclusion of all others. In the name of a diremption between theory and practice, a particular form of practice is sanctioned. Positivism's seemingly passive, contemplative reason masks an underlying level of committed reason. As a result of its own ideological position, however, positivism is prevented from recognizing these inconsistencies.

The effect on social theory of this hidden value commitment in positivism is a conceptualization of problems and alternative solutions which encourages the development of a technological rationality and mentality. Only those problems which are amenable to scientific-technological solutions are rationally decidable. Ultimate goals are supposedly not accessible to rational decision and therefore beyond the control of science and rational dialogue.

Habermas has argued that this committed conception of rationality ". . . ultimately implies an entire organization of society: one in which a technology, become autonomous, dictates a value-system--namely, its own--to the domains of praxis it has usurped. . . ." ¹¹⁸ However, it should be noted here that the word "implies" is highly ambiguous. For the "decisionistic practice" etc. we argued to be entailed by positivism does not logically imply "an entire . . . technocratic organization of society." On the contrary, as Weber understood, no single mode of living could be justified by this "epistemologically sanctioned" practice. As we noted in the discussion of Weber's adherence to formal rationality in science and the fact/value dualism, such an epistemology could not even justify itself and entailed a "leap of faith" decision. ¹¹⁹ To the extent that Habermas attempts to argue that the theory of theory and practice in positivism implies specific modes of social

and political organization, we cannot agree.

The only sense of "implies" that can be sustained here is a notion that has been motivated by historical analysis and observation. For historically it does, indeed, seem to be the case--as Habermas himself has argued elsewhere--that the contemporary "mystique" of a positivist understanding of science helps provide the legitimating efficacy for the spread of technocratic consciousness, attempts to depolitize the polity and public sphere--in the name of the "expert" and "impartial" decisionmaking processes.¹²⁰

* * * * *

In closing our discussion of positivism two important points need to be made. First, it should be emphasized that our critical discussion of certain traditions of positivist thought only applies, as a whole, to those who adhere to the three central tenets with which we defined positivism at the beginning of this chapter. It should also be noted that several contemporary figures in the "empirist" tradition have attempted to address and systematically revise certain features of positivism that have here been found wanting. For example, Scheffler has discussed at some length the importance of thematizing the role of "history" and "meaning" in developing a

viable "objectivistic" epistemology.¹²¹ Such an epistemology attempts to preserve certain aspects of positivist thought while revising others. The scope of Scheffler's work and others like it, goes beyond the scope of our chapter. Although it might be said that certain aspects of our critique of positivism might apply to these works, it must be recognized that arguments to this effect have yet to be made. The Popperians, of course, would reject the first two tenets with which we defined positivism. For Popper all (scientific) perception is theory impregnated and the need for a hermeneutic aspect to social science acknowledged.¹²² However, he and many of his followers deny that practical questions admit of truth, that values have a cognitive content. The same points that were made to the neo-Kantians and positivists, viz., decisionism, etc., can, therefore, be made here too.¹²³

Secondly and finally, it must be recognized that in this chapter we have left a large number of problematics and questions "unaddressed" and "unanswered." This chapter as a critique of positivism (and one of its major critics) was intended to show only that certain epistemological and methodological positions cannot stand alone. How we might develop a hermeneutic social science, a critical perspective, "balance" the roles of a nomological and hermeneutic social science, justify criteria determining sufficiency

of understanding and explanation and a grounding for science raises problems and questions of enormous complexity. In the following chapters we will return to these issues and explore how others have attempted to systematically address them. In a critical examination of these works we might discover a series of further approaches to these questions that do not suffice. It might well be that the central conclusions of this thesis serve to cast strong doubt on the viability of certain approaches to the issues above. We might at least discover certain approaches in the philosophy of (social) science that can be systematically criticized and doubted. In this case we will have done a great deal less than answer certain fundamental questions, but we might have found good reasons not to ask certain questions in the ways they have been generated by some of the schools discussed.

NOTES

¹ Andrew Arato argues that the idea of Reason as embodying both naturalism and empiricism should be traced back to the Enlightenment, although strictly speaking, modern positivism first appears in a recognizable form with Comte. Cf. Andrew Arato, "The Neo Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," Telos 21 (1974): 108-61.

² It will be argued that just as positivism tends to be unable to comprehend social practice, so Kuhn's work is a manifestation of its theoretical opposite, i. e., the tendency to reduce theory to practice and is, therefore, unable to adequately comprehend theory. For an elaboration of these distinctions, see pp. 208-17.

³ The central works of these writers are listed in the Selected Bibliography.

⁴ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interest, p. 74.

⁵ Israel Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967), p. 5. Scheffler's chap. 1 provides an excellent discussion of this point. See also A. J. Ayer, ed., Logical Positivism (New York: The Free Press, 1959), the ed.'s Introduction.

⁶ For one such view cf. Frederick Engels, Anti-Dühring (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

⁷ Robert S. Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," in The Philosophy of Rudolph Carnap, ed. Paul A. Schilpp (LaSalle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1963), p. 120.

⁸ Ibid., p. 105. It follows from Cohen's definition that the members of the Vienna Circle were positivists only in their early, phenomenalist phase. In their subsequent physicalist stage it would then be more appropriate to refer to them as Logical Empiricists. By our definition, however, they can be considered as adhering to a positivist position throughout.

⁹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, chap. 4.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

¹³Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 68-9.

¹⁵For a general discussion and development of this argument, see Habermas, "On Theory and Praxis in Our Scientific Civilization," in Jürgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 265ff.

¹⁶This tension has been discussed at length by Robert Cohen. Cf. his "Ernst Mach: Physics, Perception, and the Philosophy of Science," Synthese 18 (1968): 132-70.

¹⁷Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 108.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁹It also had a series of other implications. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 108-11.

²⁰Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," p. 112.

²¹Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 109.

²²This inconsistency is discussed below. For an example in Mach's work, cf. his History and Root of the Principle of the Conservation of Energy, trans. P. E. B. Jourdain (Chicago: Open Court, 1898), pp. 54-7. For a systematic treatment of the problem in Mach's work, once again, cf. Cohen, "Ernst Mach: Physics, Perception, and the Philosophy of Science."

²³Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 89.

²⁴Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 2, p. 9.

²⁵ Cohen, "Ernst Mach: Physics, Perception, and the Philosophy of Science," p. 135.

²⁶ Ernst Mach, The Science of Mechanics, trans. T.J. McCormack, 5th English ed. (LaSalle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1942), p. 580, quoted in Cohen, "Ernst Mach: Physics, Perception, and the Philosophy of Science," pp. 136-37.

²⁷ Mach, The Science of Mechanics, p. 137.

²⁸ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 88.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁰ Cf., for example, the references to Mach in Logical Positivism, ed. Ayer.

³¹ Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 111.

³² Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 2, p. 10.

³³ Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 111.

³⁴ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 2, p. 11.

³⁵ Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 112.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 143.

³⁸ Rudolf Carnap, The Logical Structure of the World and Pseudoproblems in Philosophy, trans. Rolf A. George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

³⁹ For a useful discussion of protocol sentences, cf. J.O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), chap. 8. For a critical discussion, cf. Otto Neurath, "Protocol Sentences," in Logical Positivism, ed. Ayer.

⁴⁰ Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science (Scranton, Pa.: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964), p. 36. Cf. C.G. Hempel, "Problems and Changes in the Empiricist Criterion of Meaning," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 40 (1950): 41-63, for a discussion of the history of the formulation of the empiricist criterion of meaning.

⁴¹ Karl-Otto Apel, Analytic Philosophy of Language and the Geisteswissenschaften (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1967), p. 15.

⁴² Cf. Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, p. 47.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, chap. 3.

⁴⁴ Karl R. Popper, Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), chap. 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ For a summary of the main points, see John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 379-93.

⁴⁷ Cohen, "Dialectical Materialism and Carnap's Logical Empiricism," p. 113.

⁴⁸ Karl-Otto Apel, "The A Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities," Man and World, no. 5 (February 1972), pp. 3-37.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), pars. 243ff.

⁵⁴ Apel, "The A Priori of Communication," p. 10.

⁵⁵ It is, of course, recognized that the claim that human action cannot be adequately comprehended through the categories of an observational language is a controversial one. The discussion of explanation and understanding that follows in a moment, as well as the discussion of hermeneutics that follows this chapter, attempts to make the points we have made above, in greater detail. But the claim involves, among other things, a refutation of Skinnerian behaviorism and a rejection of reductionist programs for the social science. The literature on these topics is extensive and complex; many of the arguments cannot be developed here in sufficient detail. Cf. the works of Peter Winch, Charles Taylor (which we discuss in the following chapter), A.I. Melden, A.R. Louch, and P. Sellars. For a discussion of reductionist programs in the social sciences, with which I am broadly in sympathy, cf. Steven Lukes, "Methodological Individualism Reconsidered," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁵⁶ Apel, "The A Priori of Communication," p. 11.

⁵⁷ For an excellent outline of the program and relevant references, cf. Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, pp. 72-93.

⁵⁸ Habermas has critically discussed three contemporary attempts to make plausible this type of an objectivistic, reductionistic program in "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," Philosophy of the Social Sciences, vol. 3, no. 2 (1973), pp. 161-63.

⁵⁹ Apel, "The A Priori of Communication," p. 26.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶¹ The classic statement of this theory of the explanation relation is in Carl G. Hempel and P. Oppenheim, "Studies in Logic of Explanation," in Hempel, Aspects of Scientific Explanation: And Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 245-91. For a brief summary of the theory and references to its more recent contributors, cf. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Paul Edwards, editor-in-chief, vol. 3/4, s. v. "Explanation in Science," by Jaegwon Kim.

⁶² Michael Friedman, "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," The Journal of Philosophy, vol. 71, no. 1 (17 January 1974), p. 7.

⁶³Kim, "Explanation in Science," p. 160.

⁶⁴von Wright, Explanation and Understanding, p. 13.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁶⁶Friedman, "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," p. 7.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁶⁸Apel, "The A Priori of Communication," p. 25.

⁶⁹Hempel, "Studies in the Logic of Explanation," p. 327.

⁷⁰Cf. Friedman, "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," pp. 8-9, and Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, pp. 346-51. Both these authors provide a number of examples in support of the argument.

⁷¹Friedman, "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," p. 15.

⁷²Hempel, of course, does not claim that social scientists' explanations look like the D-N model. He claims only that such explanations can, in principle, approximate it. Hempel accounts for the "diffidence" of social scientists to the D-N model by arguing that:

1. covering laws are often not of the same subject matter (they are the objects of other disciplines);
2. greater concern is expressed by social scientists for the contexts of applications of generalizations than for the generalizations themselves; and
3. generalizations on which the social scientist relies are usually imprecise (but can, in principle, be systematized and formalized).

Cf. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in Aspects of Scientific Explanation, pp. 231-45.

⁷³Friedman, "Explanation and Scientific Understanding," pp. 13-14 (emphasis added).

⁷⁴Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests.

⁷⁵ Cf. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, and Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

⁷⁶ Cf. Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, chap. 9.

⁷⁷ Bromberger, "An Approach to Explanation," in Butler, Analytical Philosophy.

⁷⁸ These terms are defined, for our immediate purposes, below.

⁷⁹ The work of the "early" Kuhn is The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974). Works of the "later" Kuhn include a 1969 postscript to the above volume, "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?" "Reflections on My Critics," in Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

⁸⁰ Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, p. 37.

⁸¹ Karl R. Popper, "Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge," in his Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 215-53.

⁸² Kuhn, "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?," p. 15.

⁸³ Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, p. 68.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 149.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 165-69.

⁸⁹ Cf. M. J. Mulkay, The Social Process of Innovation: A Study in the Sociology of Science (London: The Macmillan Company, 1974). Mulkay's work also contains a useful list of further references that support the view above.

⁹⁰The evidence provides strong support for Lakatos' formulation of the nature of research programs. Cf. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Lakatos and Musgrave, eds., Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, pp. 91-196.

⁹¹Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," and Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity.

⁹²Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, p. 13.

⁹³Ibid., p. 15.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 21.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷The classic statement on this distinction was that of Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum," trans. Herbert Feigl, in Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. H. Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), pp. 85-102. Cf. also Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, chap. 3.

⁹⁸Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, p. 65.

⁹⁹Cf. note 79.

¹⁰⁰Reference as in note 90.

¹⁰¹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 137.

¹⁰²Cf. *ibid.*, chap. 5.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 133.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid., p. 135.

111 This point is made at somewhat greater length in the following chapter. For a more systematic development of it, cf. Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," Review of Metaphysics (September 1971), pp. 3-51. Taylor argues that a positivist or empiricist social science which holds to the idea of "brute data" is incapable of constructing a description of social reality in terms of intersubjective meanings. Furthermore, he argues, such meanings, understood in terms of the social values and perceptions of the actors, are indispensable to a correct understanding of social reality.

See also Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, pp. 171-89.

112 Nagel, The Structure of Science, pp. 492-93.

113 For a discussion of the nature of these contexts and a useful critique of Nagel's distinction, cf. Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, chap. 10.

114 Ibid., p. 377.

115 Kaplan's work, *ibid.*, takes us a long way in making such an argument.

116 Jürgen Habermas, "Rationalism Divided in Two," in Positivism and Sociology, ed. Anthony Giddens (London: Heinemann, 1974), p. 206.

117 Gerard Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1973), p. 325.

118 Habermas, "On Theory and Praxis in Our Scientific Civilization," in Theory and Practice, p. 270.

"Specifically, Habermas notes four levels of increasing progressive social rationalization. [*Ibid.*, pp. 270-76.] The first is in the application of technology to social problems and procedures. The second emerges when there is a conflict between competing technological solutions on the first level. This type of conflict is rationalized in decision theory. On the first two levels, values

are isolated from rational decision procedures and enter into the process as subjectively given goals. The technical values of efficiency and economy tend to dominate the selection of means. The ends as such cannot be questioned within the terms of the procedures: they admit only of compromise between competing parties. As decision theory rationalizes choice of techniques, however, the operative value systems also change. Habermas notes, acknowledging agreement on this point with Dewey, that

. . . the development of continually multiplied and improved techniques would not remain bound solely to the [existing] orientation of values, but also would subject the values themselves indirectly to a pragmatic test of their validity. [Ibid., p. 272.]

This testing of values becomes particularly acute when a system is confronted with a conflict situation in which there is a rationally operating opponent. At this point, a third level of rationalization becomes relevant, i.e., game theory. At this level, previous value orientations are relativized to a more basic value, survival, which embodies a specific technical task, viz., standing up to the opponent. The problem orientation can be widened to subsume all decision situations if survival is taken as the primary value and reflected in such secondary values as stability and adaptability. At this point, a fourth level of rationality becomes a possibility (as yet unrealized). A cybernetically organized systems theory oriented around the primary goal of maintenance and reproduction could, Habermas speculates [ibid., pp. 273-74] allow decisionmaking to be delegated to computers completely. Initial value systems would then enter as variables to be functionally weighted in light of the overall decision matrix and goals.

This vision of the development of rationalization carried to its fullest extent reveals, Habermas argues, the ultimate contradiction of positivism, reduced to scientism, which is allowed to dominate all spheres of social practice. In the interest of rationalizing human social existence so as to increase humanity's control over the conditions of its life, the logic of scientism, taken to the culmination, ends in a situation where decisions are removed for all practical purposes from humanity's control and given over to fully automated systems." (Quoted from Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 2, pp. 28-29.)

¹¹⁹Cf. pp. 51-53.

¹²⁰See Jürgen Habermas, "Science and Technology as Ideology," in Towards a Rational Society, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

¹²¹See Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity, especially chap. 5.

¹²²See Karl R. Popper, Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), chaps. 1, 2, and pp. 162-68, 183-90.

¹²³This critique of the Popperians has been made by Jürgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, trans. Tom McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 105. Also see Habermas, "Rationalism Divided in Two," in Positivism and Sociology, ed. Giddens.

CHAPTER V

A CRITIQUE OF HERMENEUTICS: ON THE TENDENCY TO THE REDUCTION OF THEORY TO PRACTICE

Introduction

In the discussion of Weber's concepts of Verstehen it was argued that he conflated a complexity of issues. The critique attempted to highlight the limitedness of Weber's conception of the analysis of social action. In the discussion of positivism it was suggested that there was a mode of knowledge and methodological procedures appropriate to understanding the basis of communicative interaction and intersubjective agreement, procedures which differ from those utilized to gain knowledge of objectified processes. The critique of positivism argued that positivism is unable to understand science, where the latter is conceived, not as a formal, self-enclosed system, but as human activity, as the practice of the community of investigators. Dimensions of social practice, e. g., intentionality, rules, and conventions, cannot be understood, it was said, in concepts which are utilized only in procedures of observation aimed at the establishment of causal regularities.

In order to continue our examination of the relationship between

theory and practice as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, as well as to make good on the criticisms outlined above, it is necessary to turn directly to a discussion of the hermeneutic tradition.

It is particularly in the early work of Dilthey, working within Geisteswissenschaften tradition, that we find a major attempt to uncover the basis of the cultural and hermeneutic sciences and put them on a methodological and epistemological foundation wholly different from that of positivism. We begin this chapter with an examination of the early work of Dilthey. In particular, Dilthey's stress on Verstehen (understanding) is outlined. On his account the essential cognitive task of the human sciences is to understand its object as experienced in the dimension of the "meaningfulness that it embodies." However, Dilthey's empathetic concept of Verstehen is found to be singularly inadequate to the task of understanding. His early work entails an intractable problem of evidence and a crude objectivism. Interestingly enough, Dilthey's later work attempts to grapple with many of the problems posed in his earlier work. Specifically, in a discussion of the "later" Dilthey we will see that his stress on method changes from one of empathy and mystical introspectionism, to a set of procedures that lays the foundations for a notion of Verstehen that can be defended as a

method of verification productive of valid knowledge. However, Dilthey's later work fails ultimately to overcome the psychologism inherent in his earlier position. While making a contribution to move the hermeneutic tradition away from introspectionism, etc., his work lapses into relativism, objectivism, and descriptivism.

In the discussion of the shortcomings of Dilthey's work, the central theme of this chapter is unfolded; namely, that throughout the whole hermeneutic tradition despite continuous attempts to disentangle theory from practice, there is a strong tendency to reduce theory to practice, to reduce the role of theory to that of explicating practice, and to grant authority to the categories and concepts of the subject/object of investigation. As such within hermeneutic epistemology and methodology, it is contended there is a propensity to descriptivism and relativism. There is also a loss of a critical perspective.

This discussion also draws many of its ideas from the work of Habermas et al;¹ specifically from Habermas' attempt to indicate hermeneutics' "immediately practical relation to life."² However, it is my essential aim to extend this discussion into variants of the hermeneutic tradition in contemporary social science. There will be a (selective) analysis of the work of Peter Winch, Alfred Schutz, and Harold Garfinkel, representatives of the schools of ordinary

language analysis, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology, respectively.³ Although none of these schools can trace their intellectual heritage simply to the hermeneutic tradition, their essential problematic is, as we shall see, that of hermeneutics, i. e., the study of the objectivations of human activity, with the aim of interpreting them.⁴ N. B.,⁵

It is, of course, recognized that many of the intricacies of the works of Winch, Schutz, and Garfinkel are neglected. However, I feel that a somewhat cursory treatment of their work is justified in light of the overall themes of this chapter, i. e., the examination of the relationship between theory and practice in the hermeneutic tradition.*

In an examination of the language interpretive sociology of Winch and of the phenomenological sociology of Schutz, it is shown that their work is vulnerable to many of the criticisms we made of Dilthey. However, it is noted that there are important ambiguities in the positions taken by Winch and Schutz on certain central issues. These issues include:

*It should also be noted that in Part 4 and in the Concluding Remarks of this thesis we will return to certain aspects of these writers' works when it is seen that Critical theory has not as yet been able to make good on certain of the criticisms here made.

---the relationship between the language of the social analyst and that of his or her subject/object, and

---the relationship between the interpreter and his subject/object, and the possible effects on both of an interpretive intervention.

The ambiguities of Winch on these issues are of particular interest not only because they expose inconsistencies in his work, but because they bring to the fore a potentially promising approach to these concerns. A satisfactory approach to these problems is held to be of the utmost importance to the development of hermeneutics. Unfortunately, this potentially promising approach is not addressed systematically by Winch. As a consequence, the issues are not adequately dealt with. They are also not adequately addressed by Schutz. Nor are they systematically spoken to by Garfinkel whose work highlights some of the most interesting applications of hermeneutics to social science, and reaches a reductio ad absurdum in the conflation of theory to practice.

In the final section of this chapter and in an analysis of the work of the hermeneutician Hans-Georg Gadamer, it is shown that he directly and systematically addresses many of the problems and approaches we have highlighted. However, in an examination of the Gadamer-Habermas exchange, with which we conclude this chapter, it is argued that Gadamer ultimately maintains a diremption

between science and criticism and begs certain fundamental questions. Following Habermas we argue that Gadamer, in the final analysis (along with Dilthey, Winch, Schutz, and Garfinkel), idealizes meaning, accepts the meaning structures of hermeneutics as a given, and ontologizes these structures as the limits of understanding, communication, and science. Finally, it is noted that if we are to sustain these criticisms and develop an alternative critical approach to social life, it becomes necessary to address certain theoretical problems; most importantly, the problem of grounding.

Empathy and Verstehen

Dilthey sought to lay the foundations for the Geisteswissenschaften, the cultural (or human) sciences, foundations that would be quite distinct from those of the natural sciences. He saw his project as analogous to the Kantian project of providing an epistemological foundation for the natural sciences.

Dilthey contended that the categories appropriate to the Geisteswissenschaften had to be sufficient to the understanding of man through the uncovering and recovering of his consciousness as objectivated in his socio-cultural institutions. The entire social life-world was the object domain of these sciences. The moments of meaning or intentionality as they unfold in human interaction were held to be the important moments to capture and understand. The

object domain of the Geisteswissenschaften overlapped that of the natural sciences only insofar as nature entered into social interaction, but then "natural" objects would be viewed from a different standpoint, i. e., as socially meaningful. The categories of the natural sciences, e. g., space, time, and basic quantificational systems of measurement, were regarded as being unable to pierce, describe, analyze, and understand that which was socially meaningful.

According to certain positivists, the object in the natural sciences is constructed from the fullness of immediate experience by abstracting certain properties in such a way that it can be subsumed as a particular under a general law. The logic of explanation in the deductive-nomological model was to provide a causal sequence culminating in the object or event taken as explanandum. On Dilthey's account explanation was the cognitive task of the natural sciences, the practice of which generated such questions as "why?" and "how?" On the other hand the concern according to Dilthey in the human sciences is with the object as experienced in the objectivating process of the subject, i. e., with the object as experienced in the dimension of the meaningfulness that it embodies. The constitution of the object as meaningful in socio-life practice requires of the cultural sciences, Dilthey argued, a different cognitive task from that of the natural sciences. This task was that of Verstehen

(understanding). Verstehen attempts to answer the questions:

"What?"

"What is this item of behavior?"

"What is this object?"

as realized within the social framework of any given object(s) and/or actor(s). (Within the hermeneutic tradition the applicability of this conceptual division between explanation and understanding has been questioned. Those whose work we discuss later in the chapter will be seen to implicitly contest Dilthey's view.)

The question arises as to how Dilthey thought one was to answer the questions posed by the task of understanding. How can we answer the question "what is the object?" The initial position adopted by Dilthey, the position for which he is most famous, was that the object was to be understood through a method of empathy.⁶ The method was individualistic and introspectionist. The task was to reexperience psychological states of one's past self or of a historical or foreign person. Through the use of empathetic Verstehen, psychic states of others were held to be relivable. From these experiences, it was further contended, the historical world could be reconstructed.⁷ Dilthey argued that there was an ongoing unity of life experiences so that a former experience of oneself could be recalled. Even if we grant that there is some initial plausibility in the notion that a person forms such a unity, how can

the idea of reliving the former experiences of another, an idea that Dilthey also held, be made sense of? As Arato has written:

The concept of empathetic Verstehen contains the antinomy of individual and history. To guarantee the possibility of the Verstehen of others Dilthey had to seek ahistorical solutions (by the way of postulates that could be interpreted either anthropologically or in terms of a Lebensphilosophie).⁸

Dilthey maintained that human nature is, fundamentally, always the same. He posited certain common elementary components of mental life. These common elements of mental life allowed the reconstruction of the "same" experience to be a conceivable goal.

Several points should be noted at this juncture. First, Dilthey's stress on empathy has certain parallels with some of Weber's formulations of Verstehen, e. g., his conception of direct understanding.⁹ The criticism we will make of Dilthey can also be seen to apply to aspects of Weber's thought. Secondly, Dilthey's conception of Verstehen corresponds to certain formulations of the problematic by a number of Logical Empiricists. For Nagel and Theodor Abel, the operation of Verstehen amounts to the attempt, by a social scientist, to "project himself by sympathetic imagination into the phenomena he is attempting to understand."¹⁰ However, Dilthey and these authors have clear differences, particularly over the status of any knowledge claims made through the operation of Verstehen. Nagel rejects the notion that Verstehen is a method

of verification, capable of generating a mode of knowledge of social phenomena. For him it is, at best, a useful tool which can aid the generation of hypotheses. Nagel's rejection of a position akin to that of the early Dilthey is based, amongst other things, on the view that such a position entails an intractable problem of evidence.

Nagel points out that the imputation of intentions, attitudes, and emotions by empathetic Verstehen assumes a twofold hypothesis that cannot be demonstrated within the terms set. It assumes (1) that persons, in given specified circumstances, are in certain psychological states; and (2) assumes definite relations of concomitance between certain states, as well as between such states and certain overt behaviors.¹¹ As Nagel put it,

. . . neither of such assumptions is self-certifying, and evidence is required for each of them if . . . they . . . are to be more than an exercise in uncontrolled imagination.¹²

None of the psychological states we imagine the subjects of a given study to possess may, in fact, be theirs. Likewise, even if our imputations are correct, none of the actions which allegedly derive from those states may, in fact, be their cause, basis, or foundation.

Language and Action in the Work of the Later Dilthey

Dilthey himself came to realize many of the problems with his early work on Verstehen. In the first years of this century he began to systematically address many of the problems raised by an empathetic notion of Verstehen and turned against the psychologism inherent in it. However, as we shall see, he failed, in the last instance, to overcome this psychologism. Nevertheless, despite this ultimate failure, he developed the concept and method of Verstehen several important stages toward a notion of Verstehen that can be defended as a method productive of a mode of knowledge of social phenomena and as a method of verification.

Dilthey began by arguing that to attempt to recapture a former experience was not, as he previously claimed, dependent on having the same experience, but rather depended on our capacity to reconstruct the same intentional or symbolic object. The aim of the cultural scientist was not to relive the actual psychological states of his object but to recapture the meaning of the agent's actions and social objects. Since these objects, Dilthey held, had a public, objective structure, they presented the possibility of objective knowledge gained through understanding. To make good on this possibility, the scientist had to gain access to and familiarity with the language and social context of the object. The cultural scientist

could only enhance his knowledge of social phenomena through understanding and the establishment of intersubjectivity.

All social communication generally presupposes this type of intersubjective understanding.

Hermeneutic understanding is only a methodically developed form of the dim reflexivity or semi-transparency with which the life of prescientifically communicating and socially interacting men takes place in any case.¹³

The a priori of communication implies that each individual must interpret his or her own feelings, needs, and intentions in accordance with the available structures of linguistic intersubjectivity, i. e., the public meanings available in a given social context. It is, furthermore, through this very process of interpretation and communication that the socio-life world is created, sustained, and changed.

The later Dilthey's framework of the cultural sciences is established in his theses on the community of life unities. Habermas has usefully explicated this notion in terms of two levels:

1. the process of self-formation and ego identity and
2. a dialogic relation between subjects who reciprocally recognize each other as intentional subjects sharing meanings.

The community of life unities involves the synthesizes between two hermeneutical dialectics, one of which is claimed to operate at each level.

The individual's life is seen as a model of a hermeneutic circle. The individual's experiences taken as an ever-increasing total give meaning to life as a whole. It is the identity of the ego which synthesizes the various experiences of life relations, i. e., relations between the ego and objects and people in the world, and provides the ongoing unity for the individual's history and Bildung. The identity of the ego is both historical and dynamic. The interactions of life relations take on a meaning within the context of the individual's history and experience. The present is always mediated by the past and future. It is mediated by the past insofar as the significance of the present is determined by needs, values, and norms developed in the individual's past. To the extent that present experience is interpreted according to future anticipations, it is also mediated by the future. However, the meaning of a particular experience, a part of the individual's life as a whole, is always open to revision not only on the basis of the meaning of the whole, but also on the basis of new experience. All past experiences and future anticipations insofar as they merge with present experiences are subject to constant reflection and revised interpretation in light of new experiences.

The life history of an individual, held together by ego identity, is the pattern for the categorical relation of the whole to its parts. . . . The meaning that hermeneutic understanding takes as its object, what Dilthey emphatically calls significance, results exclusively from the role of elements in a structure

whose identity includes the continual decay of identity just as much as the persistent overcoming of this corruption. It must therefore be repeatedly recreated through continually renewed, corrected, and cumulatively expanded retrospective interpretations of life history.¹⁴

Therefore, life cannot only be understood and viewed as a seemingly endless series of events and experiences, synthesized and given unity by the individual ego, but must also be understood as a series of seemingly constant life interpretations.

It is a point of agreement between hermeneuticians and Wittgensteinians that the meanings that the individual gives to particular experiences and to life as a whole are argued and held to be intersubjectively given. As we argued in the previous chapter, viz., the a priori of communication, these meanings are not private, despite the fact that they may often appear so. Individuals' interpretations of life experiences are dependent on a framework and stock of intersubjective meanings and symbols. The semantic content of an expression owes "as much to its place in a linguistic system valid for other subjects as it does to its place in a biographical context. Otherwise the latter could not even be expressed symbolically."¹⁵

Life experience of life relations is constructed in communication:

The individual viewpoint that clings to personal life experience corrects and expands itself in common life experience. By this I understand the sentences that form in any group of persons related to each other that are common to them. . . . Their distinguishing mark is that they are creations of the common life.¹⁶

Language is a continuously developing and expanding system of meanings and symbols within a framework of "common" life which is both partially defined by and defines the linguistic system. The concept of the "common" has a specific sense for Dilthey, referring to the "intersubjectively valid and binding quality of the same symbol for a group of subjects who communicate with each other in the same language."¹⁷

Thus life histories are constituted in the cumulative experiences of individuals over time (the vertical, diachronic dimension), and in the intersubjectivity of communication common to different subjects (the horizontal, synchronic dimension). The "community of life unities" operates in multitudes of overlapping structured connections in which the two dimensions merge. The "community of life unities" can also be characterized in terms of two hermeneutical dialectics. The first is "vertical" and takes the form of self-formation and self-reflection on the part of the individual ego. The second is "horizontal" and takes the form of a dialogue between subjects who identify with each other while simultaneously asserting their nonidentity against each other. It is a dialogue between subjects who reciprocally recognize each other as intentional subjects sharing meanings. There is also the vertical dimension of society itself. The system of meanings and symbolic interactions develops and renews

interpretations through time. The "community of life unities" is postulated by Dilthey as the objective framework of the Gesites-wissenschaften.

Within this framework, Dilthey attempted to confront the problem of the relation of the universal and the particular, as it manifested itself in the attempt to utilize the necessary generality of ordinary language to capture the specificity of the individual experience. As Habermas wrote: hermeneutics must account for ordinary language's ability to ". . . make communicable, no matter how indirectly, what is ineffably individual."¹⁸

As hermeneutics takes all of the socio-life world as its object domain, it takes ordinary language as its object language. But ordinary language is itself one of hermeneutics' primary topics of study. It is both topic and resource, for ordinary language functions as its own metalanguage. "Formalized languages possess metalinguistic rules of constitution with whose aid we can reconstruct every statement that is possible in such a language; that is, we can reproduce it ourselves."¹⁹ However, ordinary language is a practical activity, a social accomplishment, which is deeply embedded in the pragmatic dimensions of everyday life and cannot be dirempted from its social context.²⁰

We cannot give a formal account of the structure of ordinary

language, as we cannot provide an exhaustive set of metalinguistic rules for ordinary language. We cannot understand ordinary language by simple reference to purely intralinguistic symbolic meanings; its embeddedness in social contexts ensures, Dilthey argued, that we have to incorporate nonverbal acts and consequently nonverbal interpretations. Ordinary language must be understood as a language game combining linguistic and behavioral components and meanings. Dilthey classified three types of elementary forms: linguistic expressions, actions, and experiential or emotive expressions or gestures. None of these three forms, he contended, could adequately grasp the particular meaning of a speech act or action. The structure of ordinary language becomes comprehensible only when we take account of the "integration of the three classes of life experiences in everyday life conduct." Each class of expression is colored by the specific context of its production. In the framework of social life-worlds each of the forms interacts with the others and aids mutual understanding of the whole. Language and action together are mutually illuminating, they interpret each other reciprocally. Furthermore, both linguistic expressions and action can be better comprehended if account is taken of experiential expressions, e. g., gestures which might help indicate anger, fear, etc.

A central dilemma of the methods of the cultural sciences has

often been called the hermeneutic circle. But the circle, far from being vicious, is, as Habermas put it, "fruitful."²¹ Both the explanans and the explanandum belong to the same linguistic system, viz., ordinary language. Therefore, they have a relationship of parts to whole. If this relationship were purely linguistic, the circle would be vicious; that is,

. . . if a concept were defined by first isolating descriptions of possible extensions of the concept and then picking out further instantiations of the concept according to this definition, . . . there would be no way to alter the theory or interpretation in light of empirical findings. The object to be understood could only be grasped according to the already established interpretation scheme. But because the objects of hermeneutics are also objects of experience, that is, they are experienced as (historical) facts as well as understood as meaningful objects, the viciousness is avoided. As facts, the objects to be understood are experienced within a social context of normative structures. The facts must be understood in relation to rule-governed practices based on mutually reciprocal expectations. It is the expectation of experience in conformity with social norms, of practice which helps to create the meaning of the interpreted object, which breaks the purely linguistic circle.²²

Thus in the cultural sciences, an initial interpretation is a conjectured interpretation. It is a provisional attempt to uncover a system of meaning. The "interpreter himself must learn to speak the language that he interprets."²³ In the "open system of ordinary language,"²⁴ our provisionally selected interpretative scheme has the status of a hypothesis that does require corroboration. Conjectured

interpretations can be tested and changed in light of further information, and linguistic acts taken as experiences within a given frame of symbolic interaction. As experiences, linguistic acts have a significance beyond their role as carriers of meaning within systems of grammatical structures. Since ordinary language is intertwined with practice, the meanings and experiences that the interpretation attempts to capture can be seen as part of a "stream" of life-contexts; ". . . linguistic analysis also reveals the empirical context of indirectly communicated life experiences."²⁵ Therefore, a provisional interpretation of an action, object, or expression only has meaning as part of a larger interpreted scheme.

If there is a manifest discrepancy between the posited interpretation and its object, it will be uncovered as a "gap" between actions anticipated by the interpretation and the actual resultant actions. The objects' meaning, as it becomes progressively manifested through interactions, will indicate the success or failure of the initial interpretation. An interpretation fails when there is a disappointment of expectations, when the interpretation incorrectly anticipates certain behaviors or actions.

Structures of Action and Knowledge

There is a further consequence that can be drawn from this view of hermeneutics.

If the hermeneutic circle can be resolved by demonstrating the singular integration of language and practice and the corresponding intermingling of linguistic analysis and experience, then it loses its logical doubtfulness. At the same time, however, it becomes an indication of hermeneutics' immediately practical relation to life. Hermeneutics is rooted in "the thought-generative work of life" insofar as the survival of societal individuals is linked to the existence of a reliable intersubjectivity of mutual understanding. ²⁶

Within a given ongoing social context, a disappointment of expectations takes the form of a disturbance of a certain mutuality, a consensus or agreement about reciprocal expectations. Such a consensus as to mutual expectations is essential to social interaction per se and the integration of a society. As Dilthey wrote:

Understanding first arises in the interests of practical life. Here people are dependent on intercourse with one another. They must make themselves understandable to one another. One must know what the other wants. Thus the elementary forms of understanding come into being. ²⁷

The very possibility of creating and maintaining successful mutual (inter)action between two or more individuals depends on a "bridgehead" of shared expectations and linguistic skills, on the possibility of understanding shared intentions and meanings. Without such a "bridgehead" and understanding, the possibility of lack of coordination,

tension, or conflict is greatly enhanced. Thus knowledge of language and action, i.e., communication structures, is directly tied to an interest in successful social action, what Habermas has called man's "practical interest." We will elaborate and discuss this conception of the relationship between knowledge and the human species' claimed practical interest in Chapters 9 and 14.

Dilthey, however, was ambiguous on the status of hermeneutics' practical relation to life. Rather than seeing it as laying down the conditions for the possibility of objective knowledge, he saw in it dangers for the scientific character of hermeneutics. In a bid to maintain an ideal of pure objectivity and description for science, he falls back into objectivism and a conception of Verstehen which retained traces of his early psychologism.²⁸

For Dilthey there was a tension between "life" and "science." Given that the scientist-interpreter and the object (who is also a subject) of his study are immersed in life contexts of meanings, values, conventions, etc., the question arises as to how the cultural sciences could objectively reconstruct the life and experience of the object? On Dilthey's account, in order to be objective, knowledge in the cultural sciences had to be free of particular meanings and normative structures of the scientist-interpreter. Reconstructed knowledge had to have universal validity, it had to be true and valid

for every hermeneutician--irrespective of context. But in order to guarantee that all hermeneuticians could arrive at the same reconstruction, Dilthey had to give an account of the possibility of this reconstruction within the community of life unities.²⁸ In the end, he did this by revitalizing his "earlier" empathetic concept of Verstehen and by adopting a philosophy of vitalism (Lebensphilosophie). On this model, one can reconstruct subject states of another and recreate the meaningfulness of another's experience, and do so without the distorting influences of one's own meaning structures, predispositions, and values.

Dilthey argued that our particular, individual experiences are part of the whole of life and share in basic "elements of human nature." One can capture the particular in the universal inherent in language because all particulars--objectivations of life experiences--are seen as components in a common, ever-present and continuous "stream of life."

For the interpreter, what can be experienced is what is the case. . . . For the reproductive experience of one who transposes himself into the original [experience] promises participation in the one omnipresent stream of life.²⁹

Only insofar as the objectivations of experiences are part of an all-embracing objective spirit, can Dilthey claim a continuity of meaning and form which allows the reexperiencing of the original

experience. Objectivity is guaranteed through the "interchangeability of the cognitive subject."³⁰

In a discussion of what he calls the historicist-positivistic tradition of hermeneutics (Schleiermacher, Dilthey), Gerard Radnitzky argues that this approach (one that claims subject-neutral observation, etc.) develops a "Musée Imaginaire"³¹ stance toward past traditions and experiences. "Methodologically this tradition tries to distance and disengage itself from its object, to assume a contemplative, neutral pose, to regard its object as a dead, museum piece, unchanging and open to examination."³² The goal of such an approach is:

. . . a hermeneutic interpretation which progressively objectifies the meaning through abstracting from decision about the credibility of assertions and about the acceptability of norms and value-judgments.³³

The result is an objectivism which restricts the cultural sciences to the explication of meaning structures, to a merely descriptive function. The methodological goal is to minimize the hermeneutician's subjective bias and interference. To the extent that it is claimed that this methodological goal can be achieved because the subject is given and static, the link between "science" and "life," theory and practice, as well as between fact and value, is claimed to have been broken. However, the claimed diremption of these phenomena hides a certain fundamental continuity. For the descriptive function the

cultural sciences adopt implies a tendency to reduce theory to practice, i. e., to reduce what is admissible in the realm of theoretical discourse to that which is an explication of social practice. The task of social science becomes one of understanding, through explication, social practice. This understanding lapses into a descriptivism, for within the terms of reference that have been set, we cannot escape the frames of the actor's meanings.

Once it is claimed that there are simply cleavages between fact and value, theory and practice, a critically reflexive understanding of a given object of study is held to be anathema. The cultural sciences are reduced to historicism and relativism; its categories become those of the persons it studies. As we noted in our earlier discussion of the work of Kuhn, if all theory demands is that interpretations of the texts, persons, cultures, or traditions be purely descriptive and nonevaluative, nothing can be said--within the terms set--about the truth-content or possible deception (ideology) expressed by the object of study. Only points of internal logical inconsistency and problematic areas of interpretation can be discussed.

Dilthey also claims that the process of interpreting another tradition has no necessary effects on the self-understanding and practice of the interpreter. As reality, it is held, is unaffected by an interpretation and the process of "interpretative intervention," so

too the interpreter; the claim is, that all is left as it was found. This position depends for its viability on the possibility of a context-free, neutral observer. But such a notion contradicts the central realization of contemporary hermeneutics; that

Historical thinking must reflect upon its own historicity. . . . There is no neutral standpoint outside of history upon which the cultural scientist could base himself.³⁴

Interpretations cannot escape the language, the preconceptions embedded in it, the background life-contexts of their authors. The question is: what is the relationship between the meaning structures of the hermeneutician and that of his object/subject? The question is of central importance to the hermeneutic sciences if a concept of Verstehen is to be defended as a viable method. But before addressing this issue directly, it can be noted that the language-interpretative sociology of Peter Winch, which is based on a reading of the later Wittgenstein, both exhibits many of the same characteristics of the work of the later Dilthey and advances and develops the issues we have been concerned with in the pages immediately above. It is to this work that we now turn.

Winch: Explanation as Identification

As the positivist program for the social sciences closed off an analysis of intentionality, conventions, etc., hermeneutic conceptions of social science generally deny the validity of any attempt to establish causal regularities in social analysis. Both conceptions of social science close off the possibility of a critical science. Winch's work reflects an explicit rejection of the viability of causal nomological knowledge in social investigation and an implicit rejection of the possibility of a critically reflexive understanding of social phenomena. His work is extremely important as an example and as an attempt to map out--albeit in programmatic form--a concept of sociology which is essentially hermeneutic.*

For Winch understanding and explanation in the social sciences are only possible within the learned conceptual framework of any given "form of life."³⁵ Winch's thesis follows, he argues, from Wittgenstein's assertion that "what has to be accepted, the given is--so one could say--forms of life."³⁶ Understanding and explanation proceed and, for the best part, stop with the identification of the meaning of social practices--by subsumption under a rule.

*There are many important questions raised by Winch which, given the scope of this thesis, can obviously not be pursued. Where possible I will try to indicate some of these questions and issues, and relevant further references.

On Winch's account, rules are the logical basis of social practice and meaningful action is "ipso facto rule governed."³⁷ Such action is action in "which it makes sense to suppose that somebody else could in principle describe the rule I am following."³⁸ The "test of whether a man's actions are the application of a rule is not whether he can formulate it but whether it makes sense to distinguish a right way and wrong way of doing things in connection with what he does."³⁹ The concept of following a rule entails "a peculiar kind of interpersonal agreement."⁴⁰

But social action is not simply the utilization of preexisting rules. Rather, these "rules arise in the course of conduct and are only intelligible in relation to the conduct out of which they arise." Furthermore, "the nature of the conduct out of which they arise," Winch contends, "can only be grasped as the embodiment of these principles."⁴¹ There is a certain "openness of rules" as decisions have to be frequently made as to "what is to count" as "going on in the same way."⁴²

Winch's conception of the nature of rule-governed action provides the foundation for his critique of a causal-nomological model for the social sciences. He argues that social phenomena do not have the same logical structure as the phenomena the natural sciences make their own. In order to establish a regularity, we have to have some

way of determining which experiences of events are to count "as instances of the same thing." In the community of natural scientists this problematic is resolved by the establishment of rules of procedure. The natural scientist faces only one set of rules--those the community of investigators have established. But "what the sociologist is studying, as well as his study of it, is a human activity and is therefore carried on according to rules."⁴³ In social life "criteria of identity," of what it means "to be doing the same thing," are internal to social activity, contexts, and participants and are therefore "necessarily relative to some rule; with the corollary that two events which count as qualitatively similar from the point of view of one rule would count as different from the point of view of another."⁴⁴ Social scientific regularities exist, in Winch's view, in the "mind of the analyst."

Given the "openness of rules," prediction is also highly problematic. In particular situations which diverge from a rules' "paradigm case," the "very nature of human decisions" implies not only the possibility of alternatives "within a rule-governed situation," but also the possibility--over time--of modifying the rules. In very routine circumstances action can be predicted;⁴⁵ otherwise, we cannot predict because we cannot say what is going to happen before it happens--let alone what it might mean.⁴⁶ From Winch's point of

view, however, although we cannot

- a. predict social phenomena; nor
- b. develop causal nomological knowledge of social phenomena,⁴⁷

this most definitely does not imply that social phenomena are condemned to unintelligibility.

For Winch the problems of a theory of explanation of human action already manifest themselves at the level of observation and description. To identify or describe an action already entails a process of interpreting the action as

- being of a certain type,
- having a particular purpose or point,
- and as situated within a frame of rules, standards, and language,
- the products of a form of life.

As Thomas McCarthy points out in his discussion of Verstehen,

The same movements could be variously described as "lighting a fire," "giving a signal," "lighting a ritual fire," and so forth. . . . Now the Winchian point can be put by suggesting that the proper identification of an action depends on knowing the stock of action descriptions available in a given language game, as well as the criteria for their application. An interpretative understanding of the form of life in which it is located is thus essentially involved in the proper identification of an action, of relevant stimuli and of possible motives. These are not independent, but rather interconnected operations.⁴⁸

An interpretative understanding of an action depends on the successful uncovering of tiers of meaning. In short, this involves descriptions of (a) action(s); (b) possible reasons, motives (i. e., justifications) for actions; (c) the general set of beliefs and practices which make such actions intelligible; and (d) the ultimate points which following a system of rules have. These latter points can be uncovered by comprehending the "limiting notions," which are at the base of a society's "very conception of human life."⁴⁹ The "ethical space" of a society, i. e., its conception of "good and evil," is, Winch argues, given in its attitudes toward "birth, death, and sexual relations."⁵⁰ The very notion of a society's conception of human life, Winch contends, is limited by its attitudes toward these three "moral primitives." Not only are these "limiting concepts. . . . necessarily . . . an important feature of any human society," but they are also a basis for our understanding of a society.

In any attempt to understand the life of another society . . . an investigation of the forms taken by such concepts--their role in the life of the society--must always take a central place and provide a basis on which understanding may be built.⁵¹

Interpretative understanding, if successful, yields on Winch's account an explanation of an action--an explanation by identification. Explanation takes the form here, as it did for Dilthey, of answers to the questions "what?," "what is the item of behavior?," etc.⁵²

This account of explanation could be argued to square with the three desirable properties, Friedman suggests, that a theory of explanation should have.⁵³ For example, Winch's theory is

1. sufficiently general to square with the variety of social-life contexts (the "general cases" for social science);
2. objective in that criteria of a sufficient explanation are to be found on the side of the object/subject--not on the side of the "idiosyncratic tastes" of scientists;
3. demonstrably connected to understanding. We understand an item of behavior when it has been subsumed under a rule. Winch's work, however, does not deal adequately with the processes of how we understand, i. e., with method. (Dilthey's later work [see pages 253-59] is more developed on this issue.)

However, there are several problems with Winch's view, none the least of which is his own interesting, but unsystematic, attempt to transcend it.

In the Idea of a Social Science, Winch essentially maintains that the fundamental criteria for the identification of actions are internal to the activity under investigation itself. The investigator should be neutral with respect to varying standards of intelligibility. Science cannot, Winch contends, define the norm for intelligibility in general. "Reality has no key."⁵⁴ Ideas, "keys," and criteria of rationality are contextually bound to "forms of life." The categories of hermeneutics will be as relative as the variety of "forms of life" themselves. Let us call this Winch's position one.

On the other hand Winch suggests that a more reflective

understanding of a given society, than the society's own self-understanding, is possible. But "if it is to count as a genuine understanding at all," he adds, it must presuppose "the participants' unreflective understanding."⁵⁵ The question immediately arises as to what is the relationship between these levels of understanding, or as Winch (or as the later Dilthey) might put it, between the language of the social analyst and that of this object/subject. Are there logical issues implied by a difference in language games?

In his examination of Evans-Pritchard's investigations of Azande magic, Winch addresses the problems posed in the questions above as the "strain inherent in the situation of an anthropologist who wishes to make these beliefs and practices [of the Azandé] intelligible to himself and his readers."⁵⁶ Here the anthropologist is faced with language games which he realizes are "fundamentally different in kind such that what may be expressed in one has no possible counterpart in the other."⁵⁷ Winch rejects the view, as McCarthy put it,

. . . that the anthropologist should simply take up and apply the standards of intelligibility current in his own society and proposes instead a sort of dialectical process in which, by somehow bringing the subjects' conception of intelligible behaviour into relation with our own, we create a new unity for the concept of intelligibility. 58, 59

But what this amounts to is as yet unclarified in Winch's work.⁶⁰

(We will refer to this albeit undeveloped position as Winch's position two.)

Several objections can be made to Winch's work which are directly continuous with our essential theses. First, it should be noted that his conception of interpretative sociology is inextricably intertwined with his conception of language games and forms of life as monadic unities. The problems with this conception of realms of social thought and life parallel those of Kuhn's "paradigms." As Kuhn exaggerates the internal integration of paradigms and the claimed discrepancy between them, so Winch can be criticized for exaggerating the internal unity of "forms of life" and their "demarcability." Christianity, for example, cannot be conceived as a discrete system of rules grounded in a discrete form of life. Rather, the history of Christianity is a history of dissent as well as consensus, conflict as well as peace, contradiction as well as harmony. At frequent moments in its history it has been torn by social struggle.⁶¹ As MacIntyre and Jarvie have argued in debate with Winch, cultures embody differences and contradictions.⁶² What constitutes accepted standards of reasonable behavior in any given society is often the source of militant and violent conflict. Furthermore, these differences of standards cannot simply be conceived as "incommensurables" of language games which people choose through leaps of faith. Rather the process of choice can be often understood as reasoned acceptances or rejections. Much oft-claimed deviance

in societies can be accounted for as a result of reasoned judgments between differing modes of life out of which people have been able to draw criteria for comparison and judgment.⁶³ It can also be argued that certain actual historical transitions become unintelligible if one fails to take account of both the alternative systems of ideas etc. with which people have been confronted, and the process whereby they drew from these alternatives criteria of judgment.⁶⁴

The analogy of social units to (language) games is perhaps misleading. The constitutive rules of chess are rules which long traditions of dialogue have established with a relatively high degree of consensus. As we will argue in a moment, the traditions that shape societies are perhaps not best conceived as dialogues at all. If communities and societies can be compared to games, then they are not games analogous to chess. "Winch does not allow," as Alasdair MacIntyre has written, "for the variety of relationships in which an agent may stand to a rule to which his behaviour conforms."⁶⁵

"Partners" in the "game" are often not "partners" at all. The relationship might be one of constraint and control. (We will further explore and develop this theme throughout the remainder of this chapter.)

Winch's claim that language games are "incommensurables" also parallels Kuhn's views of "paradigms." As Kuhn is at best

ambiguous between radical relativism and a more viable epistemology, so too is Winch. On Winch's position one interpretative sociology is a linguistic version of Dilthey's historicism and relativism; each society must be understood from within its own rules, its own standards, logic, and consistency. On this account all criteria of rationality and truth, for theory and practice, are held to be relative. To the extent that Winch holds this view, the criticisms we made of Kuhn's radical relativism can be here applied and need not be repeated.⁶⁶

However, Winch's position two embodies a conception of intelligibility which cannot be understood in the terms immediately above. Here the very process of mediating forms of life is claimed to advance our understanding and found a new standard of intelligibility. The position appears potentially promising as an approach to overcome the notion of forms of life as incommensurable, monadic unities, and the problems of relativism. Unfortunately, how we might better comprehend this position, as previously noted, finds few clues in Winch's work.

To the extent that Winch holds to position one above the same criticisms that were made of the later Dilthey can be made here. Past and existing practices are alone considered authentic. Theory is merged into practice as the role of theory becomes equated with

the explication of practice and as the processes of constitution are merged with those of justification. The categories and concepts of theory are claimed to be directly reflexive and continuous with those of the social practice under investigation. Not only is authenticity granted to these frames of meaning, but also--as with Kuhn-- authority. Dilthey's and Winch's research programs uncritically accept the underlying consensus of "forms of life." In fact, their acceptance is dogmatic. For they close off the possibility of a critically reflexive understanding of traditions and a priori exclude the possibility of systematic distortion, i. e., ideology and false-consciousness, in a tradition's self-understanding. As such, social actions that reflect power and constraint cannot be conceptualized by Winch. It seems quite clear that the concept of ideology might find application "in a society where the concept is not available to the members of the society."⁶⁷ Likewise, there are many aspects of one's own individual behavior which are often not understood. It seems clear that a concept of, for example, neurosis might find application irrespective of whether the concept is available to individuals.

As we argued that Kuhn fails to make the distinction between those standards or criteria which are internal to paradigms and those by which we may judge it, so too Winch unjustifiably conflates the

problems of hermeneutic understanding with the problems of assessing the rational validity of ideas.⁶⁸ The problematics are quite separate. We can accept the internal authenticity of a "form of life," tradition, without necessarily accepting it as rational or true. However, how we rationally justify or ground the rationality of "criteria of rationality" is as yet an open question. It is in Parts 3 and 4 of this thesis, in the work of the critical tradition and Habermas, that we will examine a major attempt to ground a view of the rationality of criteria and develop a concept of ideology that implies "that criteria beyond those available" in a given "society may be invoked to judge its rationality."⁶⁹

In defense of Winch it can, of course, be said that to the extent he maintains position two above, he explicitly recognizes some of the problems we have raised.⁷⁰ A more reflective understanding of a given social unit is possible, Winch said, so long as the participants' "unreflective" self-understanding is presupposed. Here Winch seems to be suggesting that mediating language games require translatability of terms, concepts, etc., but not necessarily the immediate understanding and accord of the subject/object of investigation with the terms, concepts, etc., of the social investigators. However, besides some brief remarks (e. g., that a psychoanalyst may explain an item of neurotic behavior in terms unknown and

unintelligible to the analysand--so long as they are translatable),⁷¹ the relationship between the language of the investigator and that of his object/subject remains ambiguous and problematic in Winch's work. This position is in need of substantial development.

In a longer and more extended discussion of Winch's work it would be important to address the adequacy of his definition of meaningful behavior and his denial of the validity of the task of developing causal generalizations in the social sciences. Neither of these issues will be dealt with here directly. They have been usefully discussed at some length elsewhere.⁷² Nevertheless, I do intend to return to a consideration of these issues in Part 4, where Habermas' notion of meaningful behavior and his conception of the respective rules of a causal-nomological and hermeneutic social science will be discussed.

Schutz' Postulate of Adequacy

Although Schutz' formulation of understanding and explanation in the social sciences does admit of the possibility of causal analysis (with reference to an actor's "system of motives for action"), it can be usefully noted that his phenomenological conception of social analysis is open to many of the same criticisms that we made of Dilthey and Winch. I shall briefly mention a few of the most important points of parallel.

For example, where Winch talked of "forms of life" and language games, Schutz talks of "multiple realities," "subuniverses of reality," and "finite provinces of meaning."⁷³ Schutz develops a phenomenological version of Winch's linguistic relativism.⁷⁴ On Schutz' account there are "strictly speaking . . . no such things as facts, pure and simple."⁷⁵

All facts are from the outset facts selected from a universal context by the activities of our mind. They are, therefore, always interpreted facts, either facts looked at as detached from their context by artificial abstraction, or facts considered in their specific setting. In either case they carry along their interpretational inner and outer horizon. This does not mean that, in daily life or in science, we are unable to grasp the reality of the world. It just means that we grasp certain aspects of it, namely those that are relevant to us either for carrying on our business of living or from the point of view of a body of accepted rules of procedure called the method of science.⁷⁶

Scientific method is but one of multiple paths to construct knowledge of the social world.

As the social world was not structureless for Winch, neither is it for Schutz. The social scientists' observational field "has particular meaning and relevance structure for the human beings living, thinking, and acting therein."⁷⁷ But whereas the structures of "forms of life" are given in "systems of rules," the structure of "multiple realities," Schutz argues, are to be located in the Lebenswelt and in the actor's "typifying practices." The Lebenswelt,

people's "lived-in-world," is the world of intersubjectivity, communication, language, everyday practices, and commonsense knowledge.⁷⁸ The Lebenswelt is the foundation of society, the basis of all meaning. It is the framework of resources (i. e., procedural methods, rules), and topics (i. e., categorizing practices, significations, and interpretative schema). As the "founding experience" of our world, it is held to be presupposed in all human interaction and science.⁷⁹

The world . . . is from the outset experienced in the pre-scientific thinking of everyday life. . . . The unique objects and events given to us in a unique aspect are unique within a horizon of typical familiarity and pre-acquaintanceship.⁸⁰

This horizon of familiarity and pre-acquaintanceship is acquired through our very being in the Lebenswelt. "We are, so to speak, born into it, we live in and endure it."⁸¹

But, whereas Winch's conception of social structure was contextually bound to community and society, Schutz' position, despite this conception of the Lebenswelt, embodies a tension between the constituting role of the individual and that of the collectivity. In fact, in certain passages, Schutz' position appears radically individualistic. In the second chapter of The Phenomenology of the World, Schutz contends that the origin of meaning is ultimately to be located in the Ego's reflections on "the stream of consciousness."

"Here and only here," he states, "in the deepest stratum of experience that is accessible to reflection, is to be found the ultimate source of the phenomena of meaning and understanding. What is primarily given to consciousness is," as George Walsh put it,

. . . an unbroken stream of lived experiences (Erlebnisse) --heterogeneous qualities without boundaries or contours which wax, wane, and pass gradually into one another. The contents of this stream of consciousness have no meaning in themselves. . . . All such lived experiences . . . at the time they are actually lived through . . . are not given to us as separate and distinct entities. However, . . . once [an experience] has been caught in the "cone of light" [acts of identification and reflection] emanating from the Ego, . . . [the experience] is "lifted out" of the stream of duration and becomes clear and distinct, a discrete entity. It is at this moment and by virtue of the Act of turning-toward (Zuwendung) that the experience acquires meaning (Sinn).⁸²

In reflecting on our experiences, meaning may be ascribed either retrospectively, or prospectively, on future events.⁸³ In either case the Ego⁸² gives subjective experiences meaning which may be drawn both from the individual's creative-imaginary efforts and from the "public stock of knowledge" ("objective meaning")--which is itself derivative from the shared world of lived experiences. ⁸³ Schutz hold, then, that social reality

. . . has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the human beings living, acting, and thinking within it. By a series of commonsense constructs they have preselected and preinterpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives.⁸⁴

In order to grasp this social reality, Schutz contends, the "thought-objects" of social scientists have to be "founded upon the thought objects constructed by the commonsense thinking of men, living their daily lives. . . ." ⁸⁵ Thus, Schutz states,

. . . the constructs of the social sciences are, so to speak, constructs of the second degree, that is, constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene. ⁸⁶

Although in Schutz' view there are a number of different tasks for the social sciences, ⁸⁷ there is one essential theme for all sciences; that is, "to constitute an objective meaning-context either out of subjective meaning-contexts generally or out of some particular meaning-context." ⁸⁸ The question arises, as Schutz himself recognized: "How is it possible to form objective concepts and an objectively viable theory of subjective meaning-structures?"

An answer is held to be forthcoming from the basic insight that the concepts formed by the social scientist are "constructs of constructs," constructs of the "second degree."

The scientific constructs formed on the second level, in accordance with the procedural rules valid for all empirical sciences, are objective ideal typical constructs and, as such, of a different kind from those developed on the first level of commonsense thinking which they have to supersede. They are theoretical systems embodying general hypotheses. ⁸⁹

For our purposes, it is unimportant here to enter into the intricacies of Schutz' conception of method in the social sciences. ⁹⁰ However,

a number of features of this method and the relationship conceived between the social scientist and social world can be usefully noted.

First, as Dilthey maintained the possibility of a neutral observer, so it appears that Schutz contends that the social scientist can be "detached" from the social world. The social scientist "is not involved in the observed situation, which is to him not of practical but merely cognitive interest."⁹¹ For Schutz the logic of everyday life is seen to be predicated on practicality. Everyday life embodies norms of rationality sufficient to practical accomplishments. The scientist, however, "by making up his mind to become a scientist has replaced his personal biographical situation by . . . a scientific situation."⁹²

The scientific problem, once established, alone determines what is relevant for the scientist as well as the conceptual frame of reference to be used by him.⁹³

We have already criticized Dilthey for holding a position that entailed a simple objectivism. But the critique we made of Dilthey cannot be simply transferred to Schutz' views. Schutz' position does not entail a crude objectivism. His discussion of the Lebenswelt, the pre-suppositions of science, and nature of social scientific types⁹⁴ has served to stress some of the complex mediations between the social analyst and the social world. Schutz certainly appreciated that knowledge claims of social investigators have no simple correspondence :

to reality. However, Schutz does not speak to the complicated questions raised by Winch's position two, i. e., to the problematic of the relationship between the language of the social analyst and that of his subject/object. Schutz also fails to speak systematically to the relationship between the interpreter and his subject/object and the possible effects on both of an interpretative intervention.⁹⁵ It appears that with Schutz, as well as with Dilthey and Winch (position one), all is left the same.

The social scientist proceeds, on Schutz' account, by observing "certain facts and events within social reality which refer to human action." The scientist then "constructs typical behaviour or course-of-action patterns from what he has observed."⁹⁶ Each step in the construction of types can be "verified by empirical observation, provided that we do not restrict this term to sensory perceptions of objects and events . . . but include the experiential form, by which commonsense thinking in everyday life understands human actions and their outcome in terms of their underlying motives and goals."⁹⁷ The types the social scientist constructs are, in Schutz' view, anything but arbitrary. In fact, they are subject to two postulates, the postulate of logical consistency and the postulate of adequacy.⁹⁸ N. B. Compliance with the former postulate warrants "the objective validity of the thought-objects constructed by the social scientist." In other

words, the scientist's types have to be logically coherent and precisely formulated. They have, for example, to describe the ambiguities of practical activity, clearly. Compliance with the postulate of adequacy "warrants their compatibility with the constructs of everyday life."

The latter means that each term in such a scientific model of human action must be constructed in such a way that a human act performed within the real world by an individual actor as indicated by the typical construct would be understandable to the actor himself as well as to his fellow-men in terms of commonsense interpretation of everyday life.⁹⁹

There is a crucial ambiguity here which parallels an ambiguity in Winch's work. Does Schutz mean, as he has stated, that "a theory which aims at explaining social reality has to agree with the commonsense experiences of the social world?"¹⁰⁰ If what he means, as Dorothy Emmet and Alasdair MacIntyre have pointed out, entails

. . . that the commonsense view of the social world must be immune from correction and modification by the discoveries of social science then what he asserts is not only false but deprives the social sciences of part of their genuine importance. Our commonsense beliefs about society are not only often false, but are also sometimes incorrigible at the level of commonsense.¹⁰¹

If the social scientist is restricted in his terms to those of the commonsense interpretation of everyday life, then, all we have said of Dilthey's and Winch's collapse of theory into practice, their

descriptivism and relativism, etc., applies here and need not be reiterated.¹⁰² On the other hand, if Schutz means that "typical constructs" should be understandable to actors in everyday life and by understandable he means translatable, then all that we said, viz. Winch's position two, can be here applied. The relationship between the technical concepts of the sociologist and those of ordinary people is not discussed but needs to be systematically addressed. For example, the use of such concepts like ideology and neurosis needs to be squared with the role of hermeneutic understanding.¹⁰³ On all these issues, it is clear that Schutz' own work begs a number of fundamental questions and is clearly inadequate. To the extent that he stresses the importance of the translatability of the sociologists' language, then, it appears he is attempting to avoid many of the problems that arise if the sociologists' theory is required to agree with the commonsense experiences of the social world. However, his attempt to avoid these problems is at best suggestive--it is clearly not systematic.

Garfinkel: Explanation as Explication

In the work of Garfinkel we find both some of the most interesting applications of the insights of the hermeneutic tradition to social science and some of its most self-evident limitations. The account of Garfinkel's work that follows is, of course, by no means exhaustive

either of his contributions to sociology or ethnomethodology. Nor is it intended to be a systematic discourse on ethnomethodology, which to use its own jargon, is a multiplicity of topic and method.¹⁰⁴

Rather, I intend to show how within Garfinkel's original program and in what seems to be his present self-understanding of his work,¹⁰⁵ there is a strong tendency to reach a reductio ad absurdum in the conflation of theory to practice.

At the heart of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological program for sociology is a conceptualization of social action as constructed, "organic self-mobilization." The social act is understood as "the locus where intentions come to behavioural expression, as the fulcrum of creative self-governance where the elementary freedom of the human subject is realized."¹⁰⁶ Structurally differing organized practical activities of everyday life are viewed as "contingent accomplishments of socially organized common practices."¹⁰⁷

A central tenet in the ethnomethodological account of social science is to refuse what Garfinkel takes as

. . . the prevailing proposal that efficiency, efficacy, effectiveness, intelligibility, consistency, planfulness, typicality, uniformity, reproducibility of activities--i. e., that rational properties of practical activities--be assessed, recognized, categorized, described by using a rule or standard obtained outside actual settings within which such properties are recognized, used, produced, and talked about by settings members. . . . Structurally differing organized practical activities of everyday life are

to be sought out and examined for the production, origins, recognition, and representations of rational practices. All "logical" and "methodological" properties of action, every feature of an activity's sense, facticity, objectivity, accountability, communality is to be treated as a contingent accomplishment of socially organized common practices.¹⁰⁸

Garfinkel, drawing on the work of the philosopher Bar-Hillel, on the indexical properties (i. e., contextual dependencies) of utterances¹⁰⁹ has noted, as Jeff Coulter put it, that

. . . actor's accounts, as sequences of utterances, are reflexively and essentially tied into, or bound up with, the socially organized occasions of their production. This context-specificity prohibits generalizations to other utterances with respect to sense (or "meaning") since recognizable sense is not discernible independently of the situated social circumstances wherein talking is done and transactions are located.¹¹⁰

In ethnomethodology, as Coulter goes on to argue, there is no category of "context-in-general."

Attempts to "remedy" the indexicality of actor's expressions, by substituting paraphrases or filling out the minutiae, do not succeed in severing the dependence of utterances on their contexts of production. Rather than attempt to remedy the essential indexicality of the talk of members of a society, the alternative programme is posited in demonstrating the ways in which parties to practical, social arrangements make evident to themselves and others the rationality of their indexical talk and indexical activities. Thus the "methods of concerted actions and methods of common understanding¹¹¹ become," for the ethnomethodologists, "the professional sociologist's paramount phenomenon."¹¹²

On Garfinkel's account, ethnomethodology's claimed topics are

other social sciences resources. The crucial concern of ethnomethodology is to explicate and demonstrate the accountability and indexicality of everyday practices, whereby actors employ resources, variously formulated and reflected, for various topics of practical interest. These terms should be understood as following:

1. accountability-- the capacity of "members" to account for their actions in terms of culturally appropriate conventions, the informal logic of everyday life.
2. indexicality-- the contextual variability of the meaning of utterances. Meaning is held to be tied to the practical purposes of "hearer" and "speaker." Garfinkel often also equates indexicality with the "universal contextual dependence" of utterances.
3. resources-- the methods of practical reasoning and stock of commonsense knowledge.

Resources are argued to be

- a. variously formulated, i. e., elaborated and specified in light of an utterance which is produced in situ;
- b. variously reflected, i. e., characterized in light of past occurrences and future expectations;
- c. variously employed for various topics. ¹¹³

Every kind of member's practices "from divination to theoretical physics,"¹¹⁴ become topics for ethnomethodology,

. . . the sociological analysis of operative structure, rather than the taken-for-granted backcloth of members' procedures that produce the social structures as end-products studied in formal orthodoxy [i. e., contemporary sociological practice.] ¹¹⁵

The ethnomethodological program, on Garfinkel's account, is not an attempt to reconstruct sociology. In one of his most well-known claims, Garfinkel contends that his research program is indifferent to orthodox sociological claims to be scientific. However, a knowledge of the "richness" of social contexts and the claimed "sovereignty" of actors in the characterizations of their actions, is sometimes held to lend weight and to be compatible with certain philosophical arguments that lead to a total rejection of a program of a causal, nomological social science.¹¹⁶

The products of ethnomethodological inquiries are held to be the description of methods "whereby members accomplish the interpretations they do accomplish."

Tape transcriptions are utilized in rendering the data upon which analyses are effected, thus allowing a limited replication so that the reader might check off the way in which the investigator listened and analyzed the content of his data.¹¹⁷

Ethnomethodology accounts for members' accounts by explication. Social action is explained in terms of its construction. If we can understand actors' methods, we can give an account of how members accomplish the social practices they do accomplish. Garfinkel is not concerned to answer the questions -- "what?", "what is the item of behavior?" Rather he is concerned to address the questions -- "how?", "how is social action accomplished?" He is concerned with

explicating the structural properties of actions, i. e. , the operative conditions that make social practices possible accomplishments.

Explanation, on Garfinkel's account, is inextricably tied to explication.

There are several tensions in Garfinkel's work which can usefully be pointed out. First, it may be noted that, in Garfinkel's view, ethnomethodology is itself an ongoing accomplishment of organized ("artful") practices. The question arises as to what status Garfinkel gives the knowledge claims of ethnomethodological interpretation. Garfinkel's views on this issue are ambiguous. There is a tension in his work between a tacit adherence to a naturalism and a position that has a "family resemblance" to the relativism of Dilthey, Winch (position one), and Schutz. On the one hand the "discoverables" of ethnomethodology are held to be naturally occurring properties, perhaps universally present, and "uncoverable" by the social analyst qua objective, theory-free, observer. On the other hand the properties revealed by ethnomethodologists are contended to be indexical particulars, which are held to be objective only within the "boundaries" of ethnomethodology;--itself to be understood as subsuming a particular mode of rationality, standards, and methods. This conception of ethnomethodological practice appears to approximate Winch's conception of a "form of life" or Schutz' conception of

a "finite province of meaning." There is an oscillation in Garfinkel's work between positivist and relativist claims. Neither position (let alone their respective problems) is addressed systematically. 118

The problems in Garfinkel's work can be illustrated by the following line of argument.* Obviously, Garfinkel recognizes that ethnomethodological practices of constructive analysis do not and cannot reproduce members' lived and embodied activities. The result of such investigations, he suggests, transcend the natural attitude to reveal it, but as reasoned discourses, are themselves to be seen as practical activities that embody their own rationality, standards, and particular methods. Therefore, the resources of ethnomethodology can themselves become a topic. Ethnomethodology can study itself and thereby reveal and explicate its own resources. What would such a study tell us?

*Garfinkel has published relatively little of his work. As a consequence certain ambiguities in his texts have rarely been clarified or followed up by later works. In a seminar series at Boston University Summer School (Boston, Mass., 1975), I asked him about the ambiguities pointed to above, and whether or not he thought these might have encouraged certain of the splits in the ethnomethodological "camp" (see note 104). Based on his answers, I think it is fair to ascribe the views below as views he has taken seriously and upheld. However, it must, of course, be noted that these views have not been addressed directly in publications and must, therefore, be given a tentative status. They might well not be views he would systematically defend.

In Garfinkel's view it would not only reveal interesting accounts of resources per se but would also uncover the basis of objectivity per se. In other words, an ethnomethodological study of ethnomethodology is claimed to uncover the methods of what constitutes scientific practice, i. e., practice commensurate with the production of objective knowledge. What is the status of these claims?

On the one hand Garfinkel does indeed seem to be claiming that ethnomethodology is but another "form of life" or "finite province of meaning." On this account the standards, criteria of rationality, criteria of objectivity, etc., of ethnomethodology are relative to its modus operandi and practical interests. If this is the position he is upholding then all that was said of Dilthey's, Winch's, and Schutz' relativism can be here repeated. But clearly this position is in tension with certain of the above passages. Garfinkel also seems to be making the absurd claim that the truth content of social science can be accounted for and justified by explicating the existing practice of a claimed form of social science.

It is important to note the compatibility of this claim with Garfinkel's account of the role of theory. If the central task of theory is to transcend the "natural attitude" by revealing it, i. e., by explicating it, then, theory is given no foundation for reflection independent of past and existing practices, which alone are considered legitimate,

authoritative, and justified. Theory lapses once more into a descriptivism and also, in Garfinkel's work, into a vicious circle. For in attempting to evaluate and assess the validity of ethnomethodology, he takes this very program for granted. This position is the reductio ad absurdum in the conflation of theory to practice. The moments of constitution and verification are wholly conflated. The problems of interpretation and assessing the rational validity of ideas are once more conflated--and once more unjustifiably conflated. As we have argued through the whole of Part 2 of this thesis, if theory is collapsed into practice, nothing can be said about the truth content or possible deception (ideology) expressed by the object of study. ¹¹⁹

The relationship of a social analyst to a fellow social analyst, or between social analysts and their subject/object, is also problematic in Garfinkel's work. The central notion of indexicality is not given sufficiently precise meaning. Frequently the term is used to imply that the meaning of meanings is tied to the social situation of their production. Utterances, it is often claimed, have universal contextual dependence. There is a danger of a logical regression involved in this conceptualization of indexical expressions. For if the study of social facts equals the study of indexical expressions and if (as is held) all expressions are indexical, then, whatever one says of social facts will itself be indexical, i. e., anything one says

about indexicality will itself be indexical.¹²⁰ The regression can easily be seen to imply a tacit threat to the basis of intersubjectivity. If all meanings can be understood only in the context of their production, then, the whole notion of the a priori of communication, public meanings, etc., becomes problematic. In a discussion of indexicality we assume an intersubjectively shared language. The discussion of language and meaning cannot be wholly centered, as it tends to be in Garfinkel's work, on indexicality. The whole concept is in need of clarification and the relationship between indexicality and ordinary language greatly specified. Without such a clarification and specification, the success of Garfinkel's formulation of the relationship between meaning and context, context and language, language and actors, will be in doubt.

Hermeneutics and the Idealization of Meaning:
The Gadamer-Habermas Debate

It should be noted that none of our remarks above were intended to suggest that the ethnomethodological program is unimportant or without a multiplicity of insights. (The same should be said, of course, about the programs of Winch and Schutz.) Rather the remarks made have been intended to show how the self-understanding of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological social science reproduces many of the problems we have raised throughout the whole of our discussion of hermeneutics.

In our discussion of Winch, Schutz, and Garfinkel, it was my hope to show how a social science based essentially on the hermeneutical tradition tends to collapse theory into practice, lapse into various forms of descriptivism and relativism, and loses the ability to recognize and assess the nature of ideological distortion and the truth content of traditions. The schools we have discussed have also failed to deal adequately with the relationship between the language of the social investigator and that of his or her subject/object of inquiry, and with the effects an interpretation might have on the self-understanding of both the interpreter and his or her subject/object.

The nature of these complex problematics and their discussion can be decisively advanced by a consideration of the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Habermas' response to it. But it should at the outset be appreciated that many of the issues we have raised do not find resolution in the works we have yet to consider. However, our investigations, as previously suggested, might serve to rule out certain approaches to the questions raised and perhaps even certain approaches to the generation of questions themselves.

* * * * *

The debate between Gadamer and Habermas is far too involved to be discussed fully in the context of this thesis.¹²¹ Instead, I will attempt to draw from the Gadamer/Habermas exchange that which most directly speaks to the themes we have developed thus far.

Gadamer, it can be argued, can be seen to begin his work from an implicit critique of Wittgenstein's (and Winch's) ahistorical account of language. For Gadamer, as McCarthy has pointed out,

. . . language and tradition are inextricably intertwined. Tradition is the medium in which language continues and develops. From this perspective the process of socialization into a language community, which provides Wittgenstein and Winch with their point of orientation, is regarded as a component of an ongoing process in which a tradition is preserved and developed.¹²²

As Winch of position two raises the problem of understanding two different language games, the problem appears, as many of Winch's critics have pointed out,¹²³ much like one of translation. Gadamer begins his work from this very view of the problem and takes as his starting point "the situation in which the interpreter and his subject have already mastered their respective languages."¹²⁴

The understanding of a language is itself not yet really Verstehen, but an accomplishment of life (Lebensvollzug). For one understands a language in that one lives in it . . . the hermeneutic problem is therefore not a problem of the correct mastery of a language. . . . Such mastery . . . is [rather] a precondition for understanding in dialogue.¹²⁵

For Gadamer the problematic of Verstehen is that of achieving understanding between persons who already have a grasp of their respective languages. The "paradigm" for the operation of Verstehen is the attempt at "mutual understanding in dialogue."

Verstehen, on Gadamer's account, is inextricably tied to the process of interpretation,

. . . with a linguistic articulation of the meaning grasped . . . the logic of Verstehen is the analysis of the nature of the interpretative process, that is, of the articulation in the interpreter's language of meanings constituted in another universe of discourse.¹²⁶

According to Gadamer the process of interpretation has both a hypothetical and circular dimension. The hermeneutician or social investigator makes an initial interpretation, from his or her framework of perspectives, of the meaning "as a whole" of, e. g., a text or social institution. With further reflection, research, and ingression of the material under study, the conjectured interpretation can be revised and developed.¹²⁷ The process is continuously one of understanding the parts in terms of a conjectured sense of the whole, and altering the latter in light of better knowledge of the former.

This hypothetico-circular process of understanding the parts in terms of a projected sense of the whole, and revising the latter in the light of a closer investigation of the parts, has as its goal the achieving of a unity of sense, that is, an interpretation of the whole in which our detailed knowledge of the parts can be integrated without violence.¹²⁸

Interpretations, Gadamer contends, can be tested in dialogue. The purpose of the dialogue is to recapture the meaning held by the object or experience for the subject, to reconstruct it within the given tradition taken as a whole. The scientist ventures an interpretation of the meaning of the object and the interpretation is tested in light of the response of his dialogic partner. This process is continued until an agreement, however tentative, is attained.

Furthermore, Gadamer argues, it is through such a dialogic interaction that the interpreter can become aware of the influence of his own perspectives, context, and tradition on his own interpretative understanding. What is required is an initial recognition of the possibility of subjective distortions, preconceptions from the interpreter's own cultural background, and an attempt to uncover them within the process of dialogic interaction.

This openness cannot be a question of the interpreter's ridding himself of all preconceptions and prejudgments. This is a logical impossibility--the idea of an interpreter without a language. All interpretative understanding is necessarily bound to preconceptions and prejudgments. The problem for interpretation is not simply the having of a structure of prejudices (Vorurteilsstruktur), but the unselfconscious imposition of this structure and the violence to an adequate understanding which this entails. . . . It is rather in the interpretative process itself that one's own structure of prejudices gradually becomes clearer. 129

In the process of reaching agreement, both parties enhance their own understanding and self-understanding through the uncovering of

preconceptions in relation to mutually shared meaning structures.

The process contributes to their respective Bildung.

For hermeneuticians, Gadamer contends, there are no standards of objectivity which can be recognized independently of the attainment of intersubjective agreement by the partners in the dialogic process. "The scientist's interpretation must be based on understanding held in common with his object/subject and expressed through the mutual satisfaction in practice of expectations on both sides."¹³⁰ Thus, the success of an interpretation can only be confirmed by continuing successful agreement on the level of both interpretation and practice.

The existentialistic-hermeneutic tradition,¹³¹ which is most prominently represented today in the work of Gadamer, accepts as its starting point--in contradistinction to the work of most of those whom we have discussed in this chapter to date--the necessary engagement of the scientist-interpreter in a social-historical context. The necessary historicity of all persons implies the singular inadequacy of any model of objectivity in the cultural sciences that places at its center the idea of "neutral," "detached," "scientific" observation, or reconstruction, "free" of subjective bias. Against this model of objectivity, the existentialistic-hermeneutic tradition appreciates and realizes that an interpretative understanding can only be established "through interaction between the interpreter and his object

in a mutually created socio-linguistic context."¹³² Such interaction, as we have seen, necessarily has implications for the present and future action of both parties. Each party enters the dialogic situation with a pre-given and established conceptual framework which informs and forms a pattern of present and future expectations. The pattern may well change as a result of the interaction, but the conceptual system and tradition which (in)forms it can never be completely overcome. As Wellmer put it,

Even though his preliminary attitude may change in the process of critical appreciation of traditions, or of the decoding of initially alien significant links, he [the scientist-interpreter] can neither entirely escape from the total context of tradition, . . . nor wholly free himself from the nexus by which this tradition relates to his own future. Consequently, his indications remain suggestions, which have to be proven not only in regard to the material already available, but in the future historical practice of human beings from which the thread of tradition continues and will continue to be formed. 133

The appreciation of the tradition-embeddedness of all interpretative interventions allows the existentialistic-hermeneutic tradition to overcome the tendencies of the hermeneutic tradition to reduce the role of theory to the explication of practice, to a purely descriptive approach, etc. It also opens up for discussion and systematic reflection the dimension of history. The texts, experiences, actions, or institutions to be understood can only be interpreted in light of the history of the tradition and social context in which they are created,

sustained, and changed. Likewise, the interpreter is made aware of the tradition and history of which he is a part. "The attempt to penetrate another structure of meanings, norms, and action expectations forces him to become more aware of his habitualized and unreflective acceptance of his own tradition and thus he becomes more aware of the history of his self-formative process."¹³⁴

It is of central importance to note that once an historical dimension is established, it becomes possible to transcend in interpretative analysis the surface level of linguistic meaning.

The historical development of a tradition is the medium in which meaning is created and transmitted through time. All the actions and expressions of a person can be understood as meaningful only within the context of this history. But if it is true that a tradition itself lends meaning and significance to actions and expressions, then it is possible to conceive of the object of interpretation as having a meaning beyond or in conflict with that subjectively intended by the actor.¹³⁵

Therefore, in an interpretative analysis of a given object in the context of its embeddedness in a tradition, it becomes possible for the scientist-interpreter to become aware of and uncover a discrepancy between manifest and intended meaning. Such a discrepancy can become apparent to the analyst even in cases where the actor was not, or is not yet, aware of it. Gadamer has expressed this point forcefully.

I maintain that the hermeneutical problem is universal and basic for all interhuman experience, both of history and of the present moment, precisely because of the fact that meaning can be experienced even where it is not actually intended. 136

Habermas is in accord with Gadamer's account of hermeneutics to this point. Their positions diverge, however, over an assessment of the implications of this possible discrepancy between experienced/manifested meaning, and intended meaning. One of their major differences becomes apparent in their debate and discussion about how to analyze, understand, explain, and overcome this discrepancy.

An important further divergence in their positions occurs over disagreements about the nature of the context dependency of hermeneutics. Habermas agrees with Gadamer's characterization of the basic structural features of communicative interaction and interpretative understanding. He agrees that interpretative understanding attained through a communicative interchange is always context dependent, i. e., that an interpretation presupposes an ongoing tradition (language, conventions, etc.), the terms of which the scientist-interpreter can never fully escape in his efforts to pierce another tradition. Thus Habermas argues that when someone of one tradition is interpreting a subject/object of another, the understanding achieved must be made intelligible within the terms of reference and traditions of both parties. This practice and process of merging traditions in

order to achieve a counderstanding, becomes in hermeneutics "the self-conscious . . . transmission and mediation of traditions" (Traditionsvermittlung).¹³⁷

Habermas, in another point of agreement with Gadamer, writes that within a given tradition, a hermeneutical procedure is needed when there is a breakdown of an action expectation, when an individual expression or action appears to deviate from the meaning structures of the tradition. Given such a situation, the deviant action can only be retrieved and thereby understood if there exists as a pre-condition a background tradition shared by both the interpreter and his subject/object.

When a disturbance occurs in a communicative experience that is reliable according to common schemata of world-interpretation and of action, the interpretation that must be made immediately is directed simultaneously at the experiences acquired in a world constituted through ordinary language and at the very grammatical rules that constitute this world. Such interpretation is linguistic analysis and experience at once. Correspondingly, it corrects its hermeneutic anticipatory interpretation against a consensus among partners, which is arrived at in accordance with grammatical rules.¹³⁸

However, how we are to conceive this background tradition--the consensus amongst partners--that serves as the context and pre-condition for interpretative understanding, raises further complex issues.

To recognize the context dependency of the hermeneutic project

is at one and the same time to recognize the need to begin a hermeneutical procedure from a preunderstanding flowing from a (learned and shared) background tradition which grounds the consensual basis for dialogue. Gadamer expressed this recognition when he wrote, "Is the phenomenon of understanding adequately defined when I say: Understanding means avoiding misunderstanding? Isn't there rather in truth something like a 'supporting consensus' which is prior to all understanding?"¹³⁹ Gadamer answers his own question by arguing that there is, of course, such a prior underlying consensus. On this point Habermas also agrees. However, it is in debate about the nature of such a consensus that they express their second major difference. "We [Habermas and Gadamer] agree on the affirmative answer to this question, but we disagree on how one is to determine this prior consensus."¹⁴⁰

Thus there are two major points of disagreement between Gadamer and Habermas. They disagree about how to analyze and understand

1. the discrepancy between experienced/manifested meaning and intended meaning and
2. the underlying supporting consensus of tradition.

Within the debate these two points are merged into a discussion around the question of the nature of the authority of tradition. The discussion is of central importance not only in the debate between

Gadamer and Habermas but also for the themes of this thesis. For it brings to a head the central questions of this chapter (and thesis) to date. Is the tradition ("form of life," "finite province of meaning") to be accepted as the ultimate authority which cannot be superseded and which must be the final arbiter in all cases of disagreement? Or is there a critical perspective from which to question the claims of tradition? Can we assess the criteria of rationality of a tradition by grounding a conception of the rationality of criteria? Can we avoid the lapse of the role of theory and hermeneutics into a descriptivism and relativism by developing a defensible conception of categories, e. g., ideology, which are not internal and available to a given society, but which can be used as a justified basis to assess the truth content of a tradition? Can we ground a critically reflexive understanding of traditions?

For Gadamer, in the last analysis, there is no justified ground for criticizing a tradition outside its terms of reference. On Gadamer's account, the fact that interpretation always starts from the basis of a supporting consensus formed in an ongoing tradition means that there is no position, external to the tradition, from which to criticize it. ¹⁴¹

Any attempt to abstractly suspect this certainly contingent consensus of being false consciousness is meaningless since we cannot transcend the discussion in which we are engaged. From this Gadamer deduces

the ontological priority of linguistic tradition before all possible critique: at any given time we can thus carry on critique only of individual traditions, inasmuch as we ourselves belong to the comprehensive tradition-context of a language.¹⁴²

Gadamer argues that the underlying consensus of cultural contexts must be treated as a genuine and legitimate agreement since "there is no way to step outside it, no standard from which to consider it otherwise, no language available which can crawl out of its own skin and allow us to see how reality is constituted within its concepts and rules."¹⁴³ This implies that when a discrepancy is uncovered between intended and expressed/manifested meaning, the intended meaning must be interpreted within the given conceptual system of the ongoing tradition. The interpreter cannot escape the authenticity and authority of the standards set by the tradition. The traditions supporting consensus provide the standards from which the manifested meaning must be understood. From Gadamer's point of view, all theoretical and practical questions only admit of truth within the contexts of traditions wherein there is consensus.¹⁴⁴

Habermas' response to Gadamer begins with the contention that Gadamer's work establishes ". . . a false ontological self-understanding of hermeneutics."¹⁴⁵ Habermas argues that through systematic reflection on the Enlightenment's concept of reason and rational discourse, a basis can be uncovered to critically reject the

universalistic and ontological claims of hermeneutics.¹⁴⁶ Central to the consciousness of the Enlightenment, he argues, was the awareness of the possibility of repression and coercion, i.e., systematic distortion, within a tradition. The Enlightenment's ideal of reason was opposed to the legitimation of such a tradition. Their ideal of reason was an ideal of critical reason. A tradition was not to be legitimated other than through the process of noncoercive rational consensus.

Consequently, the Enlightenment principle of reason can be interpreted as the demand for the abrogation of all repressive conditions that could claim no legitimacy other than their sheer existence; reason not as a counter-concept to authority, but as the principle of voluntary communication in contrast to experienced actuality of a process of communication distorted by violence.¹⁴⁷

In his discussion of Gadamer's work, Wellmer, a close associate of Habermas, points out that for Gadamer, the Enlightenment is but another tradition. To Gadamer it is a tradition like all traditions, that is, trapped within its own presuppositions. Wellmer argues that from Gadamer's hermeneutical point of view, the Enlightenment can be seen as an attack on the structure of prejudices of the ecclesiastical tradition.¹⁴⁸ But the attack itself is an attack that is mounted on a structure of its own prejudices, namely, that of a dogmatic belief in reason.

Gadamer uses the case of Spinoza to show how, in place of the dogmatic principles of exegesis laid down by ecclesiastical tradition, the belief in reason itself becomes the dogmatic foundation of Biblical exegesis. In fact this belief in reason shows itself to be dogmatic from the viewpoint of hermeneutical criticism: subjective reason augments its force from that very context of tradition which it opposes abstractly in an "anti-authoritarian guise."¹⁴⁹

Within the existentialistic-hermeneutic school, the Enlightenment ideal of reason is not held to provide a foundation to transcend tradition and thereby the ultimate relativism inherent in hermeneutics. "If one cannot escape a situation of context dependency, one cannot ultimately ground reason as the final arbiter and authority."¹⁵⁰ To believe that reason can be such an arbiter is, in Gadamer's view, a dogma of the history of our own tradition. The belief in reason is but another normative orientation, a standard of our tradition.

Habermas takes issue with this hermeneutical position by challenging as dogmatic its uncritical acceptance of the underlying consensus of tradition. For Habermas and his school of Critical theory.

Every consensus, in which the understanding of meaning terminates, stands fundamentally under suspicion of being pseudo-communicatively induced: . . . Thus the prejudgmental structure of the understanding of meaning does not guarantee identification of an achieved consensus with a true one.¹⁵¹

Habermas tries to salvage from the Enlightenment's dogmatic belief in reason an essential principle of rational dialogue. Furthermore,

Habermas maintains that he can explicate, defend, and ground, i.e., ultimately justify, this principle.¹⁵²

In Habermas' view, this grounding requires a "depth hermeneutics" which recovers the underlying history of the tradition's consensus in such a way as to reveal sources of domination and distortion; sources which by their very nature remain concealed from a surface understanding of tradition. Such a "depth hermeneutics" requires, in turn, a nondogmatic, nonmetaphysical grounding of reason from which it can advance a critical standard. The concepts of a "depth hermeneutics" and a Critical theory of society cannot be developed at this point. They will, however, be systematically discussed in the chapters that follow. At this point it is important to note the core of Habermas' disagreements with Gadamer.

Gadamerian hermeneutics is criticized, as Wellmer put it, for forgetting what the Enlightenment knew, "that the 'dialogue' which (according to Gadamer) we 'are' is also a relationship of coercion and, for this very reason, no dialogue at all."¹⁵³ Gadamer fails, Habermas argues, to see the fundamental "opposition between authority and reason."¹⁵⁴ Habermas contrasts his critical standpoint toward authority, which he considers (in agreement with Weber) legitimized force, with Gadamer's dogmatic acceptance of the authority of tradition as it has historically developed.

Reason in the sense of the principle of rational discourse is the rock on which hitherto factual authorities are smashed rather than the rock on which they are founded. 155

Wellmer develops Habermas' line of criticism by charging hermeneutics with being a form of idealism.

According to Habermas, the idealism of the hermetic position consists in the fact that it itself is the expression of an inadmissible idealization, namely the idealization that the linguistic organization of social relations and of the motivational base of social interaction has attained a state of "perfection." 156

This idealization operates on two fundamental levels. 157 The first level of idealization concerns the fact of hermeneutics' failure to take account of systematically excluded meanings which, according to Habermas, have to be allowed as a possibility which would lead to the inhibition of communication. The result of such inhibition (e. g., in the case of neurosis or ideology), render some persons incapable of filling in certain gaps of meaning in their linguistic field (e. g., the expression of their true feelings, motivations, and interests). These gaps remain incomprehensible if not totally unrecognizable from a strictly surface, hermeneutical point of view. The second level is the already discussed refusal of hermeneutics to recognize the possibility of a deceptive consensus underlying tradition. "A consensus within a tradition which embodies social and linguistic inhibitions and pressures in regard to access to meaningful

communicative and action patterns," cannot be considered "a genuine consensus based on free consent, and therefore it cannot be legitimately utilized to justify norms and true beliefs."¹⁵⁸

In sum, then, the critique of existentialistic-hermeneutics as being a form of idealism, is that it refuses to accept the possibility of ideological distortion as a historical reality within various socio-historical traditions. As with the objectivistic-hermeneutic tradition of Dilthey before it, and with the interpretative sociology of Winch, Schutz, and Garfinkel contemporary to it, the existentialistic-hermeneutic tradition claims to be unable to transcend the parameters of its socio-historical and linguistic situation and tradition. It accepts the meaning structures in which it finds itself as a given and ontologizes these structures as the limits of understanding, communication, and science. This tradition of hermeneutics (also) does not recognize the possibility of a critical perspective. Nor does it accept the need to critically question the legitimacy of authority.

If we are to develop the criticisms above into a viable approach to social theory and science, it is of central importance to go beyond a perspective limited by the epistemological and philosophical pre-suppositions of hermeneutics. For Habermas, as we have noted, it is important to do this by developing and grounding an approach that can be a critique of ideology. Such an approach has been continually

recommended throughout this thesis as a possible and plausible approach to overcome many of the problems we have encountered in the discussion of theory and practice in the works of Max Weber and certain neo-Kantians, and in the works of certain positivists and hermeneuticians. The question, therefore, arises as to whether or not a critique of ideology or critical approach to society is a viable alternative approach.

A critique of ideology is concerned to uncover

. . . what lies behind the consensus, presented as a fact, that supports the dominant tradition of the time, and does so with a view to the relations of power surreptitiously incorporated in the symbolic structures of the systems of speech and action. 159

In contradistinction to the works of the "schools" that we discussed to date, a critique of ideology is concerned to place at its center the distinctions between

- systematically distorted communication and undistorted communication;
- false consciousness and true consciousness;
- the authenticity of traditions and the authority of tradition;
- the authority of tradition and the truth content of tradition;
- understanding and critical understanding.

In order to avoid the loss of a critical perspective, a critique of ideology is also concerned to overcome the oft-claimed dualism

between science and criticism.

It should be noted that an adequate critique of ideology requires certain crucial theoretical developments. It must provide a theoretical foundation which can be used to give a reconstruction of the natural-historical development of ideological structures of communication and action. It must be able to support and defend its pretensions to a critical perspective by grounding its choice of ultimate theoretical principles and methodological procedure. Thus, we are led to Part 3 of this thesis and the problematic of grounding critical theory and various Marxist attempts to fulfill such a demand.

NOTES

¹ See pp. 147-48 for relevant references.

² Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, chaps. 7 and 8.

³ The following texts are those that we will systematically address: Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy; Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," in Rationality, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), pp. 78-112; Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World; Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology. Each of these texts has had a significant influence on the formulation of the problematic of social sciences in the last two decades. To the extent that these works share a rejection of positivism they have a certain unity. But their respective programs for the social sciences can only be conflated at the cost of misunderstanding.

⁴ In Knowledge and Human Interests, Habermas distinguishes between "objectify" and "objectivate." As the translator, Jeremy J. Shapiro, explains:

"To objectify (vergegenständlichen) means to make into an object of instrumental action or of natural science separate from and external to the subject-- in other words, to constitute in the Kantian sense. To objectivate (chiefly objektivieren) means to give form in a symbolic system, that is, to make into a vehicle of communicative action. The latter may become external to the subject in the sense that others can participate in it, but it is at the same time that in which the subject exists" (see translator's note, p. 323, fn. 23).

⁵ For a general introduction to hermeneutics, cf. Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, pp. 211-32. Cf. also Richard Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969). For a discussion of a hermeneutical approach that is more in the context of Anglo-American philosophy and social science, see Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and

the Sciences of Man," Review of Metaphysics (September 1971), pp. 3-51.

⁶ Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, "On the Special Character of the Human Sciences," in Verstehen: Subjective Understanding in the Social Sciences, ed. Marcello Truzzi (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 8-18. For a useful discussion of Dilthey's initial views and their developments, cf. Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," pp. 115-20, 141-52. Cf. also H. P. Rickman's Introduction to Dilthey's Pattern and Meaning in History: Thoughts on History and Society, ed. H. P. Rickman (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

⁷ Cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 1, ed B. Groethuysen (Leipzig: Verlag von B.G. Teubner, 1922).

⁸ Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," p. 119.

⁹ Cf. pp. 121-22.

¹⁰ Nagel, "The Subjective Nature of Social Subject Matter," in Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences, ed. Brodbeck, p. 44. For Theodor Abel's formulation of Verstehen, cf. his "The Operation Called Verstehen," in Verstehen: Subjective Understanding in the Social Sciences, ed. Truzzi, pp. 40-56.

¹¹ Nagel, "The Subjective Nature of Social Subject Matter," in Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences, ed. Brodbeck, pp. 34-44.

¹² Ibid., p. 42.

¹³ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 148.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁶ Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, p. 132ff., quoted in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 155.

¹⁷ Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, p. 132 ff, quoted in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 155.

- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 163.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 162.
- ²⁰ This claim is discussed at greater length; viz., Garfinkel's work. Cf. pp. 280-88.
- ²¹ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 171.
- ²² Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," Chap. 3, p. 11.
- ²³ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 172.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 173 and quoting Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, p. 136.
- ²⁷ Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, p. 207, quoted in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 173-74.
- ²⁸ Cf. Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," p. 151; Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 180 ff.
- ²⁹ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 183.
- ³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 182 ff.
- ³¹ Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, p. 223.
- ³² Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 15.
- ³³ Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, p. 223.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 224-25.
- ³⁵ Cf. Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, pp. 34, 40-42, 52 ff., 100 ff.
- ³⁶ Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p. 226, quoted in Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, p. 40.

³⁷Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, p. 52.

³⁸Ibid., p. 31.

³⁹Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 41.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 67 (my emphasis).

⁴²Ibid., p. 87.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁵Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 91-94.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 93-94.

⁴⁷Winch also rejects the possibility of causal explanation with reference to motives. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 81-83. However, this argument is very obscure in the text.

⁴⁸Thomas McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," Theory and Decision 3 (1973): 356-57.

⁴⁹Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," in Rationality, ed. Ryan, p. 107.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 108.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 111 (my emphasis).

⁵²Cf. pp. 250-51.

⁵³These were outlined on p. 204.

⁵⁴Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, p. 102.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁶Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," in Rationality, ed. Ryan, p. 89.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

⁵⁸ McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," p. 360. Cf. Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," in Rationality, ed. Ryan, pp. 98-101.

⁵⁹ This dialectical process appears to be founded on the process of making analogies between different forms of life. Cf. Winch's discussion of the relationship between Christian prayer and magic and his discussion of the "limiting notions," in "Understanding a Primitive Society," in Rationality, ed. Ryan.

⁶⁰ McCarthy has attempted to elucidate this notion in Winch's work by comparing it with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Cf. his "On Misunderstanding Understanding."

⁶¹ I owe this point to Anthony Giddens (lecture, August 1975).

⁶² Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," and "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, pp. 15-33, 171-89, respectively. Also see I. C. Jarvie, "Understanding and Explanation in Sociology and Social Anthropology," in Explanation in the Behavioural Sciences, ed. R. Borger and F. Cioffi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

⁶³ For an introduction to Deviance sociology and relevant references, cf. Cohen, ed., Images of Deviance.

⁶⁴ MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, pp. 25-32; Habermas, Legitimation Crises, chaps. 1, 2, 3; McCarthy, "The Problem of Rationality in Social Anthropology," in Stony Brook Studies in Philosophy (Long Island, N. Y.: Department of Philosophy, Stony Brook University), mimeographed.

⁶⁵ MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, p. 22.

⁶⁶ Cf. pp. 214-15.

⁶⁷ MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁸For a useful introduction to this problematic, cf. Lukes, "Some Problems about Rationality," in Rationality, ed. Wilson, pp. 194-214.

⁶⁹MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in The Philosophy of Social Explanation, ed. Ryan, p. 21.

⁷⁰Cf. Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), chap. 11

⁷¹Cf. Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, pp. 89-90.

⁷²Cf. references in note 62; Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, pp. 26-31; Habermas, Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 124 ff.

⁷³Cf. Alfred Schutz, "Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality," in Collected Papers, 3 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 135-58.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Alfred Schutz, "Commonsense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action," in Philosophy of the Social Sciences, ed. Maurice Natanson (New York: 1963), p. 304.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 305.

⁷⁸For a fuller account of Schutz' understanding of the notion of Lebenswelt, cf. his "Phenomenology and the Social Sciences," Collected Papers, vol. 1, pp. 118-39.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 133.

⁸⁰Alfred Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. and with an Introduction by Dorothy Emmet and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), p. 12.

⁸¹Schutz, "Phenomenology and the Social Sciences," p. 133.

⁸²George Walsh, from his Introduction to Schutz, Phenomenology of the Social World, p. xix.

⁸³ Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, pp. 45-53.

⁸⁴ Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. by Emmet and MacIntyre, pp. 11-12.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Cf. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, pp. 239-49.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 223.

⁸⁹ Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. by Emmet and MacIntyre, p. 15.

⁹⁰ Cf., for a summary, *ibid.* For Schutz' major statement on the social science, see his The Phenomenology of the Social World.

⁹¹ Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. by Emmet and MacIntyre, p. 16 (my emphasis).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ We have said very little about the role of types and the process of typification in Schutz' program. This is a very complex topic that is deserving of close consideration. However, its discussion would take us beyond the immediate scope of this chapter. Cf. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, chaps. 4, 5.

⁹⁵ Cf. p. 285.

⁹⁶ Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. by Emmet and MacIntyre, p. 16.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁹⁸ It can be noted that as Winch's account of explanation could be argued to square with the three desirable properties that Friedman suggested, a theory of explanation should have, so Schutz might contend that his theory of explanation is:

- a. sufficiently general to be compatible with the multitude of types of actions that constitute social realities (the general cases of social theory);
- b. objective in that accounts of social action have to adhere to the postulates' logical consistency and adequacy (the latter implying adequacy at the level of meaning and causation--cf. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, pp. 230-36);
- c. demonstrably connected with understanding. We understand action when we can explain it in terms of underlying motives and goals. The motivation-context of action is held to approximate the meaning-context. We understand, in Schutz' view, when we can demonstrate not only that certain motives could have brought about a certain action, but also that they probably did so. (Presumably Schutz--in a position which might be similar to that taken by Winch in position one--could account for his own theory of social explanation by seeing it as another "finite province" of action and meaning governed by its own rationality and motivation, e. g., an interest in systematic knowledge.)

⁹⁹ Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," in Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, ed. Emmet and MacIntyre, p. 17 (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 11 (my emphasis).

¹⁰¹ Emmet and MacIntyre, eds., Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis, p. xiv.

¹⁰² Cf. pp. 262-67, 277-79.

¹⁰³ This point was originally made on pp. 277-80.

¹⁰⁴ Ethnomethodology is itself a "school" with many divisions and alternative research programs. For example, from Garfinkel's foundational work the "school," it can be argued, has subdivided into three quite distinct and different research programs. There is the work of:

1. Peter McHugh and Alan Blum, who are concerned with the problematic of the hermeneutic circle, multiple readings of texts, and social meanings of all kinds. Cf. Peter McHugh et al., On the Beginning of Social Inquiry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974). Their work, in my view, entangles them with all the problems of radical relativism. They can be thought of, as Anthony Giddens put it (during a lecture series at the University of Boston, August 1975), as the "idealist-wing" of Ethnomethodology;

2. Jack Douglas and Aaron Cicourel, who are concerned with the "glossing practices" of "conventional sociology." In their view if the sociologist is to avoid imposing--by fiat--on the social world, he or she must direct attention to explicating members' indexical meanings and thereby "discover the world as it is." These authors are engaged in the attempt to "reconstruct" the foundation of conventional, orthodox sociology. They can be thought of as the "reconstructionists"; cf., for example, Jack Douglas, The Social Meanings of Suicide (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

3. Harvey Sacks and Emmanuel Schegloff, whose concerns are closest to the original work of Garfinkel. They are "conversational analysts" concerned to abstract and explicate "formal properties" of "talk." Cf., for example, their contributions to Roy Turner, ed., Ethnomethodology (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1974).

There are, I would contend, positivist strains in the work of both the "reconstructionists" and "conversational analysts." The former seem to be seeking a basis for "theory-free" observation, and the latter appear to be increasingly committed to a form of naturalism. (I owe this observation to Giddens's lecture series.)

¹⁰⁵ I shall note below a number of remarks and arguments Garfinkel made at a series of lectures at the Summer School of the Sociology Department, Boston University, July 1975.

¹⁰⁶ "The Ethnomethodological Programme in Contemporary Sociology," The Human Context, vol. 6, no. 1 (1974), p. 103.

¹⁰⁷ Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, p. 33.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel, "Indexical Expressions," Mind, no. 63 (1954).

¹¹⁰ Coulter, "The Ethnomethodological Programme," pp. 105-6.

¹¹¹ Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, p. 32, quoted in Coulter, "The Ethnomethodological Programme," p. 106.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 105-6.

¹¹³ The definitions of Garfinkel's key terms are drawn from his Studies in Ethnomethodology, especially chaps. 1, 3, and 8. Much of Garfinkel's work is extremely obscure. I have benefitted enormously from conversations with Jeff and Lena Coulter, who have helped clarify a number of points in this exegesis.

¹¹⁴ Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, p. 32.

¹¹⁵ Coulter, "The Ethnomethodological Programme, p. 106.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 104, for an excellent account of the respective arguments.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 106.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, pp. 1-33, for examples of these ambiguities.

¹¹⁹ Cf. pp. 262-68, 274-78, 288-97.

¹²⁰ I owe this point to Anthony Giddens who made it at one of a series of lectures at Boston University Summer School, Department of Sociology, Boston, Mass., August 1975.

¹²¹ Cf. Hans-George Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection," trans. by G. B. Hess and R. E. Palmer, Continuum, vol. 8, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring, Summer 1970), pp. 77-95. Jürgen Habermas, "Summation and Response," Continuum, vol. 8, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring, Summer 1970), pp. 123-33.

¹²² McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," p. 361.

¹²³ Cf. *ibid.* Also see Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice, chap. 11.

¹²⁴ McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," p. 362.

- ¹²⁵ Hans-George Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1965), p. 362, quoted in McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," p. 362.
- ¹²⁶ McCarthy, "On Misunderstanding Understanding," p. 362.
- ¹²⁷ Ibid.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid.
- ¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 363-64.
- ¹³⁰ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 17.
- ¹³¹ The name for this school is taken from Radnitzky's discussion of hermeneutics in "Contemporary Schools of Metascience," pp. 222 ff. This school of hermeneutics which developed out of the work of Heidegger and Ricoeur as well as Gadamer is discussed in relation to Habermas in Frederick Lawrence, "Dialectic and Hermeneutic," in Stony Brook Studies in Philosophy, pp. 37-59. Lawrence calls the Gadamer school the phenomenological trajectory as opposed to the Cartesian trajectory represented by Dilthey. (p. 51).
- ¹³² Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 18.
- ¹³³ Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, p. 33.
- ¹³⁴ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 19.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid.
- ¹³⁶ Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflections," p. 87.
- ¹³⁷ Radnitsky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, p. 214.
- ¹³⁸ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 193-94.
- ¹³⁹ Gadamer, "Die Universalität des Hermeneutischen Problems," in Kleine Schriften, as quoted in Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 124.
- ¹⁴⁰ Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 124.

¹⁴¹ For a full account of Gadamer's position, see his Wahrheit und Methode. Also see Palmer, Hermeneutics.

¹⁴² Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 125.

¹⁴³ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ For a view that parallels that of Gadamer, see Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man."

¹⁴⁵ Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 127.

¹⁴⁶ Habermas' argument is enormously complex. It extends to a conception of the necessity to view the Enlightenment's thinkers and work within the context of a theory of evolution and progress. The arguments for this position will be discussed in chap. 12.

¹⁴⁷ Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, pp. 46-47.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-51.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 44.

¹⁵⁰ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 24.

¹⁵¹ Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 125.

¹⁵² The problematic of grounding is defined at greater length in the Introduction of the following chapter.

¹⁵³ Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, p. 47.

¹⁵⁴ Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 127.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 92.

¹⁵⁷ These two points are taken from Wellmer, *ibid.* p. 93.

¹⁵⁸ Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 3, p. 28.

¹⁵⁹ Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 12.

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

by

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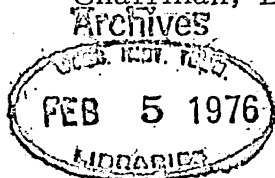
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PART III

ON THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER VI

ON THE REFORMULATION OF THE NOTION OF THEORETICAL TRUTH IN LUKÁCS, HORKHEIMER, AND MARCUSE

Introduction: The Problem of Grounding in Critical Theory

We have seen that central to the works of Max Weber and the neo-Kantians, positivists, and the early school of hermeneutics, neo-Kantians, positivists and the early school of hermeneuticians, are certain claimed dualisms between fact and value, subject and object, description and evaluation, science and criticism, and theory and practice. We have also seen that a claimed dualism between science and criticism pervades the whole of the hermeneutic tradition. However, where many of these writers have upheld a dualism and discontinuity, e.g., between fact and value, we have frequently found that this claim masks unexplicated presuppositions and a commitment to certain definite relationships of continuity. We have also often criticized the epistemological positions of these writers for closing off certain approaches to social inquiry; particularly, we have criticized them for ruling out of consideration a critical approach. We have argued and stressed the necessity for social theory to be able to place at its center the distinctions between:

---standards and criteria of rationality that are internal to traditions, and those by which they may be judged;

--the authenticity of tradition, and authority of tradition;

---the authority of tradition, and the truth content of tradition;

---ideology and distorted communication, and genuine self-understanding and undistorted communication.

In criticizing the epistemological positions of those whom we have discussed, we have as a consequence challenged their theories of objectivity and truth. It becomes crucial, therefore, if we are to develop a more adequate epistemological and methodological framework to reconceptualize the notion of objectivity and truth. If we reject the accounts of objectivity, etc., these authors have maintained, and if we are to avoid the fall of theory and science into a position of skepticism and/or relativism and/or solipsism, then the question and problematic as it has been developed thus far becomes one of grounding, rationally justifying, one's choice of ultimate theoretical principles and methodological procedure.

Certain authors in the Marxist and Critical tradition have sought, with various degrees of rigor, to address this problematic. It can be argued that for these authors, the problematic of grounding finds its source, origin, and impetus for discussion in practice and in theory.

The motivation to discuss the question of grounding partially arises and derives its force from the course of 20th-century history and political practice. For these decades have seen the degeneration of the Russian Revolution into Stalinism, the critique of political economy into Diamat with its ideological mystification and justification of centralized party politics, technocratic social management and worse. Likewise the (to date) failure of revolution in the West; the absence of mass revolutionary class consciousness -- have all been events that have added to the impetus to reexamine the relationship between theory and practice in certain Marxist circles.

But the problem of grounding as a theoretical problem transcends, of course, 20th-century history and finds its roots deeply implanted in the history of philosophy. The questions for our purposes and for Critical Theory, are, however, most succinctly raised by Marx, although not followed through by him.

In Marx's work the relationship between

theory and practice,
truth and ideology,
true consciousness and false consciousness

is raised. Marx it seems had two views on these relationships, one relatively "simple," which I will call the instrumentalist view, and one more complex. We say "seems" because often certain passages in Marx's work have been read (by Marxists and :

non-Marxists alike) as sustaining the "simple," instrumentalist view. However, it should be recognized that many of these passages (e.g., the famous "Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy") can be read--when suitable account is taken of Marx's use of Hegelian terminology--to be in contradistinction to an instrumentalist position.¹

In order to avoid detailed exegetical questions we do not need to make the claim here that Marx was ambiguous between these two positions, although there are writers who have argued this claim at some length.² The claim here is that both within and without the Marxist tradition, Marx has often been ascribed one or both of these views and that their differences provide the basis for raising the problem of grounding as a theoretical problem.

The first "simple" and more "vulgar" position is that which relates all thought/superstructure instrumentally to (Marx's posited) substructure. All knowledge on this account is bound to class position's; not in the sense that "reason appears distorted by the interests of power,"³ but because all theory is a mode of social practice, and all practice is class bound.⁴ In orthodox Marxism, for example, this is expressed as "bourgeois ideology is the thought of the ruling class." It is the substance of a "superstructure which ensures domination."⁵

In the second, and for our purposes more important, position ideology is a package of ideas and norms which passes for an accurate description of social reality but is, in fact, a false-consciousness. Here the concept of ideology implies the dissolution of false-consciousness as an emancipatory process mediated by communication and reflection. Contrary to the first position in which all truth claims are class relative, the second position maintains that truth claims can be rationally adjudicated independent of class interests. This second position comes also as an implicit critique of the first position for conflating the processes of constitution and verification, for reducing theory to practice and thereby obliterating any basis for an independent moment of criticism. The second position, however, raises the complicated question of how we can conceive of appropriate and valid theory, true consciousness and, more generally for certain contemporary critical theorists, theoretical truth. This is the problem of grounding.

This second position has been developed differently by, amongst others, George Lukács, the Frankfurt School, and Jürgen Habermas. It is to their work, and elevation of these issues, that we now turn. In this part of the thesis I will examine the work of Lukács and the Frankfurt theorists. Of the latter I intend to address essentially the works of Horkheimer and Marcuse.⁶ (I shall further briefly

indicate how some other contemporary Marxist figures have reflected on, and attempted to come to terms with, the questions raised.) It should, of course, be noted that this discussion of these three authors is not claimed, in any way, to be a detailed or sufficient discussion of their work. I simply hope to draw from their studies their responses to the topic at hand.

* * * * *

Two objections, however, might be made to pursuing the problem of grounding in the work of the Frankfurt School and Lukács. First, it might be argued that the Frankfurt theorists, even if they raised these issues, were not primarily concerned with the questions of grounding in the form the problematic has been raised here. It has been suggested by James Schmidt, for example, that a "key discussion in Horkheimer's 'Traditional and Critical Theory' defines critical theory as 'in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgement' based on Marx's notion of the general course of the commodity economy."⁷ Commenting on these passages, he says: "What is significant here is that the truths to be extracted from this expansion are primarily negations: unfolding of the judgement does not establish the truth of the existential judgement as a predictive

theory, but rather serves as a means of indicating the one-sidedness of the other social theories which claim to have accounted for reality."⁸ Even if this is so, it can be contended that the issues we raise are implicitly addressed. For the early theoretical formulations of Horkheimer and Marcuse assume Marx's critique of political economy as the center of their theory. The "general course" of the commodity economy is taken as unproblematic and as an adequate account of the concrete totality from which all other views can be regarded as "one-sided." An historical account of this assumed position might well be offered and it is, of course, true that Horkheimer and Marcuse were essentially concerned with extending Marx's critique to other areas of human endeavor. But these works and remarks nevertheless indicate a peculiar ambivalence between a dogmatic certitude and a hypothetical openness of an unconcluded, incomplete, negative dialectic.⁹ The ambiguity does not dissolve the problems; answers to the questions of the adequacy of Marx's conceptualization of the concrete totality and the basis on which we justify our conclusions cannot be simply assumed.¹⁰ We shall return to Horkheimer's and Marcuse's approach to these themes in a moment.

Secondly, it might be objected and argued that even if the Frankfurt School raised various questions around the themes of "reason," "truth," "freedom," the fact that they did not pursue

them is of significance in itself and speaks to the incapacity to reformulate the relationship between theory and practice, truth and goodness, etc., in theory. Such an argument could take a variety of forms, but it (surely) reaches its highest development in Lukács' History and Class Consciousness.¹¹ (However, as we shall see, even this argument has inevitably its own theoretical presuppositions.)

It might be held that bourgeois science was and is unworthy of lengthy consideration because the antinomic expressions of its thinking can only be overcome practically; theoretical disputes with bourgeois science could be maintained only as a form of the class struggle. The "structure of the historical process," it might be argued, is decisive against the "methodological self-restriction" of bourgeois thought in all its manifestations. On this view, which reaches its high water mark in Lukács, modern science is criticized for three reasons. Arato has summarized these as "(1) loss of totality; (2) loss of ontological (historical) substratum; (3) freezing of the given."¹²

All of modern science is dominated by specialization and organizationally, by forms of increasingly bureaucratic administration. On the level of scientific content, the sciences are first characterized by their fragmentation of reality, and consequently by their loss of totality, and their "ontological substratum": the more intricate a modern science becomes and the better it understands itself methodologically, the more resolutely it will turn its back on the ontological problems of its own sphere of influence . . . the

more it will become a formally closed system of partial laws. It will find that its own concrete underlying reality lies, methodologically and in principle beyond its grasp. Second, the sciences are characterized by their freezing of immediate factuality of the given because the dynamic of reality is visible only from the point of view of totality.¹³

Likewise, the cultural and historical sciences disregard what is central for Lukács; the historical dialectic of their contents and forms. In the famous "Reification" chapter Lukács argues that the efforts of the bourgeoisie to confront the problem of reification reach class limits.¹⁴ The methodological project of German classical philosophy cannot be fulfilled within philosophy. The overcoming of the problem of reification is a social project, which can only be continued outside philosophy. "The continuation and concretization of 'the dialectical method as the true historical method was reserved for a class which was able to discover within itself on the basis of its life experience (Lebensgrund) the identical subject-object, the subject of action, the "we" of genesis, namely, the proletariat'."¹⁵ The concrete becoming of men in history, expressed in the contemporary age as the standpoint of the proletariat, is the only possible basis for the synthesis of the concrete totality and its sublation (Aufhebung).

Lukács' position is one that attempts to overcome both voluntarism and fatalism, the poles of the Second International and

neo-Kantian social science. Historical Materialism, in his view, cannot gain an adequate understanding of the social totality and has no meaning outside the struggle of the proletariat, the negating subject. Its claims to truth and objectivity are not those of a simple correspondence or coherence theory. For the truth and objectivity of any method cannot be dirempted from the social praxis of classes and groups. All forms of thought are rooted in a particular historical context and are relative to the social situatedness of social structure. But Lukács argues the standpoint of the proletariat and consequently Marxism transcends the "one-sidedness" and distortions of other social theories and class ideologies. The proletariat is the class on whose genesis capitalist society rests. The process of Bildung within the society can only be successfully grasped from the pivot in its constitution. "Since the proletariat will find that it itself has been a key party in this constitution, it stands in a relationship to reality which gives it the possibility of viewing the reality not as mere fact [i. e., the freezing of the given], but as a set of relations which are historically determined and capable of alteration. In other words, the proletariat has the capability of seeing all of the relations of capitalist society as a stage in the process of its own Bildung which must be overcome."¹⁶ Objectivity and truth depend on knowledge of the totality, the coherence of which is dependent on the process of

history from which the standpoint of the proletariat as a potential identical subject-object finds its foundations.

Lukács refuses to ground the "theory of proletarian Bildung" outside the historical process and portray the role of the theorist as neutral and detached. Theory and theoretical labor are inextricably intertwined in the social process on which it cannot passively contemplate, reflect, and describe. Rather, the theorist is seen as a participant in an ongoing class conflict, explicating an objective possibility immanent in the dynamic of reified class-relations and animated things. There are numerous issues which could be raised here but for our purposes only a number of points need be noted.¹⁷

Lukács' argument is predicated on the existence of a class whose social position is said to be unique in that, first, from its position the historical process is claimed to be transparent and within reach of theory. Secondly, from its standpoint the universal interests of the species are assumed to be uncoverable. Thirdly, that it is necessary for the proletariat to have a correct understanding of its position and, fourthly, that it is capable of transcending its social conditions as a result of the de-mythologizing of its interests. Finally, it is argued by Lukács that even if (mass) revolutionary working class praxis does not exist, the dynamic of the historical process contains within it an immanent objective possibility of this

praxis. As such, Marxist social theory is continuous with the imputable consciousness of the identical subject-object. Marxism remains objective and possible. For Lukács there is a proletarian praxis present for class existence before it is actually known, but such an existence is not sufficient unto itself and demands a further critical elaboration. "The Party is the instrument in history that does this by degrees through a dual mediation: there is a first mediation--the Party, mediating between the proletariat and history-- and a second--the Party, consulting the proletariat or in other words, the proletariat mediating between the Party and history."¹⁸

Lukács does not argue or say that the proletariat will necessarily complete its Bildung process and surmount the irresolvable tensions and contradictions in the capitalist social order. The concept of imputed class consciousness specifies what is logically required (not what empirically exists), if the proletariat is to complete its transformation into the identical subject-object. "Logically analyzed, the situation of the proletariat is seen as being both within society (as an element of the synchronic arrangement of commodities exchanged) and outside society (as a subject which cannot come to self-realization within the present arrangement of forms). Lukács sees no way of reconciling this duality theoretically. . . . Rather he seeks to make the task of theorizing contingent on this very

dissonance, and argues that the purpose of theory, which now becomes equated with the activities of the party . . ." is to explicate these contradictions to a subject "which at this point in history possesses the possibility of practically overcoming the separations as a part of the very process which brings it to consciousness of them."¹⁹

Whatever its other merits, the epistemological and political difficulties of this position are far reaching. We have to ask whether or not in the absence of revolutionary working class praxis, Marxism, as it is here developed, can be anything more than an abstract negation. Does the revolutionary dialectic become anything more than a "conceptual mythology"? Is the proletariat then, nothing but the carrier of a myth, which as J. Revai argues, presents this identification as desirable;²⁰ i.e., is it a logical abstraction which Lukács imposes on the historical process? If this is the case, the Party ceases to be a mediation and becomes an expression of an ethical ideal forcing itself on history.

Lukács attempted to show that the empirical proletariat "surpassed by the richness of a history which it cannot represent to itself either as it was or it will be, retains, nevertheless, an implicit totality and is itself the universal subject which, because it is self-critical and sublates itself, can become for itself only through the indefinite development of the classless society."²¹

An important feature of Lukács' thought was not to posit an identical subject-object, to grant the meaning of history to a "world spirit." The analysis of reification attempts to derive the objective possibility of overcoming reification in the dynamic of reification itself.²² As such, the analysis is contingent on a verifiable process and, as Arato suggests, "one particular analysis of economic development (namely, Rosa Luxemburg's)."²³ But Lukács' analysis and his solution, the identical subject-object, are far from satisfactory.

Given Stalinism and (current) technocratic social management in Russia, the (as yet?) unfulfilled proletarian Bildung process in the Western world, etc., we may well wonder (with Merleau-Ponty) where these developments leave our original theory. Yet, in wondering within Lukács' theoretical framework we are caught in a circle. For the only standard of truth we have is deeply embedded in the proletariat's standpoint. Yet it is precisely this standpoint that is here problematic and questioned. To what standards and criteria does one appeal in determining whether certain historical developments are falsifications of the original theory, signs that its premises are dubious, that it is inadequate to comprehend the dynamics of capitalism; or rather, developments which leave the original theory intact but with minor modifications? "In short," as Thomas McCarthy put it, "if the notion of practical confirmation or

falsification is to be used selectively, one must inquire after the theoretical basis of this selection. And if the principles of selection themselves contain theoretical moments, one must ask about the adequacy of this background theory and its relation to the one under investigation."²⁴ As the standard of truth, the proletariat's standpoint does not allow us recourse to challenge it without undermining the entire theoretical structure. If this is done, questions of grounding cannot be taken for granted.

Yet all of this itself assumes that it is and ever was obvious what the standpoint of the proletariat is and that it is imputable in its practical absence; that universal interests are uncoverable from its actual or imputable standpoint, and, therefore, what an adequate representation of these interests by the particular, the Party, is. Unless these questions are addressed, we risk--as Lukács did--subordinating class, theory, and action to the Party.²⁵ In all these respects, Lukács' resolution of the problem of grounding raises the same questions as the first objection attempted to ignore: the answers and the method of developing answers are assumed as self-evident.

The connections of objectivity and truth, theory and practice in Lukács are closely tied to the actuality of proletarian revolutionary praxis or its imputable possibility. In nonrevolutionary periods the problem of the theory/practice relationship, etc.,

becomes, to say the least, problematic. In Lukács' theoretical framework, however, these relationships are dogmatically assumed. To tie the truth claims of Marxism as a critique of society to the standpoint of the proletariat is to leave Marxism open to Merleau-Ponty's view that the proletariat is a waning historical force in both socialist and capitalist countries. Consequently, he argues, Marxism as a critique loses its claim to truth and becomes nothing more or less than a competing ideology or moral standpoint.²⁶ The Party, then, cannot claim with surety the privileged status of historical mediator. There are further empirical objections that can be made to the theory. For example, Lukács fails to address many determinants of the empirical consciousness of the working class and its historically changing needs. Obviously, the historical conditions of Lukács' and our time are considerably different from that of Marx and Engels. Yet, in Lukács, the potentiality of the identical subject-object was and is assumed to be revolutionary, its standpoint transparent and immanently realizable. For Lukács it cannot be otherwise. The standpoint is dependent on these assumptions. The theory can only answer its critics by restating its premises.

Whether or not we can go beyond Lukács' position in History and Class Consciousness is, as yet, an open question. But for Lukács, of course, there is a way. Writing in the 1967 Preface to

the new edition, he suggests that the ideal of an identical subject-object must be rejected. It was an attempt to "out-Hegel Hegel. . . . Thus the proletariat seen as the identical subject-object of the real history of mankind is no materialist consumation that overcomes the constructions of idealism."²⁷ With the rejection of the identical subject-object we may well ask which other moments of Lukács' theoretical edifice remain intact? "Since the identical subject-object is the telos towards which all other moments of the Bildung process are directed, there is, as Schmidt argues, "good reason to believe that they too will have to be altered if they are to be transformed into a materialist dialectic."²⁸ In Lukács' other three criticisms he confirms the need for major developments in the groundwork and categories of historical materialism. These include alterations in his concept of nature,²⁹ the development of a theory of labor and, consequently, the recognition of the need to elaborate an adequate notion of praxis (that goes beyond an idealized imputed class consciousness).³⁰ The criticisms are of crucial importance. In Lukács' opinion, the basic category of Marxist political economy, "labour, as the mediator of the metabolic interaction between society and nature, is missing."³¹

It means that the most important real pillars of the Marxist view of the world disappear and the attempt to deduce the ultimately revolutionary implications of Marxism in as radical a fashion as possible is

deprived of a genuinely economic foundation. It is self-evident that this means the disappearance of the ontological objectivity of nature upon which the process of change is based. But it also means the disappearance of the interaction between labour as seen from a genuinely materialist standpoint and the evolution of the men who labour.³²

The foundation of History and Class Consciousness has to be revised in Lukács' view on the basis of Marx's "great insight" into the labor process. What Lukács points to is a theory of labor and a theory of needs. A discussion of what this might entail must be postponed to our discussion of Marcuse who, it can be argued--amongst others--also attempted to develop a theory of labor and human needs as a critical foundation for Marxism. The search for such a ground independent of (immediate) proletarian praxis became (and becomes) particularly acute in times characterized by the loss of revolutionary praxis. Few struggled with this issue and its consequences more than the Frankfurt School. A few general remarks should, first, be made about this school.

In the early work of the Frankfurt theorists, an essential tenet was that "even the situation of the proletariat is, in this society, no guarantee of correct knowledge."³³ As Horkheimer wrote, "On the identity of theory and praxis is not to be forgotten their difference."³⁴ Marcuse develops this theme: "Theory accompanies the practice at every moment, analyzing the changing situation and

formulating its concepts accordingly. The concrete conditions for realizing the truth may vary, but the truth remains the same and theory remains its ultimate guardian. Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionay practice deviates from its proper path. Practice follows the truth, not vice versa."³⁵ How, then, did the Frankfurt School interpret the notions of truth and objectivity?

It has already been argued (against an anticipated first objection) that questions of foundation and grounding are implicit in all social theory (and science). In fact, any close reading of the Frankfurt School suggests that these problems and questions are not only implicit but explicitly addressed. Obviously, a complete discussion of Horkheimer's and Marcuse's approaches to these issues is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, from a reading of Marcuse's work up to and including Reason and Revolution³⁶ and Horkheimer's Zeitschrift essays, a number of important points are developed which should not be overlooked.³⁷

The early formulations of the Frankfurt theorists presented Critical theory as part of a "dynamic unity with the oppressed class." Critical theory was considered part of the present class struggle, as a "promotive factor in the development of the masses."³⁸ The practical impact of the theorist was conceived in a way which was not dissimilar to that of Lukács: to articulate and help develop

a latent class consciousness.³⁹ There were, as Schmidt has pointed out, strong echoes of "the Mannheim-Lukács group during the days of the Free School: the task of the theoretician is to attempt to provide a milieu in which a negation of the present social order can take place. This task is carried out through an indication of alternatives which are not analyzed by contemplative theorists who merely confirm 'what is' at any given moment."⁴⁰ But in fascist Germany and with exile, the theoretical and practical were ruptured; "the political meaning of the Frankfurt School lost its immediacy."⁴¹ As Marcuse put it, "the divorce of thought from action, of theory from practice, is itself part of the unfree world. No thought and no theory can undo it; but theory may help to prepare the ground for their possible reunion."⁴² Against the objectivism of bourgeois ideology and orthodox Marxism the task of the critical theorist became more that of "remembering," "recollecting," capturing a past which was in danger of being forgotten. Indeed, Marcuse wrote Reason and Revolution to "make a contribution . . . to the revival of a mental faculty which is in danger of being obliterated: the power of negative thinking."⁴³ Theirs was an attempt to preserve a residue of Marx's original project against a theory and practice frozen into second nature; a theory uniting, in both West and East, with production, "a night in which all cows are black."⁴⁴

In examining Horkheimer's and Marcuse's theoretical position, we begin with Horkheimer's Zeitschrift essays. The argument here follows closely that of McCarthy.⁴⁵ My intention, however, is to develop this argument into a discussion of Marcuse's work. Although both Horkheimer and Marcuse share many fundamental positions, they diverge on the question of the centrality of labor, with the consequence that Marcuse hesitated to implicate Marx in his critique of instrumental rationality.⁴⁶ A discussion of this theme will take us to a conjuncture in critical theoretic development.

Horkheimer argues that critical theory, as a dialectical critique of ideology, must locate all thought in its historical context, uncover its rootedness in human interests and yet avoid relativism and be distinguished from skepticism. He accepts the Hegelian idea of a critique of forms of thought, but rejects Hegel's systematic intention, in particular the telos of consciousness' journey: the identity of subject and object in absolute knowledge.

In making these distinctions Horkheimer (and Marcuse) stress the centrality of the "governing principle of dialectical thought," Hegel's concept of determinate (bestimmte) negation. "In recognizing the dependence and limitedness of any finite truth or isolated perspective, that is in rejecting the claim on its part to unlimited truth, Hegel does not simply dismiss it out of hand, but rather finds

for this limited knowledge, as limited, one-sided, isolated, etc., its place in the total system of truth. Thus critique in the Hegelian sense does not result in mere negation, in the simple assurance that all determinate knowledge is transitory, and worthless, in a word in skepticism or relativism."⁴⁷ As Horkheimer argues: "If the true is the whole according to Hegel, the whole is not something other than the parts in their determinate structure, but the whole process of thought which contains in itself all limited representations in the consciousness of their limitedness."⁴⁸ What distinguishes the dialectical method is its recognition of what is limited as limited, as well as its recognition of its own limitations. Dialectical logic is critical logic for, as Marcuse put it, "it reveals modes and contents of thought which transcend the codified pattern of use and validation."⁴⁹

But Horkheimer cannot ground a materialist critique on Hegel's comprehensive system. Hegel's philosophy, consonant with the "innermost effort" of his own thought, is superseded, "not by substituting for Reason some extrarational standards, but by driving Reason itself to recognize the extent to which it is still unreasonable, blind, the victim of unmastered forces."⁵⁰ Insofar as the dialectic is embedded in Hegel as an idealist system, it must be recast and itself determinately negated. Horkheimer writes:

In the reflection on his own system Hegel forgets a very definite part of experience. The view that this system is the completion of truth conceals from him the meaning of the time-bound interest which influences the individual dialectical presentations as regards the direction of thought, the choice of material and the use of names and words, and which turns his attention from the fact that his conscious and unconscious partiality vis-à-vis the questions of life must necessarily become operative as constitutive elements of his philosophy.⁵¹

In contradistinction, Horkheimer formulates the materialist dialectic as the "unconcluded" dialectic (the unabgeschlossene Dialektik).

The recognition that the prevailing socio-economic conditions are transitory and limited is not synonymous with the conception of their Aufhebung. Horkheimer's materialism asserts that "objective" reality can never be identical with, or absorbed into, men's concepts; "an isolated and completable theory of reality is simply inconceivable." Thus, as McCarthy has summarized it:

Horkheimer undertakes to radicalize Hegel's already radically historical approach by (1) giving up the theologically motivated belief that progress, whatever it might consist in, is in any way guaranteed. The progress of history depends on the decisions and actions of historically acting subjects; by (2) distancing himself from the conception of a universal history in the strict, i. e., Hegelian, sense. Thought, rooted as it is in actual history, can never overview the whole of history as a pre-given totality. Rather it owes its most general categories to actual history itself; and by (3) accepting the consequences of this context-boundedness for critical theory itself.⁵²

Marcuse develops a parallel position. Dialectical thought invalidates the "claimed" opposition between fact and value. Facts can only be understood as stages of a single process; truth can be uncovered only within the subject-object totality. The totality is the result of the constitutive activity of both theoretical and practical labor. "All facts embody the knower as well as the doer; they continually translate past into present." Objects "contain" subjectivity in their very structure. Dialectical analysis becomes historical analysis. It embraces the prevailing negativity (that-which-is in terms of that-which-is-not; that which is real which opposes and denies the potentialities inherent in itself, the being other than itself); as well as its negation (the transformation of factuality into realization; of subjectivity coming to itself in history, where the development has a rational content).

The given state of affairs is negative and can be rendered positive only by liberating the possibilities immanent in it. This last, the negation of the negation, is accomplished by establishing a new order of things. The negativity and its negation are two different phases of the same historical process, straddled by man's historical action. The "new" state is the truth of the old, but that truth does not steadily and automatically grow out of the earlier state; it can be set free only by an autonomous act on the part of men, that will cancel the whole of the negative state.⁵³

Against Hegel's transposition of the tension between what could be and what exists, between being-in-itself (essence) and appearance,

into the very structure of Geist, Marcuse interprets this tension materialistically. Theory attempts to grasp the contradictory character of social processes and presents their immanent but "unconcluded," incomplete possibilities (the materialistic dialectic is "Unabgeschlossen"). This framework becomes the basis of his reading of Marx,⁵⁴ which we will say more about in a moment.

This sociological radicalism raises questions as to the logical structure of critical theory. How are the relationships between theory and praxis, fact and value, etc., conceived to avoid relativism or skepticism? To what concept of truth does critical theory appeal, if not to the Hegelian? Horkheimer's and Marcuse's responses contain moments of both identity and difference. For Horkheimer (1937) critical theory stood against the embeddedness of traditional theory in the reproductive process of present day society and those very processes themselves. Critical theory was conceived to accelerate the subversion of structures of exploitation. The difference between traditional and critical theory was the difference between two different "modes of cognition" (Erkenntnisweisen); traditional theory being shaped by the mode of cognition of the natural sciences.

The axioms of traditional theory define general concepts within which all the facts in the field must be conceived. . . . In between, there is a hierarchy of genera and species, between which there are generally appropriate relations of subordination. The facts are individual cases, examples or embodiments of the genera. There are no temporal differences between

the units of the system. . . . Individual genera may be added to the system or other changes made, but this is not normally conceived in the sense that the determinations are necessarily too rigid and must prove inadequate where the relation to the object or the object itself changes without thereby losing its identity. Rather, changes are treated as omissions in our earlier knowledge or as the replacement of individual parts of the object. . . . Discursive logic, or the logic of the intellect (Verstand), even conceives living development in this way. It is unable to conceive the fact that man changes and yet remains identical with himself.⁵⁵

Critical theory, on the other hand, is, as we have seen, radically sociological. It recognizes that its content is ever changing.

There are no general criteria for critical theory as a whole, for such criteria always depend on a repetition of events and thus on a self-reproducing totality. . . . Despite all its insights into individual steps and the congruence of its elements with those of the most advanced traditional theories, critical theory has no specific instance for itself other than its inherent interest in the supersession of class domination.⁵⁶

Nor is there, Horkheimer adds further, a social class by whose adherence and acceptance of the theory we could be guided. "It is possible for the consciousness of every social stratum today to be limited and corrupted by ideology, however much, for its circumstances, it may be bent on truth." In his important early programmatic statement about Critical theory,⁵⁷ Horkheimer explicates Critical theory's concerns and preoccupations. Critical theory, in

the formation of its categories, concepts, and in all phases of its development makes its own "an interest in a rational organization of human activity which it has set itself to elucidate and legitimize. For it is not just concerned with goals as they have been prescribed by the existing life forms, but with men and all their possibilities."⁵⁸

Horkheimer asserts the objectivity of this truth for the goal of a rational society "which today, of course, only appears to arise in the imagination, is really invested in every man."⁵⁹ It is given in men as potential. From this standpoint Critical theory can unmask the ideological, one-sided, and partial character of competing theories. But our questions as to the logical structure of Critical theory are not resolved. This description of Critical theory gives rise, as McCarthy has argued, to a related question: "In what way can the interest in the future (an interest in a rational society) that guides Critical theory be distinguished from the particularistic interests concealed behind ideological theories?"⁶⁰

This question must, of course, be answered if the interest in the future which guides Critical theory is to be distinguished from the interest(s) guiding ideological theories and suspicion of one-sidedness, etc. "What is there, then, about the conception of freedom which guides it [Critical theory] that ensures that it too is not just another time-bound (say post-Enlightenment), culture-bound

(say secularized bourgeois culture), and perhaps even class-bound (say alienated intellectuals) standpoint?"⁶¹

A reading of Horkheimer's "Critical and Traditional Theory" and other Zeitschrift essays suggests that he more or less took up the notion of the "coincidence of reason and freedom directly or indirectly (i.e., through Marx) from Hegel without sufficiently attending to the reworking of philosophical foundations that a rejection of Hegel's idealism entails."⁶² It is, however, less plausible to suggest that the above is true for all Horkheimer's colleagues. Here we argue that Marcuse's greater emphasis and explication of Marx's philosophy and theory of labor does not allow such concentering of positions.⁶³ But before attempting to discuss Marcuse, a few more points might be added to our examination of Horkheimer.

When the issues we raised above arise in Horkheimer he attempts to ground Critical theory either, as we have seen, in an "interest" in the future that is immanent in man, and/or, as he elsewhere suggests, in human work. Thus, for example, Horkheimer writes: "The viewpoints which Critical theory draws from historical analysis as the goals of human activity, especially the idea of the reasonable organization of society that will meet the needs of the whole community, are immanent in human work, but are not correctly grasped by individuals or by the common mind."⁶⁴ In this paper

Horkheimer presents this view of work almost without argument, as if it were obvious and could be taken for granted. The question is not which interpretation of work is correct (and there are many), but how does one decide which interpretation and theory is correct and which are ideologically corrupt?⁶⁵

In various expressions of culture, in art, religion, and philosophy, Horkheimer (and Marcuse, although for some different reasons as we shall see) sought to uncover the desire for a rational organization of life and realization of freedom. But most cultural artifacts, as they argued, have a double character; they are differentiable as both (and predominantly) affirmative and yet also critical, progressive, and regressive.⁶⁶ But who is to interpret these criteria, and how? The Critical theorist is required to differentiate between progressive and regressive tendencies. This, Horkheimer suggests, he can do only on the basis of his interest in the future. "A certain concern is also required if these tendencies are to be preserved or expressed."⁶⁷ We have moved in a circle, "since it was precisely the legitimacy of this interest, its universal and nonideological character, that we wished to ground."⁶⁸ Elsewhere, other suggestions are to be found,⁶⁹ but there is little philosophical elucidation of what a rejection of Hegel's idealism entails, and little clarification of a philosophy and social theory based on materialist presuppositions.

What then, we must ask, is the status of Marx's critique of political economy? What is the status of a theory that claims to be radically historical and at the same time attaches truth and validity claims to its analysis of the epoch. In "Zum Probleme der Wahrheit," Horkheimer argues that a dialectical theory which has given up the

. . . metaphysical character of finality, the solemnity of a revelation, becomes itself a transitory element bound up with the destiny of men. The unconcluded dialectic does not however lose the stamp of truth. In fact, the uncovering of limitedness and one-sidedness in one's own and in other's thought constitutes an important aspect of the intellectual processes. . . . Insofar as the experiences won through perception and deduction, methodical research and historic events, everyday work and political struggle stand up to the available means of knowledge, they are the truth. The abstract reservation that one day a justified critique of one's own epistemic situation will be put into play, that it is open to correction expresses itself among materialists not in a tolerance for contradictory opinions or even in a skeptical indecision, but in a watchfulness against one's own error and in the mobility of thought. . . . The theory which we see as right may one day disappear because the practical and scientific interests which played a role in its conceptual development, and more importantly the things and conditions to which it referred have disappeared . . . but a later correction does not mean that an earlier truth was an earlier untruth, . . . the dialectic freed from the idealist illusion overcomes the contradiction between relativism and dogmatism. While it does not presume that the progress of critique and determination will end with its own standpoint, it in no way gives up the conviction that its knowledge--in the total context to which its concepts and judgements refer--is valid not only for individuals or groups but simply valid, i. e., that opposed theories are false.⁷⁰

Our questions remain: what are the criteria for this nonabsolute truth? How do we judge between competing theories?

Horkheimer summarizes his position by reference to a type of historico-practical confirmation:

It is not history which takes care of the correction and further determination of the truth, so that the knowing subject . . . would only have to look and see; rather the truth is carried forward insofar as the men who have it stand firm by it, apply and support it, act according to it, bring it to power against all resistance from regressive, limited, one-sided standpoints. The process of knowledge involves real historical willing and acting as well as experiencing and conceiving. The latter cannot progress without the former.

In reference to the claimed innateness of the goal of a rational society in men, etc., Horkheimer adds that this is not a claim "that should bring a sigh of relief. For the realization of possibilities depends on historical conflicts . . . man's own will plays a part in that truth, and he may not take his ease if the prognosis is to come true."⁷²

This concept of practical confirmation raises a series of problems. Obviously, numerous questions arise here of a type not dissimilar to those we discussed in Lukács. For example, what if social praxis is oriented toward fascism or technocratism, does this confirm or leave intact our claims about the essence of human reality? Given the quotations we started with (p.347), it is clear that Horkheimer would agree with Marcuse when he writes that the truth of Critical

theory is indeterminate and remains necessarily so "as long as it [the truth] is measured against the idea of unconditionally certain knowledge. For it is fulfilled only through historical action. . . ."73

The truth claim remains --unfalsified--but the theory awaits verification. The issues that are invoked can be further illustrated by Horkheimer's conception of the status of Marx's critique of political economy.

On the one hand he (and Marcuse) presuppose Marx's theory of the general course of the commodity economy: Critical theory becomes the unfolding of this unique existential judgment. Marx's critique of political economy is the truth of capitalist society.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the need for revision is frequently recognized in light of the "course" of capitalist society and socialism in Russia, etc.⁷⁵ Yet, this theory is still the basis for judging the one-sidedness and partiality of all other competing theories. It is the basis on which all other incomplete theories can be judged. If the truth is the whole, it is here assumed to be grasped by Marx. Here, as with Lukács, there are epistemological difficulties and here, as with Lukács, there is a similar circle. The conclusion must also be the same: "if the notion of practical confirmation or falsification is to be used selectively, one must inquire after the theoretical basis of the selection"; since "the principles of selection themselves contain theoretical moments, one must ask about the adequacy of these

theoretical moments,"⁷⁶ the taken-for-granted background theory and its relation to those under investigation, and the society that is changing. Otherwise, we risk leaving everything as it was.

The critical spirit attempts to provide the milieu for the determinate negation of the present social order. Those who partake of its original tenets refuse "to speak the language of domination."⁷⁷ Horkheimer's version of Critical theory is in essence negative, but not wholly so. For Horkheimer seeks to maintain a positive ideal of truth and virtue, while adopting a wholly negative attitude to other theories, views, and interested standpoints. In Hegel, such a unity of positive and negative moments is not a necessary contradiction, if we pass through Stoicism and Skepticism to the insights of the Unhappy Consciousness. There,

. . . the "hitherto negative attitude" of self-consciousness towards reality "turns into a positive attitude. So far it [consciousness] has been concerned merely with its own independence and freedom; it has sought to keep itself "for itself" at the expense of the world as its own and real world, which in its permanence possesses an interest for it." The subject conceives the world as its own "presence" and truth; it is certain of finding only itself there.⁷⁸

This process is the movement of history itself. The question, nonetheless, arises: how is this process and presence of the subject and its truth to be conceived? Horkheimer clearly rejects Hegel's own view and in doing so risks contradiction unless he adequately grounds,

historically and/or philosophically, his privileged standpoint. For Horkheimer the truths to be drawn out are primarily negations. He is unable to accept, as foundational, the claims to rigor of the model of the natural sciences; the standpoint of the proletariat; the position of the party or its leadership; or, for example, the social practice of groups and classes of his day. He says little, if anything, positive about the telos of his work. "In regard to the essential kind of change at which Critical theory aims, there can be no . . . concrete perception of it until it actually comes about. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future."⁷⁹ The dialectic is necessarily negative for "in a historical period like the present, true theory is more critical than affirmative." This view finds its full development and justification in The Dialectics of the Enlightenment. However, the negative judgments of Horkheimer's Critical theory always, as we have tried to point out, assume a social theory to which it grants a privileged status and/or an interest in a rational society according to which it demarcates itself from other ideological theories. His view of the privileged status of this theory is, as we have seen, circular and insufficiently founded. Further, this "interest" was, we argued, neither philosophically grounded nor identifiable with a particular class standpoint. The (possible) convergence of reason and freedom was said, by Horkheimer, to be

immanent in man and work. But who is justified in interpreting this criterion? A few intellectuals? How can we interpret it, let alone elaborate and justify its immanence? Horkheimer had a strong tendency to treat the answers to these questions as self-evident. There is little attempt to systematically address these questions. Without it his attempt to ground Critical theory is dogmatic. What is required and what is lacking is an elaboration and elucidation of the notions of "reason," "truth," and "freedom" upon which his theory relied, but which are taken over from Hegel, via Marx, without adequate reflection. What would have to be demonstrated, amongst other things, is:

1. why the interest in a rational society is universal and
2. why Marxism is the correct theoretical expression of this interest.

Neither point receives sufficient attention in Horkheimer's work.

The rejection of Hegel's idealism requires the development of alternative philosophical and social foundations which find too brief an extension here.

NOTES

¹Cf. Agnes Heller, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," Kinesis, vol. 5, no. 1 (1972); Ollman, Alienation, pt. 1.

²Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, chaps. 2, 3; Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, chap. 2; Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, chap. 4.

³Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, p. 143.

⁴A position which is analagous to this is taken by Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), chaps. 1, 2.

⁵Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, p. 143.

⁶Obviously a more detailed discussion of the "Frankfurt" approach to these issues would have to include a detailed reading of Theodor W. Adornos', Walter Benjamin's, and other members' work.

⁷Cf. James Schmidt, "Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Response to Martin Jay," Telos 21 (1974): 176. (emphasis mine). Horkheimer's paper is in Critical Theory, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). These papers are reprinted and translated from Horkheimer's Kritische Theorie, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1968).

⁸James Schmidt, "Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge," p. 176. This view of Horkheimer's essay is not to be confused with Schmidt's position.

⁹For an elaboration of this criticism, which is also launched at Habermas, see Rudiger Bubner, "Was Ist Kritische Theorie?," Philosophische Rundschau 16 (1969). Bubner's article is reprinted in Karl-Otto Apel, et al., Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 160-209.

¹⁰This is especially true in light of the issues raised on p. 333.

¹¹Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1971).

¹²These points are well elaborated in Andrew Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," Telos 11 (1972): 38.

¹³Ibid., pp. 37-38. Cf. Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, pp. 92-110.

¹⁴Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. 121.

¹⁵Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," p. 51; and quoting Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. 149.

¹⁶James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," p. 232. Chap. 4 is an outstanding account of the notion of "The Concrete Totality and Lukács' Theory of Proletarian Bildung." The chapter (in an expanded form) will be published in Telos 24 (1975).

¹⁷For a fuller discussion, see Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification"; Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics"; and Paul Breines, "Praxis and Its Theorists: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 1920's," Telos 11 (1972): 67-105.

¹⁸Merleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, from the Introduction by Joseph Bien, p. xix.

¹⁹James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," pp. 238-39.

²⁰Cf. Merleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, pp. 53-55.

²¹Ibid., p. 54.

²²Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," p. 54.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Thomas A. McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity in the Early Writings of Max Horkheimer" (Boston: Department of Philosophy, Boston University), p. 9. (Mimeographed.)

²⁵Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, pp. 300 ff.

²⁶Merleau-Ponty, Adventures of the Dialectic, pp. 310-11. James Schmidt has pointed out that this argument is only a consistent application of Lukács' arguments. Cf. Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," chap. 5.

²⁷Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. xxiii.

²⁸James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," p. 249.

²⁹Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, pp. xxiii-xxiv. Cf. Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification," pp. 42-43.

³⁰Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, pp. xvii-xviii.

³¹Ibid., p. xvii.

³²Ibid.

³³Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 213.

³⁴Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie, vol. 1, p. 256, quoted in Russell Jacoby, "Marxism and the Critical School," Theory and Society, vol. 1, no. 2 (1974).

³⁵Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 322 (emphasis mine).

³⁶Apart from Marcuse's Reason and Revolution, and a number of scattered references to his more recent works, I intend to concentrate the discussion on his "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labour in Economics" (1933), trans. Douglas Kellner, Telos 16 (1973): 9-38; "The Foundations of Historical Materialism" (1932), in his Studies in Critical Philosophy, trans. Joris de Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); "The Concept of Essence" (1936); "Philosophy and Critical Theory" (1937), in his Negations. We leave, for future discussion, the bulk of Marcuse's "Heideggerian Marxist" work and his Marx-Freud synthesis (with its resultant tendencies to biologism and objectivism).

³⁷Cf. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1937), "Postscript" (1937) in his Critical Theory. Of considerable importance also are Horkheimer's "Zum Probleme der Wahrheit" (1935) and "Montaigne und die Funktion der Skepsis" (1938) in his Kritische Theorie.

³⁸Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," pp. 214-15.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," p. 255.

⁴¹Russell Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism," Telos 10 (1971).

⁴²Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. xii.

⁴³Ibid., p. vii.

⁴⁴Cf. Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory." Also Herbert Marcuse, Counterrevolution and Revolt (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 69-74; Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment. For an important new study in the same tradition, Russell Jacoby, Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).

⁴⁵McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity." Cf. also McCarthy, Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis.

⁴⁶Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973), pp. 78-80.

⁴⁷McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity," p. 2.

⁴⁸Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie, p. 237, trans. and quoted in McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity."

⁴⁹Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. xii.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. xiii.

⁵¹Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie, p. 240, trans. and quoted in McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity," p. 3.

⁵²McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity," p. 3. Cf. Bubner, "Was Ist Kritische Theorie?"; M. Theunissen, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Zur Kritik der Kritischen Theorie (Berlin, 1969).

⁵³Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 315.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 282 ff., especially pp. 312-22.

⁵⁵Horkheimer, "Tradition and Critical Theory," in Critical Theory, pp. 223-25. This translation, quoted from Göran Therborn, "The Frankfurt School," New Left Review 63 (1970): 68-69.

⁵⁶Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 242. This translation, quoted from Therborn, "The Frankfurt School," p. 68. Therborn's article is useful insofar as it points out where Horkheimer later modified and "toned down" the radicalism of his early work. The above quotation is from the original Zeitschrift essays. In his later republication of this essay, "social injustice" has been substituted for "class domination" (Klassenherrschaft).

⁵⁷See "Traditional and Critical Theory," "Postscript," in Horkheimer, Critical Theory or Kritische Theorie.

⁵⁸Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 245. The translation is once more that of Therborn, "The Frankfurt School," p. 69.

⁵⁹Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 251; Therborn, "The Frankfurt School," p. 69.

⁶⁰McCarthy, from the Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, pp. xi-xii.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. xii.

⁶³It could be argued that such a philosophy of labor is implicit in Horkheimer's work. Cf. his views on work that follow. Even if this were true, it could not be doubted that what is implicit is highly undeveloped.

⁶⁴Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 213 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁵McCarthy, from the Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. xii. For an alternative discussion of "work" see, for example, Horkheimer and Adorno, The Dialectics of the Enlightenment.

⁶⁶Cf., for example, "The Social Function of Philosophy," "Art and Mass Culture," in Horkheimer, Critical Theory. And, "Philosophy and Critical Theory," "The Affirmative Character of Culture," in Marcuse, Negations.

⁶⁷Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 213.

⁶⁸McCarthy, from the Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. xii.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. xiii.

⁷⁰Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie, p. 246, trans. and quoted in McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity," pp. 6-7.

⁷¹Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie, p. 247, trans. and quoted in McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity," p. 8 (emphasis mine).

⁷²Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 251.

⁷³Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," Negations, p. 75.

⁷⁴For example, cf. Horkheimer's "Traditional and Critical Theory," in Critical Theory; or his "Zum Probleme der Wahrheit," in Kritische Theorie. Cf., also, Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory," in Negations.

⁷⁵The "etc." was elaborated on p. 333 ff.

⁷⁶As in note 24.

⁷⁷Paul Piccone in his review of Jay's The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-50, in Telos 16 (1973): 146.

⁷⁸Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp. 119-20, quoting from Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind, vol. 1, p. 223.

⁷⁹Horkheimer, Critical Theory, p. 220.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEORY OF LABOR AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

The views of Lukács' 1967 Preface suggest that a theory of labor and needs could provide a material consumation that overcomes the construction of idealism and provides an elucidation of thought on materialist presuppositions. Some of the arguments of Lukács' most sympathetic critics would suggest the same direction.¹ The argument is also found in Marcuse.² We attempt, below, to explicate such a theoretical position, although the position is not claimed to be that which is found in Lukács' later work, or throughout Marcuse.³ However, it seems worthwhile to reconstruct and develop a theory of labor, etc., given the stress both theorists have placed on it and given its contemporary vitality (e.g., in the work of Alfred Schmidt).⁴ The emphasis is on reconstruction and development because a theory of labor has not been systematically worked through by the authors in the works to which we will be directly referring. Their works are often at best suggestive, and frequently contain ambiguities and unexplicated presuppositions. As a consequence I will attempt to take up the suggestions made and develop

them through considerations of a variety of texts, especially the early works of Marx.

It should be emphasized that what is outlined here is only the briefest development of a series of arguments that could take various complex forms. I only hope to sketch an approach which is claimed to go beyond the positions of the early Lukács and Horkheimer. (A more complete exploration of these points would, of course, have to involve a detailed consideration of Lukács' last labor in the Ontology,⁵ an examination of Marcuse's Heideggerian Marxism, the various developments of his later work, and a detailed consideration of contemporary positions.) Here we merely hope to indicate the direction of the program and say a little about its limitations.

It was in Lukács' later writing, as we noted earlier, that he suggested that Marx's "great insight" into the labor process was passed by and over in History and Class Consciousness.

Marx's great insight that "even production for the sake of production means nothing more than the development of the productive energies of man, and hence the development of the wealth of human nature as an end in itself" lies outside the terrain which History and Class Consciousness is able to explore.⁶

For Lukács this meant that (1) capitalist exploitation loses its "objectively revolutionary aspect," i. e., its objectively progressive qualities and revolutionary implications. He felt that, in his earlier work, he had not yet comprehended the material foundation

of capitalist exploitation. In Lukács' view this was because he had not grasped the ontological objectivity of nature, the labor process, upon which all social processes are based and therefore, in his view, to be understood. Secondly, he felt that he had previously failed to grasp and comprehend the fact that "although this evolution of the species Man is accomplished at first at the expense of the majority of individual human beings and of certain human classes, it finally overcomes this antagonism and coincides with the evolution of the particular individual. Thus the higher development of individuality is only purchased by a historical process in which individuals are sacrificed."⁷

What Lukács is suggesting in these quotations is that the understanding of the development of history, the species, and the individual has to be closely tied to an adequate conceptualization of the process of labor, the "dialectics of labour." Further, the telos of social formation is, no longer, the elusive and abstract notion of the identity of subject and object, but rather "a notion of a harmonious, total appropriation of objective reality by an objective, embodied subject."⁸ The fulfillment of what Marx called man's "species nature" (a notion that will be elaborated below) becomes the goal of a future rational social order, the "paradigm" of which might be conceived in, for example, the terms of the following passage:

The immediate, natural and necessary relation of person to person is the relation of man to woman. In this natural species relationship man's relationship to nature is immediately his relation to man, just as his relation to man is immediately his relation to nature--his own natural destination. In this relationship, therefore, is sensuously manifested, reduced to an observable fact, the extent to which the human essence has become the human essence of man. From this relationship one can therefore judge man's whole level of development.⁹

Commenting on this passage from Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Paul Walton and Andrew Gamble note that "the humanised relation of two reproducing animals is precisely its nature as a reciprocal activity, entered into freely and consciously, with the aim of satisfying the other as oneself."¹⁰ This constitutes full, undistorted sociality which, as we shall see, is a key element constitutive of species nature.¹¹ These ideas need closer examination. We begin by addressing the concept of labor.

In an interview, published posthumously, Lukács suggests that his new work centers on the question of the relationship between necessity and freedom, causality and teleology. "Traditionally," Lukács said, "philosophers have always built systems founded on one or the other of these two poles. They have either denied necessity or denied human freedom. My aim is to show the ontological interrelation of the two, and to reject the 'either-or' standpoints with which philosophy has presented man. The concept of labour is

the hinge of my analysis . . . The notion of alternatives is basic to the meaning of human labour, which is thus always teleological--it sets an aim which is the result of a choice. It thus expresses human freedom."¹² What is this concept of labor or, as Lukács puts it elsewhere, "the dialectics of labour," the "Marxian Ontology"? How can we conceptualize this new direction?

For Marx, nature becomes objective for us through the laboring process, in which both nature and the laboring subjects are themselves transformed. We may speak, in a limited sense, about a "dialectics of nature" in that the synthesis of material labor unites the historical subject (which is of nature) and the process of nature. Through Man, and by virtue of men's theoretical-practical activity, "nature attains self-consciousness" and "amalgamates with itself."¹³ Human activity, labor, production, and creation also, therefore, mediates between men and society. For Marx the world was the "world of man." He rejects the metaphysical idea of a "final universal goal" given and unfolding in history;¹⁴ a goal that predetermines the meaning of the world; a Spirit or Logos that guides man's praxis from an organic, sense-certain, undifferentiated unity between man and nature to a rational, reasoned differentiated unity between man and nature (which preserves individuality in a context of self-conscious collectivity).¹⁵ Goals and purposes, in the strict sense,

are always a category of human practice and here, as Alfred Schmidt has pointed out, Marx "limited himself, as a materialist, to what Hegel called the 'finite-teleological standpoint.'" Hegel put it this way:

In practice man relates to nature as to something immediate and external. He himself is in this relation an immediately external and hence sensuous and individual, who has however the right to conduct himself towards natural objects as their purpose.¹⁶

In Capital, Marx discussed at length the way in which the "purposive will"¹⁷ of man "triumphs over nature":

We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of the labour process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement, that was therefore already ideally present. He not only effects a change of the form of the natural basis; in it he also realizes his purpose, which he knows, which determines the mode of his activity, and to which he must subordinate his will.¹⁸

According to both Hegel and Marx, labor's purposes are subject to necessary limitations; they are limited objectively "by the material at men's disposal . . . and, subjectively, by the structure of men's needs and drives."¹⁹ Marx, of course, went beyond Hegel in attempting to work out the socio-historical roots of human

purposes. In doing so, he includes (although in sketchy form) an analysis of the complex further mediations that arise when labor casts off its "first, instinctual form" in which man (simply) utilized nature through the natural organs of his body. In a higher unity of man and nature, conscious production directed to a purpose, is mediated through the role of tools²⁰ or artifacts.²¹

Marx conceives man's "finite-telological activity," his "purposeful creations," his "conscious activity" as critical for the adequate differentiation of man's species characteristics from those of animals. Man externalizes and objectifies his nature, history is the creation and record of his praxis. Labor is the defining, natural, and historical condition of man. But more than this can be said. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx argued that ". . . an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, whilst man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom."²² Here and elsewhere in these early writings²³ Marx distinguishes human nature from the nature of animals by reference to four characteristics of man's productive activity. It is, as we have seen, (1) conscious, purposive (sometimes he uses the word "self-conscious"). It is also

(2) universal, there are no limits to man's capacity to extend himself and, therefore, history. Man produces in order to live, to satisfy his material needs. He also, according to Marx, produces free of physical need and men "only truly produce in freedom therefrom." There are, we suggested above, necessary limitations on human production. But these are operative in qualitatively different ways in each historical epoch. What man will make or is capable of making admits of no formal answer. (3) Man's productive activity can be planned, and (4) it is "social." In the Manuscripts Marx suggests that man is a social being because "he exists in reality as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestations of social existence."²⁴ Each man is both unique and a communal being. He is the "subjective existence of society as thought and experienced."²⁵ In the German Ideology the concept of social being receives important further alteration.²⁶ It can be argued²⁷ that Marx saw language as intrinsic to and, therefore, further defining of human production. Although Marx's statements about language are underdeveloped, they provide us with further insight into the social nature of man's species being. He wrote:

Language is as old as [human] consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of

intercourse, with other men.²⁸

As Michael Gordy has pointed out, "the necessity he [Marx] speaks of is empirical necessity because language is practical consciousness and practice is empirical. Since practical consciousness, i.e., purposive consciousness, is what makes production human, then language, or the possibility of language, is coextensive with human production." For Marx, "language is impossible without human beings living together and talking to each other, so the possibility of language implies human society. Since the possibility of language is coextensive with human production, human production is "social."²⁹

The form of man's labor, its quality and quantity vary, Marx of course reasoned, with natural and historical circumstances. In Capital, however, he says why it is essential to begin with a study of man, man's essence, the nature of labor:

To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog-nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.³⁰

Therefore, it is claimed, in order to know what is central and useful for mankind, we must begin from analysis of man, of labor in general and then labor as developed, changed, and constrained in each social formation. The unity that informs Marx's project is,

Paul Walton and Andrew Gamble suggest, "his constant insistence on basic premises which reveal the dialectics of labour."

The labour process, which antedates value, and serves as its starting point, thus again makes its appearance within capital, as a process which occurs inside its substance and forms its content. The labour process, because of its abstractness, and its material nature, is equally characteristic of all forms of production.³¹

From an understanding of the "natural unity" of what is "exclusively human" Marx proceeds to explore (from the early writings on alienation to the concrete measure of exploitation of labor power in Capital) how man's development is constrained by the history of class societies.

In tearing away from man the object of his production, [this] tears from him his species-life, his real objectivity as a member of the species, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken away from him.³²

The analysis is directed to uncover the tensions between the "natural unity" of labor and its historical unfreedom, in order to explore the conditions for the possibility of overcoming structures of alienation; conditions that might reveal developing "needs" and "purposes" that cannot be met under, for example, capitalism's rigid preoccupation with profit and distribution of scarce values.

Commenting on a similar reading of Marx, Walton and Gamble declare that the problem now becomes that of deriving operational

concepts from "the dialectic" that will both account for and help reveal the dynamics and direction of social change. "What we have to show," they add, "is how alienation is linked to the labour theory of value in Marx's work and in so doing highlight their dependence upon his view of man."³³

Yet, within the terms of reference of the theory, several questions remain. How, given a claimed human essence of the type discussed above, can we explain structures of unfreedom? Does the quality of man's species characteristics change over time? If so, does his essence change? If so, how can we claim a concept of essence that is trans-historical or a-historical or how can we analyze its changing social form over time? What is the relation of essence and appearance over time? How is alienation, if conceived as embracing the four dimensions Marx discusses in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,³⁴ to be linked to a critique of capitalist society that includes the concept of human essence, species characteristics, as its foundational premise? If man is alienated from his species being, how can we still justify our premises, i.e., can we still claim man has species characteristics if, as Ollman suggests, "alienated man . . . has lost touch with all human specificity!"³⁵

* * * * *

The argument can be taken several stages further by an analysis of Marcuse's work. In developing this second argumentation we use the above discussion as a backdrop and attempt to advance the argument beyond the problematics raised by the questions above.

Marcuse shares Horkheimer's position on sociological radicalism, the uncompleted nature of the dialectic and the stress on an immanent, essential potential in man that is yet to be realized. But in place of a relatively static epistemological relationship of essence to appearance and fact, Marcuse develops a critical and dynamic relationship of essence to appearance seen as parts of a historical process. With Horkheimer he stresses the embeddedness of all theory in social struggle; its ultimately necessary confirmation in practice but also its ultimate (as yet) irreducibility to any given form of social practice. "The truth of the model of essence," he argues, "is preserved better in human misery and suffering and the struggle to overcome them than in the forms and concepts of pure thought."³⁶ This truth is "indeterminate" and remains necessarily so. It is fulfilled "only through historical action, and its connection can thus result only post festum." The truth claim remains, as we saw earlier, unfalsified; but the theory awaits verification. While Horkheimer acknowledged the necessity to supersede (aufheben) philosophy with social theory, Marcuse explicated this theoretical

intention at greater length. In Reason and Revolution, "The Concept of Essence," and in other places, Marcuse explained that "if there was to be any progress beyond this philosophy [Hegel's], it had to advance beyond philosophy itself and, at the same time, beyond the social and political order to which philosophy had tied its fate."³⁷

In a critique of Sartre's existentialism, he wrote:

One step more toward concretization [away from Hegel's philosophy] would have meant a transgression beyond philosophy itself. Such a transgression occurred in opposition to Hegel's philosophy. . . . When they [Kierkegaard and Marx] came to grips with the concrete existence, they abandoned and repudiated philosophy. . . . For Marx, the conception of "réalité humaine" is the critique of political economy and the theory of socialist revolution. The opposition against Hegel pronounces the essential inadequacy of philosophy in the face of the concrete human existence.³⁸

Marcuse argues that one criterion for the objective validity of dialectical theory's separation of essence and appearance is the "suitability of its concepts for service as the organizing principle in the explanation of a given group of appearances (e.g., constellations of political power among states of a specific era, their alliances and conflicts). If the historical structure (e.g., 'imperialism') postulated as 'essential' for the explanation of such a grouping makes it possible to comprehend causally the situation both in its individual phases as well as in terms of the tendencies effective within it, then it is really the essential in that manifold of appearances. This

determination of essence is true: it has held good within the theory."³⁹ Yet, Marcuse goes on to argue, the theory of which it is a part is itself at the same time a factor in the historical struggles that it aims to grasp and catch: "only in them can the essential theoretical truths be ultimately verified. And from this very historicity of dialectical concepts grows a new kind of 'universal validity' and objectivity."⁴⁰ The question is: how are we to conceive the dynamic and historical relationship of essence and appearance from which a new kind of "universal validity" and "objectivity" derive? There is a strong tendency, in Marcuse's earlier work, to answer this question, explicitly, through a theory of alienation, grounded in the concept of labor and a dialectic of needs. This is how we shall read his work here.

For Marcuse the distinctions between appearance and essence, form/content, immediacy/potentiality, have significance at more than one level. First, they have import for the analysis and explanation of social formations and realities. The appearance and form of a social reality is not to be taken to be synonymous with illusion. To uncover the essence and content (to explain appearance and form) requires an analysis that is itself a "process of elucidating one reality by disclosing its foundation in and determination by another."⁴¹ (Cf. the example of imperialism above.) Marcuse argues that all the

concepts that Marx and Critical theory employ make possible a knowledge of reality in opposition to the freezing of the given, the false facticity and evidences of immediate reality. In doing this they refer us to a second level of significance. For in examining, for example, capitalist society they refer us to "standards entirely foreign to commodity production," they are also critical concepts. Concern for man moves into the center of the theory and to a conceptualization of man's potentiality within a particular historical situation. "At this level the tension between essence and appearance, between authentic potentiality and immediate existence, is reflected anew in the concrete notions with which the theory attempts to grasp the social process of life in its antagonistic character."⁴² These concrete notions belong to two levels: (1) Some deal with phenomena in their reified form, as they appear immediately, and others aim at their real content, as it presents itself to theory once its immediate and taken-for-granted phenomenal form has been transcended.

Both groups of concepts are equally necessary to an understanding of the antagonistic reality; nevertheless, they are not on the same level. In terms of dialectical theory, the second group of concepts, which has been derived from the totality of the social dynamic, is intended to grasp the essence and the true content of the manifestations which the first group describes as they appear.⁴³

The dialectical concepts transcend the given social reality in the direction of another historical structure which is present as a

tendency in the given reality. "The positive concept of essence . . . is rooted in this potential structure."

In attempting to demarcate progressive and regressive moments, the potential from the given, Marcuse often has the propensity to make similar arguments to those that Horkheimer used. This was indicated in the discussion of Horkheimer above. Marcuse often includes references to "the interest of freedom," "historical goals," which have the potentiality to be fulfilled in a real "universality."⁴⁴ The arguments that underlie these phrases and similar ones⁴⁵ can easily be read as following Horkheimer's pattern of argumentation, viz., "the interest in a future rational society" or as treating as self-evident what a "progressive and truly universal" view is, etc. To the extent that this is true, the criticisms we made of Horkheimer's position obviously apply and will not be repeated here. However, there is an alternative reading, which is the one that principally concerns us. Marcuse can be read as subsuming a theory of labor and needs, from which a particular type of social theory is said to follow. He can be seen, consequently, as recasting and grounding theory and thought on materialist presuppositions. The theory needs further explication. In Marcuse's work it finds extended development in Reason and Revolution (although we shall refer back to other earlier works).

Marcuse argues that Marx focused his theory on the labor process and "by doing so held to and consummated the principle of the Hegelian dialectic that the structure of the content (reality) determines the structure of the theory."⁴⁶

He made the foundations of civil society the foundations of the theory of civil society. This society operates on the principle of universal labour, with the labour process decisive for the totality of human existence; labour determines the value of all things. Since the society is perpetuated by the continued universal exchange of the products of labour, the totality of human relations is governed by the immanent laws of the economy. The development of the individual and the range of his freedom depend on the extent to which his labour satisfies a social need. All men are free, but the mechanisms of the labour process govern the freedom of them all. The study of the labour process is, in the last analysis, absolutely necessary in order to discover the conditions for realizing reason and freedom in the real sense. A critical analysis of that process thus yields the final theme of philosophy.⁴⁷

Marx, Marcuse argues in an earlier essay, takes up the Hegelian concept of labor with all its essential characteristics: "'Labour is the becoming-for-itself of man within externalization (Entäußerung) or as externalized man.'⁴⁸ In contrast to the concrete analysis of the "labour processes" in Capital this is, of course, an "abstract" determination of labor (that is insufficient for economic theory). But, Marcuse also points out, "it remains the foundation for all concrete concepts of labour in Marx and is explicitly operative in Capital: As the creator of use-values, as useful labour, labour is therefore

a condition of human existence independent of all social forms; it is external natural necessity that mediates the material exchange between man and nature, and thus human life."⁴⁹ The essential tenets of the concept of labor, which were developed on pages 375 ff., are here explicit and/or implicit. Labor as "mediation," "objectification," etc., finds its place, but with one major change in emphasis: the process of history as man's becoming, development and potential realization, finds greater expression and thematization.

Being and becoming are constituted through the being and becoming of historical, human existence. Within the totality of being, the meaning of labor is the key constitutive element for all human praxis. In the "Foundations of the Concept of Labour," Marcuse stresses that the very structure of being human, embraces the "necessity for life" ("the remedy of wants always leaves something to imagine and that some unfulfilled want always remains behind. . . .")⁵⁰

The necessity for life underlines an "ontological" condition: it is grounded in the very structure of being human that simply can never reduce to a passive process, but must constantly be a process of "self-creation" as "self-making." Even praxis of human existence which is self-mediated in the process of coming to know itself, requires "labour" as the mode of its becoming.⁵¹

Being human is always more than its present existence: "a discrepancy that demands constant labour."

This essential excess of being over existence constitutes the primordial and ineliminable human "necessity for life" (Gottl). Man's very structure of need is grounded in it and its fulfilling is the final meaning of labour: the need for an enduring and lasting self-fulfillment of the existence in the actuality of all its possibilities--a task in whose service the economy ultimately is also engaged.⁵²

In the labor process man develops both his inner and outer nature in a continuous ever-transforming process. It is a process in which he develops, struggling to fulfill anticipated needs. It is a process of becoming, a process with a final meaning. Any analysis of social life has to capture this dynamic process in its categories.

Marcuse stresses that far from being a mere economic activity (Erwerbstätigkeit), labor is and was conceived by Marx, as the "existential activity" of man, his "free conscious activity"--"not a means for maintaining his life (Lebensmittel) but for developing his 'universal nature'."⁵³

The new categories [of political economy] will evaluate the economic reality with a view to what it has made of man, of his faculties, powers, and needs. Marx summarizes these human qualities when he speaks of the "universal essence" of man; his examination of the economy is specifically carried on with the question in mind whether that economy realizes man's Geltungswesen (universelles Wesen).⁵⁴

Marcuse does not specify at any length what he considers Marx meant by "universal essence." Nor does he specify at length what he considers the "universal essence" of man to be. We will, following

textual suggestions take this to be the fulfillment of man's species nature through labor (hitherto discussed) which can be characterized as self-conscious, universal, social, planned, and free.⁵⁵ (Man is free if "'nature is his work and his reality,' so that he 'recognizes himself in a world he has himself made'.")⁵⁶

The "final theme of philosophy" opens problems and possibilities which are no longer philosophical. The self-realization of man now requires the explanation, understanding, and abolition of certain modes of labor. The critique begins in philosophical terms because the "enslavement of labour" and its emancipation are both conditions that affect the very foundation of human existence and go beyond the framework of traditional political economy.⁵⁷ Marx, of course, departs from philosophical terminology in the elaboration of his own theory. However, Marcuse points out: "The critical, transcendental character of economic categories, hitherto expressed by philosophical concepts, later, in Capital, is demonstrated by the economic categories themselves."⁵⁸ A few further points need to be made.

Marcuse elaborates Marx's notion of alienated labor in its complex social forms. We cannot, for obvious reasons of space, develop this specific discussion.⁵⁹ It is important to note, however, the different levels of analysis. On the one hand, Marx's discussion of man's alienation from his product, process, fellowman, and species

being is developed. Under the capitalist mode of production, it is concluded, "the worker does not affirm but contradicts his essence." The concept of second nature summarizes this state of alienation.⁶⁰ History is nature's coming to be in self-consciousness. Yet a distinction persists. Man is of nature and makes history, but nature is not made by man.

The distinction is vital: if it is lost then the laws of history are simply equated with the laws of nature; they are made timeless and unchangeable. Rather the laws in history exist, are natural, blind, and fateful, but are ultimately grounded in human institutions. They are specifically historical; they can be changed.⁶¹

In an essay on Karl Popper, Marcuse writes that: "The less a society is rationally organized and directed by the collective efforts of free men, the more it will appear as an individual governed by 'inexorable' laws. . . ." ⁶²

The dialectical analysis of social reality . . . shows this reality to be overpowered by objective mechanism that operates with the necessity of "natural" (physical) laws. . . . The movement is dialectical in itself inasmuch as it is not yet piloted by the self-conscious activity of freely associating individuals.⁶³

The analysis of economic, objective facts becomes necessary in order to grasp the complex cycle of the reproductive processes of civil society. But in such an analysis itself, objective facts are not simply facts: they come "alive and enter an indictment of society." An economic theory cannot but in turn be a critical theory. "Economic

realities exhibit their own inherent negativity."

In Marx, as for Hegel, dialectical analysis moves from appearance to essence, from immediacy to potentiality. Critical theory follows and explicates the existential dialectic by taking cognizance of the fact that the negation inherent in reality is "the moving and creating principle," the labor process.

The dialectic is the "dialectic of negativity"--every fact is more than a fact; it is a negation and restriction of real possibilities. Wage labour is a fact, but at the same time it is a restraint on free work that might satisfy human needs. Private property is a fact, but at the same time it is a negation of man's collective appropriation of nature. . . . Man's social practice embodies the negativity as well as its overcoming.⁶⁴

From an understanding of labor in general, the dialectics of labor, we can make explicit what is immanently possible, potential, and available to determinate negation. But, Marcuse stresses, this can only be done in historical analysis. It is a central tenet of Marcuse's analysis that man's capacity to realize his essence evolves and changes over time. So, on the other hand, the analysis of alienated labor must be supplemented with an analysis of its continually changing social form, and, also, of the positive concept of essence rooted in it.

Here again the development from Hegel is essential. Hegel's philosophy, Marcuse argues, revolves around the universality of

reason; it was a rational system with each moment, its every part (the subjective and objective, of for-itselfness and in-itselfness) integrated into a comprehensive, structured, self-unfolding whole. Marx shows, and this is the crucial development, in Marcuse's view, that capitalist society first put such a universality into practice.

Capitalism developed the productive forces for the totality of a uniform social system. Universal commerce, universal competition and the universal interdependence of labour were made to prevail and transformed men into "world-historical, empirically universal individuals."⁶⁵

This universality is, of course, a negative one for the productive forces, man's products, impinge on him as uncontrolled alien power, second nature. But in concrete, social theoretic analysis, Marx uncovers in the dynamic of this social formation and mode of production (under the laws of capitalist accumulation and value, etc.)⁶⁶ the objective possibility of this negativity being negated. One class in capitalist society makes this possible and points in the direction of another historical structure which is present as a tendency.

The proletariat is distinguished by the fact that, as a class it signifies the negation of all classes. The interests of all other classes are essentially one-sided; the proletariat's interest is essentially universal.⁶⁷

How can we conceive, ground, and justify the claimed "universal interests"? Marcuse's answer is worth quoting at length:

The universality of the proletariat is, again, a negative universality, indicating that the alienation of labour has intensified. . . . The labour of the proletarian prevents any self-fulfillment; his work negates his entire existence. This utmost negativity, however, takes a positive turn. The very fact that he is deprived of all assets of the prevailing system sets him beyond this system. He is a member of the class "which is really rid of the old world and at the same time stands pitted against it." The "universal character" of the proletariat is the final basis for the universal character of the communist revolution. . . . The proletariat is the negation not only of certain particular human potentialities, but also of man as such. All specific distinguishing marks by which men are differentiated lose their validity. . . . (Property, culture, religion, nationality). . . . His concern to exist is not the concern of a given group, class or nation, but is truly universal and "world historical."⁶⁸

Capitalism puts universality into practice and creates the possibility of "universal reason." It creates a subject that represents the universality of man, for its structural and historical determinants create the conditions for the realization of man's species nature. Capitalism fulfills the condition of necessary universality; it revolutionizes the productive forces and creates the possibility of production free from the immediacy of physiological needs; it socializes production; "all" that is required and left is that men recognize and repudiate fetishism, the appearance and form of capital, and with their (ever-present) "purposive-will," will history their own.

Few other than Marcuse have appreciated the immense difficulties involved in this last step and the blocks to its realization.⁶⁹

It is here, however, that Critical theory--as we have expounded it-- finds its role. And it is the immanent possibility of the confluence of historical developments and human essence, the becoming of man's species characteristics, that directs this theoretical labor. We asked earlier how we could interpret the concept of truth in the following passage of Marcuse:

Theory accompanies the practice at every moment, analyzing the changing situation and formulating its concepts accordingly. The concrete conditions for realizing the truth may vary, but the truth remains the same and theory remains its ultimate guardian. Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionary practice deviates from its proper path.⁷⁰

We are now in a situation to offer a reading and interpretation. It was argued that the labor process is pivotal in the constitution of being; that the dialectics of labor disclose the unfolding of man and his powers in history. In the Frankfurt School reading, however, the dialectic is, as we have seen, unconcluded and open. Read in this way the theory of labor and needs attempts to surmount the difficulties raised by our questions to the first argumentation. The potential for man to realize his essence is conceived as being historical and dynamic. Marx was read as resting his theory on the assumption that the labor process determines the totality of human existence and thus gives to society its basic patterns. As manifest in capitalism, the "productive activity" of man was said to have

created the possibility of realizing species nature. The truth of this process and its immanent potentiality is the world constitutive activity of labor. The key constitutive element in the overcoming of capitalism and authoritarianism emerges as dependent on the historical and pivotal role of the proletariat. The truth claims of Critical theory are intertwined with man's historico-practical activity and rest, consequently, on a philosophy of materialism, an analysis of labor, and, therefore, on the species characteristics of man. The analysis of modes of labor and production can, as a consequence, be empirical, analytic, and critical. The interest in freedom and a rational social order is grounded in every act of labor. Every moment of labor anticipates the fulfillment of the species characteristics of man, an enduring and lasting self-fulfillment of existence in the actuality of all its possibilities. The "universal validity" and "objectivity" of this "reconstructed" school of Critical theory finds its foundation in an analysis of labor itself.

Therefore, for Marcuse, the parameters of theory are set by the nature of man's social practice, his labor. In an analysis of labor, the claim is made, we find the foundation of the unity of theory and practice. But this unity is not to be understood as a simple identity. In an analysis of the essence of labor, theory finds a basis that is both internal to practice and independent of its given

form. Critical theory is grounded in a notion of theoretical truth that is both of practice, i. e., an expression of its essence, and irreducible to its historical manifestation at any given moment.

* * * * *

Marcuse emphasizes that Marx's conception of reality as dialectical was "originally motivated by the same datum as Hegel's, namely, by the negative character of reality."

In the social world this negativity carried forward the contradictions of class society and thus remained the motor of the social process. Every single fact and condition was drawn into this process so that its significance could be grasped only when seen in this totality to which it belonged. For Marx, as for Hegel, "the truth" lies only in the whole, the "negative totality."⁷¹

Social reality, however, can only be conceived as a negative totality in the process of abstraction, a process which is imposed on Critical theory by the very structure of its subject matter. The analysis of the labor process continually reveals the necessity to move through two fundamental levels of analysis. We must first grasp in its immediacy, the fetishized world of appearances, the "pseudo-concrete," and in so doing we must follow the abstractions that make up this world. The second step is then "the abstraction from the abstraction" (Marcuse) to the true concrete world, to essence.

Accordingly, the Marxian and Critical theory of capitalism elaborates first, the abstract relations such as commodity, exchange value, money, wages, and returns from to the concrete totality, the structural tendencies that lead to its self-generated collapse and to immanent and potentially successful emergence of a socialist totality.

The negativity of reality is an historical and social condition, the analysis of it always historical. The study of any moment of the "world of men" is, Marcuse argues, inescapably embedded in the structure of the socio-historical process. But what the relationship of part to whole is, is little developed. Bertell Ollman, developing Karl Kosik's notion of the concrete totality, provides an important elucidation of the dialectical relation of whole to parts which can be employed here with consistency to the theoretical position. Ollman argues that the dialectical and materialist conception of totality in Marx views the whole as "the structured interdependence of its relational parts, the interacting events, processes, and conditions of the 'real' world."⁷² Through the constant interaction and development of these parts, the whole also changes, realizing (some of) the possibilities given in prior stages.

Flux and interaction, projected back into the origins of the present and forward into its possible future, are the chief distinguishing characteristics of the world in this view. . . . Since this interdependence

is structured--that is, rooted in relatively stable connections--the same interaction accords the whole a relative autonomy, enabling it to have relation as a whole with the parts whose order and unity it represents.⁷³

These relations are of four types:

(1) The whole shapes the parts to make them more functional within this particular whole (so it is that capitalism, for example, gets the laws it requires); (2) the whole gives meaning and relative importance to each part in terms of this function (laws in capitalism are only comprehensible as elements in a structure that maintains capitalist society, and are as important as the contribution they make); (3) the whole expresses itself through the part, so that the part can be seen as a form of the whole . . . (a study of any major capitalist law which includes its necessary conditions and results will be a study of capitalism); and (4) the relations of the parts with each other, as suggested above, forge the contours and meaning of the whole, transform it into an ongoing system with a history, a goal, and an impact.⁷⁴

The analysis of any part of the socio-historical process cannot and must not avoid the analytic process of totalization. Nor can the part simply be subsumed under the whole. The development of man in history, the changing forms of human practice, can only be grasped if each moment is conceived as embedded in the whole, the Unabgeschlossene Dialektik of labor. Likewise, the totality cannot be understood without reference to its constituents, the consciousness and self-consciousness of men.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under

circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.⁷⁵

* * * * *

The theoretical position we developed above grounds Marxism as a materialist critique in an analysis of the labor process. The foundations of this process, it was argued, embody and anticipate the "universal interests" of the species, the fulfillment of man's species nature, in a rational social order that conforms to the "good," the "just," and the "true." It attempts to uncover an immanent relationship between truth and freedom in history and, at one and the same time, avoid relativism (being class, culture, and time bound) and, yet, be inextricably intertwined with historical process and social struggle. There are several directions one could take in commenting on this reconstructed position. For example, much needs to be said about the relationship between causality and teleology or for what passes under the concept "dialectic." However, we must restrict ourselves to the essential themes of this chapter.

The "philosophical anthropology" of our theory of labor attempts to avoid the pitfalls and epistemological circles of Lukács' theory of the standpoint of the proletariat and that of Horkheimer's

static epistemology. The question is, whether the difficulties of the previous positions we addressed are resolved, recast, or determinately negated (preserved and superseded). A number of major points need to be made.

The theory of labor as it was developed in the first and second argumentation says very little about man's suggested "universal essence." The notion of unalienated labor is ill developed. Yet its "unpacking," concretization and expansion seems of central importance if it is to become something more than an abstract, metaphysical standard recognizable only by "isolated" theorists. How can we or might we recognize this essence, know its content, let alone deduce institutional structures compatible with its principles? How are we to differentiate what is argued to be immanent and potential from those that claim to represent such a standpoint, e.g., the party, intellectuals, critical theorists? Are there criteria that make such distinctions possible and are there unique principles of social and political organization that follow from the premises of the theory? Or are there a multitude of competing moral and political standpoints compatible with "labor's" uncovered telos? Herbert Marcuse has said that in a rationally organized society, he believes, labor can win back its "originally libidinous" character.⁷⁶ Marx, on the other hand, attacked the (Fourier) thesis that labor could

become play in a free society. In the Grundrisse, he chastized and ridiculed Fourier's romantic, "'naive, dreaming shop-girls' view" that labour must become fun: "Really free labour, e.g., composing, is at the same time grimly serious, the most intensive effort." 77

If the notion of species nature is to have empirical import the issues raised by the questions above cannot be glossed over. 78

A further objection emerges from those above. The (possible) convergence of reason, freedom, species nature, was said to be immanent in labor. As we asked of Horkheimer earlier, we must ask here: who is justified in interpreting this criterion? A group of critical theorists, intellectuals? Although certainly not conceived as such, the theory is, in fact, potentially "elitist." Without a conscious theoretical defense of the possible political need for a "party," "leadership," etc., the theory faces the danger of lapsing into an unconscious, dogmatic, elitism which becomes even more serious given the lack of explicated principles for political and social organization and action.

Furthermore, if the theory of labor is to have analytic, empirical and critical import, it becomes important to be able to recognize true from false needs, ideologically distorted from reflected/true interests and to explore their relationship to social development. The theoretical position that we developed above, argues that despite

and given alienation, labor still embodies "human specificity" (the possibility of fulfilling species nature, etc.); that the development of man in labor, is the unfolding of man and his powers in history; that the dialectic is unconcluded but potentially "concluded" (i.e., that man can break through the current structures of unfreedom toward ever greater realization). Yet given the continuance of domination in Eastern Europe, with oft-expressed political suspicion of free thought (rationalized by use of Marxist terminology); the absence of a universal proletariat; the developments of 20th-century capitalism (and the emergence of revolutions in the Third World, etc.),⁷⁹ the theoretical position is faced with "discrepancies" which unless it can (begin to) account for has no recourse but to lapse, for example, into the static, epistemological position of a Horkheimer and/or fall open to the charge of investing groups and classes in the life world with a 'conceptual mythology'.¹⁸⁰ What seems required is a theory of labor that embodies a more developed theory of human needs and their relationship to historical developments and social evolution. In this light, Habermas' suggestion that the dynamics of human practice embody two essential moments (that are interdependent but irreducible) speaks of an alternative view of the interconnection between labor, needs, and social evolution (and, therefore, the motor of history) that is deserving of close consideration.⁸¹

The problem of grounding is unresolved in the works of those we discussed in the last two chapters. The theoretical cores of these writers' works are (as yet?) quite insufficient to provide a foundation for an epistemology and methodology that supersedes the series of problems posed in our concluding remarks to Chapter 5, and in our Introduction to Chapter 6. There is little doubt in my view that the works we have discussed here have made a significant contribution in providing, amongst other things, a critique of many of the aspects of the thought of the previous schools discussed. As such their work is true to the central task Critical theory was and has set. But to the extent that Critical theory does not maintain a wholly critical and negative attitude to other theories, views, and interested standpoints and, as we have argued, maintains a positive ideal of ultimate theoretical and methodological principles, it is found to be inadequate. The basis for the distinction between the contexts of constitution and justification within the works discussed appears deficient. The moment of independence the authors sought to give theory is on very fragile ground. Whether or not Habermas' position can and does go beyond the position(s) we have just outlined is, as yet, an open question. This question is a central topic of the remainder of our work.

NOTES

¹ Cf. Arato, "Lukács' Theory of Reification"; also Paul Piccone, "Dialectics and Materialism in Lukács," Telos 11 (1972): 105-35.

² See references listed under note 36, chap. 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx (London: New Left Books, 1973).

⁵ The entire Ontology has not, as yet, been published. A brief summary of his views can be found in Georg Lukács, Die ontologischen Grundlagen des menschlichen Denkens und Handelns (Vienna: Hundsblume Editione, 1970). Also, Georg Lukács, "The Dialectic of Labour," Telos 6 (1970): 162-74.

⁶ Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. xvii.

⁷ Ibid., p. xviii.

⁸ James Schmidt, "From Tragedy to Dialectics," p. 251. For an elaboration of this telos, cf. Karl Marx, Early Writings, trans. and ed. T.B. Bottomore (London: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 159-60.

⁹ Quoted in Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, p. 6. See Marx, Early Writings, p. 154.

¹⁰ Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, p. 6

¹¹ The notion of "species nature" in Marx is discussed on pp. 374 ff. below.

¹² George Lukács, "Interview on His Life and Work," New Left Review, no. 68 (1971), p. 51.

¹³ Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p. 79.

¹⁴ For a discussion of this rejection, see *ibid.*, chap. 1.

¹⁵ The concepts of undifferentiated and differentiated unity are usefully developed in Gerry A. Cohen, "Marx's Dialectic of Labour," Philosophy and Public Affairs 3 (1974): 253-61.

¹⁶ Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p. 99 (and quoting Hegel, Enzyelopadeie, vol. 11, Naturphilosophie, p. 36, Miller, p. 5.)

¹⁷ Marx, Capital, vol. 1, p. 178.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p. 100.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-7.

²¹ Cf. Marx Wartofsky, "Towards an Historical Epistemology," (Cambridge, Mass.: January 1974, unpublished lectures at M. I. T.).

²² Quoted in Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, pp. 27-28.

²³ Marx, Early Writings, pp. 120-34, 152-67, 168-78, 189-94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Cf. Karl Marx, The German Ideology (New York: International Publishers, 1973), pp. 50-52.

²⁷ I owe this point to Michael Gordy's unpublished paper, "Marx's Ethics."

²⁸ Marx, The German Ideology, p. 51.

²⁹ Gordy, "Marx's Ethics," p. 14.

³⁰ Quoted in Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, p. 29.

³¹ Ibid., p. 30 (and quoting from Marx, Grundrisse, p. 78).

³² Quoted in Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, p. 31. Cf. Marx, Early Writings, pp. 120-34.

³³ Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, p. 34.

³⁴ Marx, Early Writings, pp. 120-34. Cf. for an elaboration and discussion of the arguments, Ollman, Alienation; Istvan Mészáros, Marx's Theory of Alienation (London: Merlin, 1972).

³⁵ Ollman, Alienation, p. 134.

³⁶ Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," Negations, p. 73.

³⁷ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 257.

³⁸ Marcuse, "Sartre's Existentialism," Studies in Critical Philosophy, pp. 188-89.

³⁹ Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," Negations, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid. (emphasis mine).

⁴¹ Norman Geras, "Marx and the Critique of Political Economy," in Ideology and the Social Sciences, ed. Robin Blackburn (London: Fontana, 1972), p. 294. Cf. Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," Negations, pp. 69-71; also, Cohen, "Karl Marx and the Withering Away of Social Science."

⁴² Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," Negations, p. 85.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 85-86.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 76-80. Cf. also references listed under note 74, chap. 6.

⁴⁶ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp. 272-73.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labour," p. 12 (and quoting Marx and Engels, Gesamtausgabe, Band 1, Abtg. 3, pp. 157, 168).

⁴⁹ Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labour," p. 13 (and quoting Marx, Kapital, Volksaug., ed. Karl Kautsky (Berlin, 1928), Band 1, p. 10).

⁵⁰ Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labour," p. 13 (and quoting Gottl, Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft [Jena, Germany, 1931], p. 442).

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁵³ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 275 (and quoting Marx, Okonomisch-Philosophische Manuskripte (1844) in Marx and Engels, Gesamtausgabe, Band 3 (Berlin, 1932), pp. 87-88.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 274-76.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 275 (and quoting Marx as in reference 49 above, p. 89).

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 276.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid*, pp. 273-87.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of "second-nature" see Russell Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy from Lukács to the Frankfurt School," Telos 10 (1971), especially pp. 141-44.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 141-42.

⁶² Herbert Marcuse, "Notes on the Problem of Historical Laws," Partisan Review 26 (1959): p. 117 ff.

⁶³ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, 1. 316.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 282.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 287 (and quoting Marx, The German Ideology, p. 64).

⁶⁶ For an explication of these laws, see Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp. 295-312. Or Paul Mattick, Marx and Keynes (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1969); Ernest Mandel, Marxist Economic Theory, vol. 1 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

⁶⁷ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 291.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 291-92

⁶⁹ Cf., for example, Marcuse, Soviet Marxism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Five Lectures (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970); One Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

⁷⁰ Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p. 322.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 312-13.

⁷² Bertell Ollman, "Marxism and Political Science," Politics and Society 3 (1973): 496. Also see Karel Kosík, Die Dialektik des Konkreten, trans. from Czech by Marianne Hoffman (Frankfurt, 1967).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Karl Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

⁷⁶ Marcuse, "Trieblehre und Freiheit," printed in Freud in der Gegenwart (Frankfurt, 1957), p. 418. Quoted in Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx.

⁷⁷ Marx, Grundrisse, p. 505. Cf. also pp. 595-99. Quoted in Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx.

⁷⁸ The problems are not necessarily insurmountable within the tenets of the theory, i. e., what is missing--e. g., a theory of socialism and political institutions--could be developed within the terms of reference of the theory.

⁷⁹ See the brief discussion of these issues on p.333 ff

⁸⁰ See our earlier discussion of Lukács for an elaboration of this point.

⁸¹ Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, especially chaps. 2, 3, and the Appendix. The position is outlined in considerable detail below.

PART IV

JÜRGEN HABERMAS' THEORY OF THE RELATION
OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN
THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

Habermas' project is a breathtaking attempt to develop the idea of a theory of society conceived with a practical intention: "the self-emancipation of men from the constraints of unnecessary domination in all its forms."¹ Habermas' work can also be seen as a sweeping attempt to fulfill this project through a reexamination of the relationship between theory and practice. Critical theory, it is argued, cannot treat as self-evident the relationship of theory and practice. It has, in Habermas' view, to continually demonstrate and reaffirm this relationship in practice and in theory. The project is conceived as a ". . . struggle for the critical soul of science" and "the scientific soul of criticism."² Critique, or critical social science, finds its place, Habermas argues, between philosophy and science. Habermas rejects an attempt to return to the ontological and epistemological views of classical philosophy but "seeks to reformulate and defend some of its central theses: the inseparability of truth and goodness, of facts and values, of theory and practice. With these theses stands or falls the attempt to provide philosophical foundations for a critical theory of society, for a social theory with a practical intention."³

The imperative to reformulate the relations between theory and practice derives its force, for Habermas, from the "course of history." Twentieth-century history is seen to be characterized by the degeneration of the Russian Revolution into Stalinism and technocratic social management. Likewise, the (as yet) failure of mass revolution in the West, the absence of mass proletarian revolutionary class consciousness and a Marxist theory which was and is frequently either a deterministic, objectivistic science (consequentially legitimating the diremption of "revolutionary practice" from the formation of class consciousness)⁴ or a pessimistic cultural critique (which did less to integrate Marxist political economy and socio-cultural, psychological dimensions than replace the former with the latter),⁵ are all seen to be dominant features of recent decades. Above all, capitalist society is argued to have changed both its appearance and perhaps its essence. State intervention grows; the market place is supported and replaced; capitalism is increasingly "organized"; education, science, and technology contribute significantly to the productivity of labor and also become ideological; instrumental reason and bureaucracy seemingly ever expand and depoliticize the public sphere, etc.⁶

These events and others, Habermas contends, not only call into question interpretations of Marx, but the adequacy of his work

to account, for example, for class, class consciousness, the possibility of a revolutionary subject, and the relationship between theory and practice in theory and in practice. Habermas, therefore, finds it necessary to go back to Marx's social theory, epistemology, and self-understanding in order to locate sources of possible misunderstanding. He further attempts to explore the epistemological and methodological adequacy of the human sciences in order to check the sufficiency of Marx's work itself. Before turning to Habermas' analysis of Marx's writings, a brief summary of the overall structure of this project can usefully be noted.

Habermas begins his work by dividing Marx's category of "sensuous human activity" into two aspects. These are the self-generative and self-formative moments or as he calls them elsewhere--purposive-rational action and communicative action. From the second moment he derives a third--the emancipatory moment--in his discussion of the possibility of systematically distorted communication.⁷

The result of Habermas' analysis of these three moments is a tricotomous model of the human species' interests (generalized motives), mediums (structured activities) and sciences. The interests are:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the practical 2. the technical 3. the emancipatory | } | <p>which unfold
in three
mediums;</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. interaction 2. work 3. authority | } | <p>which give rise
to the conditions
for the possibility
of three sciences;</p> |

1. the hermeneutic
2. the empirical-analytic
3. the critical

In Chapters 4 and 5 (in the sections entitled "Structures of Action and Knowledge"), we have already seen how Habermas attempts to ground the empirical-analytic and hermeneutic sciences in the species' activities constituted by the technical and practical interests respectively. It is one of Habermas' central claims that the respective sciences only systematize and formalize the procedures required for successful completion of the human species' three structured activities.

Pivotal to the grounding of the three sciences is the theory of interests. It is in this theory that we find Habermas' initial attempt to ground criteria of objectivity and truth specific to each science and object domain. However, Habermas has recently recognized

the need to develop further in his work the distinctions between processes of constitution and justification (which he now regards as inadequately specified in his theory of interests). This he attempts to do in his theory of communicative competence. In this theory he seeks to ground the respective sciences within the problematic of Critical theory and science. This project, we argue, despite its systematicness, is--in the last analysis--not much more successful than the attempts to ground critical theory that we have already discussed.

The development of this part of the thesis will have a somewhat different structure to those hitherto. In the next six chapters our task will be primarily exegetical, although I hope to highlight certain difficulties and questions throughout. The stress on exegesis is made because Habermas' work is extremely difficult if not obscure in many places. As a consequence, a step-by-step construction of his various positions seems not only worthwhile but necessary.⁸ Furthermore, this exegesis of Habermas' work will draw whenever and wherever helpful on the work of his colleagues and those who share with him certain common positions. These authors often help to elucidate and interpret Habermas' work.⁹ It will not be until the last chapter of this part that I will try and develop a critique of Habermas' work as a whole.

NOTES

¹ McCarthy, from his Introduction to Habermas' Legitimation Crisis, p. xf.

² Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, p. 53.

³ McCarthy, Introduction to Habermas' Legitimation Crisis, p. xv.

⁴ This may take a variety of forms from the polar opposites of vanguard activism to quietism. These issues are taken up further on pp. 536-37.

⁵ For a developed example of this criticism, see Paul Mattick, "The Limits of Integration," in The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honor of Herbert Marcuse, ed. Kurt H. Wolff and Barrington Moore (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

⁶ For an elaboration of these arguments, see Habermas, Theory and Praxis, pp. 3-6, 195-99.

⁷ Cf. Habermas' critique of Gadamer discussed on pp. 297-302.

⁸ The following texts of Habermas are those we will be most concerned with:

Towards a Rational Society.

Theory and Practice.

Knowledge and Human Interests.

"On Systematically Distorted Communication," Inquiry, vol. 13 (1970).

"Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence," Inquiry 13 (1970). (These last two articles are reprinted in Recent Sociology, ed. Dreitzel, vol. 2 (New York: 1972).

"A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," Philosophy of the Social Sciences, vol. 3, no. 2 (1973).

Of less immediacy are Habermas,

"On Social Identity," Telos 19 (1974).

"What Does a Crisis Mean Today? Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism," Social Research, vol. 40, no. 4 (1973).

"Rationalism Divided in Two: A Reply to Albert," trans Glyn Adey and David Frisby, in Positivism and Sociology, ed.

Anthony Giddens (London: Heineman, 1974).

"The Public Sphere," trans Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, New German Critique, no. 3 (1974).

"Summation and Response."

⁹For a concise statement of a position close to Habermas, see Apel, "The A Priori of Communications and the Foundations of the Humanities."

Other works that parallel, to a significant extent, Habermas' work are:

Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society.

Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience.

Schroyer, The Critique of Domination.

Schroyer's work is also a helpful introductory statement; further useful introductions are included in Fred Dallymar, "Reason and Emancipation: Notes on Habermas," Man and World, vol. 5, no. 1 (1972).

An excellent summary of the (as yet developed) theory of communicative competence, with some useful criticism, is Thomas A. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," Philosophy of Social Science, vol. 3, no. 2 (1973).

Papers that aid the historical location of Habermas' project are: Jeremy J. Shapiro, "The Dialectic of Theory and Practice in the Age of Technological Rationality: Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas," in The Unknown Dimension, ed. Dick Howard and K. Klare (New York, 1972); Albrecht Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation: Reflections on the 'Linguistic Turn' in Critical Theory," Stony Brook Studies in Philosophy; McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity in the Early Writings of Max Horkheimer." McCarthy's Introduction to Legitimation Crisis is also extremely useful in providing both historical and clarificatory remarks.

The critical literature on Habermas is extensive. A lengthy bibliography of relevant references is found in Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," and Theory and Practice, pp. 283-86. See also O. Blanchette, "Language, The Primordial Labor of History: A Critique of Critical Social Theory in Habermas," Cultural Hermeneutics, vol. 1 (1974); Fred Dallymar, "Critical Theory Criticized," Philosophy of Social Sciences, vol. 2, no. 3

(1972). This issue of the journal also includes critical articles by C. Lenhardt, M. Hill, C. Nichols, and N. Lobkowicz; see also Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection"; Dick Howard, "A Politics in Search of the Political," Theory and Society, vol. 1, no. 3 (1973); P. Laska, "A Note on Habermas and the Labor Theory of Value," New German Critique, no. 3 (1974); F. Lawrence, "Dialectic and Hermeneutic: Foundation Perspectives on the Relationship Between Human Studies and the Project of Human Self-Constitution," Stony Brook Studies in Philosophy; M. Jay, "Some Recent Developments in Critical Theory," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, vol. 18 (1973-74); James Schmidt, "Reply to Martin Jay," Telos, no. 21 (1974); Göran Therborn, "Habermas: A New Eclectic," New Left Review, no. 67 (1971); and Walton and Gamble, From Alienation to Surplus Value, pp. 43-50.

CHAPTER VIII

AN INTERPRETATION AND CRITIQUE OF MARX

Habermas is concerned to uncover a fundamental ambiguity that he sees in Marx's writings. Habermas contends that in his philosophy of materialism, Marx is ambiguous between two moments. As we shall see, Habermas refers to these moments as the Kantian and Fichtean strains in Marx's thought. The focus of Habermas' concern is with an analysis of "sensuous human activity" or "social labour," which he takes to be the central category of Marx's materialism.

Marx is, of course, no vulgar materialist. On Marx's account, nature becomes objective for us only through the labour process in which both nature and the laboring subjects are themselves transformed. It is in this sense, that we previously noted one may talk of the dialectics of nature in Marx. Men and women are both of nature and through them, "nature attains self-consciousness and amalgamates with itself by virtue of their theoretical-practical activity."¹ This activity constitutes nature's self-movement and the basis for its self-consciousness.

Through labor we both evolve qua human species and alter the

framework of experience. Labor becomes the "dialectic of negativity, as the moving and creating principle."² The basis of experience, the conditions and grounds of possible knowledge, can be conceived in the notion of material synthesis. The synthesis of material labor unites the historical subject and the process of nature. But synthesis through social labor neither generates a logical structure nor creates an absolute unity of men and nature. "Like Kant's original apperception, the materialist concept of synthesis preserves the difference between form and matter."³ The categories are, of course, not those of the Understanding but of the form-giving character of human production. As Marx put it, "In his production man can only proceed like nature herself, that is only by changing the forms of the substances."⁴

Habermas argues that there are certain Kantian residues in Marx's thought. In his view what is Kantian about Marx's conception of knowledge is the "invariant relation of the species to its natural environment," which is established through the labour processes which are "the perpetual natural necessity of human life." (Marx.) The arguments are worth exploring at greater length for there is, Habermas contends, an ambiguity in Marx's epistemological category.

In the last section of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx argues that we find the clues for a materialist

interpretation of history in Hegel's grasping of the self-creation of man as process. In Marx's view, Hegel's work lays the foundation for a philosophy of labor. However, in these early writings, Marx opposes his philosophy of labor ("naturalism" or "humanism") to both the philosophies of labor of the traditions of idealism and materialism; "only naturalism is able to comprehend the process of world history."⁵ In his first Thesis on Feuerbach, Marx summarizes his sublation of idealism and materialism:

The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the object or contemplation (Anschauung); but not as sensuous human activity, as practice; not subjectively. Hence in opposition to materialism the active side was developed abstractly by idealism--which of course does not know real sensuous activity as such.⁶

Marx interprets this "sensuous human activity" in juxtaposition to the abstract "active side" of idealism, which in turn was developed (in part) to counteract the objectivism of materialism. As such, Marx's concept of human activity has, Wellmer argues, "the peculiar status of a category which is fundamental both as an anthropological [which refers to the philosophical theory of man] and as an epistemological category."⁷ Marx points to the epistemological import of the category in the second Thesis where he states that "the dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is

isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." The question is a practical one: "Man must prove the truth."⁸ But what does Marx mean by "sensuous activity" or "practice" or by "proving . . . the truth"? As Wellmer points out, "as far as he specifies what he means . . . [he] does not speak of labour, as he does in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts; . . . rather of 'practical-critical activity' or of 'revolutionary activity'."⁹ However, although the theses on Feuerbach directly contain an injunction to learn from idealism insofar as it grasps the "active side" of the cognitive process (i. e., the form or faculty of knowing), Habermas argues that Marx, who is at best ambiguous, essentially develops the philosophy of praxis as a philosophy of labor. In the Manuscripts the difference is rather one of emphasis. In Capital it is at the level of epistemology implicitly reductionist. That is to say, Habermas contends, that "practical activity" becomes synonymous with labor which becomes synonymous with the category of productive labor, instrumental action. The latter takes on a paradigmatic role as the philosophy of practice. In so doing, it is claimed, Marx reduces the self-formative act of the human species to labor. This is not, as yet, to make any claims about Marx's social theory, but to address his philosophical frame of reference. What does Habermas mean?

Habermas begins by attempting to extrapolate the way in which social labor is to be conceived as the synthesis of man and nature in order to understand how "all the elements of a critique of knowledge radicalized by Hegel's critique of Kant are present in Marx and yet are not combined to construct a materialist epistemology." We have already briefly pointed to the Kantian moment of material synthesis. But there is a second non-Kantian component of the concept of synthesis through social labor. There is a twofold relation between man and nature.

On the one hand, the Kantian moment, man is posited as having an invariant relation to nature; a relation in which man struggles to satisfy his needs and reproduce himself in the realm of necessity. Both nature and man are transformed in the process. The unity of the objectivity of possible objects of experience is historically embedded in the "universal structure of mediation constituted by labouring subjects." The Kantian moment reveals that man is engaged in a trial-and-error encounter with nature in his everyday life, acquiring, inquiring, and learning in the realm of feedback-controlled action. The resultant (pragmatic) knowledge increases the range of his control over nature. The knowledge is technically exploitable and belongs to the same category as that which is produced and tested in the natural sciences. Man's relation to nature

is instrumental and is invariant, for the natural processes over which he must secure control to reproduce life cannot be abolished. In a letter to Kugelmann, Marx wrote: "Natural laws can absolutely not be abolished. What can change in different historical states is only the form in which these laws take effect."¹⁰ "Only because," Habermas argues, "the conditions of the objectivity of possible natural-scientific knowledge are rooted in a deep-seated structure of human action can statements of laws at all claim universal validity. In contrast, the historically changeable form is grounded in the level of development of the forces of production."¹¹ The behavioral system of instrumental action is constituted historically by the unique configuration of existing productive apparatus and the labor of man.

On the other hand, the subject attains consciousness of itself in the strict sense only if it becomes aware of itself in its production or labor as the self-generative act of the species. Labor is often referred to by Marx as social labor. The instrumental activity of man takes place in a symbolically mediated institutional setting (i. e., a framework of norms). The human subject, while produced by the "labour of the entire previous course of world history" achieves identity of self only through the comprehension of the self-formative processes of past generations which are constituted through his own self-positing struggles."¹² This is the Fichtean

moment which is for Marx, of course, a self-conscious positing in historical struggle, not a logical relation between ego and nonego. Self-consciousness is not an "ultimate representation" but an action that "goes back inside itself and thus in its own accomplishment simultaneously makes itself transparent."¹³ The mechanisms for transparency and self-understanding are not those determined by the extension of technical control, but involve a constitutive struggle of reflection and understanding to recover identity.

The Kantian moment of self-generative activity is held to be logically irreducible to the Fichtean moment of self-formative activity. These two generalized modes of activity are, as we shall see, further analyzed by Habermas in his theory of interests. In this theory, the two moments of activity are held to be expressions of the species' generalized motives or "interests," the technical and the practical respectively. Self-generative activity, motivated by man's technical interest, takes place through "productive labor." Self-formative activity, motivated by man's practical interest, takes place through "critical-revolutionary," "practical activity." The "processes of natural history are mediated by the productive activity of individuals and the organization of their interrelations." The species reproduces its life both through learning processes of socially organized labor and processes of mutual understanding in interactions in

ordinary language. Consequentially, the "dialectics of emancipation" involve freeing man from the forces of both outer and inner nature.

In his empirical investigations and the fragments on historical materialism, Marx, in Habermas' view, always takes account of social practice as encompassing both productive labor and practical activity or, as he puts it elsewhere, both work and interaction. Marx incorporates an analysis of the material, i. e., economic, basis of society with an analysis of the institutional framework, the structure of symbolic interaction and the role of cultural tradition. He draws on analytic distinctions between two, dialectically related, "dimensions" of the reproductive process of society. On the one hand, there is the realm of scientific-technical progress which is characterized by "epochal innovations through which functional elements of the behavioural system of instrumental action are reproduced step by step at the level of machines" (forces of production). On the other hand, he distinguishes the institutional realm (the relations of production): These relations are subject to norms, which with the force of institutions, distribute rewards, obligations, and charges. The latter comprises forms of social integration (domination) and social conflict (class struggle). The course of the social self-formative process is marked by stages of reflection through which the "dogmatic character of surpassed forms of domination and ideologies are

dispelled, the pressure of the institutional framework sublimated, and communicative action is set free as communicative action."¹⁴

On the level of epistemology and anthropology the above distinction made by Marx, interpreted by Habermas, would require a concomitant distinction between man as a tool-making and as a language-using, "symbolizing" animal. In contrast, however, at both levels Marx has a strong tendency to incorporate the latter in the former. This is the basis of Habermas' central objection to Marx. Marx is read as granting primacy (at the level of epistemology and anthropology) to man as a tool-making animal. "Sensuous," "practical," activity is absorbed by the "paradigm" of productive labor. "Marx deludes himself about the nature of reflection," critical activity, and the dialectic when he reduces self-reflection to labor. "He identifies" transformative abolition (Aufheben), as objective movement which reabsorbs externalization, "with the appropriation of essential powers that have been externalized in working on material."¹⁵ Fichte's concept of the independence of the self-constituting act of reflection is reduced, Habermas argues, to a feedback relation to the productive process; even though "Marx, himself, retains the framework of the philosophy of reflection." Marx correctly criticized Hegel, in transforming the construction of the manifestation of consciousness into an encoded representation

of the self-production of the species, but in so doing (and probably as a consequence) fails to recognize the epistemological and methodological status of his own work. In the materialist synthesis Marx relegates the Fichtean moment to an area bounded by the Kantian, on the one hand, and Darwin's theory of evolution on the other.

Habermas is aware, of course, that Marx did not obliterate the distinction between productive or instrumental activity and practical and critical activity in his scientific practice. But nowhere, Habermas points out, did he distinguish between the logical status of the instrumental meaning of the natural sciences and sciences of man as critique. We have already briefly discussed Habermas' conception of the technical (instrumental) and practical basis of the natural and social sciences respectively (in the sections "Structures of Action and Knowledge" in Chapters 4 and 5). We have also seen (at the end of Chapter 5) how Habermas, in his debate with Gadamer, stresses the importance of developing a conception of social science that can also be a critical theory or critique of society and ideology. In the following three chapters Habermas' conceptions of both these concerns and themes will be greatly elaborated. In an absence of a knowledge of the next three chapters, I am well aware that at this stage of my exegesis, certain distinctions which I made immediately above and will make immediately below, are not yet fully developed

and clear. At this point, however, it is most important to capture the general structure of Habermas' critique of Marx. We will return to a detailed examination of most of the terms and issues involved throughout the following chapters.

It is central to Habermas' critique of Marx that as a consequence of his tendency to reduce his epistemological categories to the "paradigm" of productive labor, he (Marx) misunderstood the epistemological and methodological status of his own work. On Habermas' account, although Marx himself "established the science of man in the form of critique and not as a natural science, he continually tended to classify it with the natural sciences."¹⁶ Marx makes frequent analogies between the status of his work and that of the natural sciences. The Russian reviewer of Capital is quoted (in an Afterword to the second edition of Capital) with absolute approval. Habermas regards this demand for a natural science of man, with its positivist overtones, as "astonishing."

For the natural sciences are subject to the transcendental conditions of the system of social labour, whose structural change is supposed to be what the critique of political economy as the science of man reflects on. Science in the rigorous sense lacks precisely the element of reflection that characterizes a critique investigating the natural-historical process of the self-generation of the social subject and also making the subject conscious of this process.¹⁹

Since, for Marx, self-reflection is tied to the framework of a feedback

relation to production, and instrumental activity determines the scope of human action, the logically distinct moment of comprehension can be expounded within the explanatory method of the natural sciences. It is a logical consequence of a framework restricted to instrumental action. If we take as our basis a materialist concept of synthesis through social labor, in which the Fichtean moment is bounded by the Kantian, etc., then "both the technically exploitable knowledge of natural science, the knowledge of natural laws, as well as the theory of society, the knowledge of laws of human natural history, belong to the same objective context of the self-constitution of the species." If our knowledge of society is viewed as dependent on the pragmatic self-understanding of social groups which in turn is tied to the development of production, then, the sciences of man also appear under the categories of knowledge for control. So far as production establishes the only framework in which the genesis and function of knowledge can be interpreted, the second Thesis on Feuerbach, as Wellmer suggests, "assumes a purely instrumentalist meaning; natural science becomes the basic paradigm for what theoretical knowledge can be, and the relation between science and industry provides the normative model for the relation between theory and practice and their possible unity."¹⁸

Having said this, Habermas makes it clear that this lack of

epistemological clarification is not found in Marx's social theory, i. e., his theory of capitalism, his critique of political economy. His theory is essentially "critical" theory. It is at one and the same time an analysis of the crisis-ridden dynamics of capitalism and a critique of ideology, i. e., it is both an analysis of political economy (qua political-economic activity) and a critique of political economy (qua an incorrect theory of such activity, and an inadequate view of the nature of theory in social science). It is an empirical theory and a theory of the transformative abolition of exploitation and alienation. It is both science and criticism, a theory of exploitation, etc., which also conceives of itself as the critical consciousness of revolutionary practice. It becomes practical only by awakening class consciousness through initiating self-reflection and a process of self-understanding. The transcendence of the causality of fate and second nature depends on a practice that is the emancipatory activity of a class, not a technical, manipulative practice. On Habermas' reading, there is a basic unresolved tension in Marx between the quasi-reductionism of his anthropological and epistemological categorial framework and the critical, dialectical character of his concrete social investigations.^{19,20}

It is in Habermas' theory of interests that the two interdependent but irreducible moments of social practice are elaborated at the

levels of epistemology and philosophical anthropology. Habermas holds that such an elaboration is crucial to the adequate development of a science of man as a critical science.

NOTES

- ¹ Cf. Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p. 79.
- ² Marx, Early Writings (Bottomore ed.), p. 202.
- ³ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 34.
- ⁴ Marx, Capital, vol. 1, p. 47; quoted in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 34-35.
- ⁵ Marx, Early Writings (Bottomore ed.), pp. 202-6.
- ⁶ Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, Appendix, p. 197
- ⁷ Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 74. Cf. also his Critical Theory of Society, chap. 2.
- ⁸ Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 197.
- ⁹ Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 75.
- ¹⁰ Quoted in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 36.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, p. 139.
- ¹³ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 38.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 55.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 44.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 47.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 46.
- ¹⁸ Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 76. The view is discussed at greater length in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, chaps. 2, 3, 6.
- ¹⁹ There are, however, passages in Marx's writings where his methodological self-reflections clearly could and have been read as "encouraging" the positivist atrophy of his social theory itself. For example, the famous "Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of

Political Economy." (See my comments on this work, pp. 333-36.

²⁰The recognition of this tension and ambiguity provides an opening to understanding the development of Marxism. It also provides us, as Wellmer suggests, "with a key for an evaluation" (but not, of course, for a historical explanation) of the way these issues were resolved in "official," orthodox Marxism into an almost exclusive collapse into the reductionist, determinist side of Marx's thought. It gives us a basis on which to explore Marxism since the time of the Second International and to reconstruct why and how "Western" Marxism attempted to surmount the petrification of Marx in Diamat. Obviously, such a reconstruction cannot be made here. For an interesting beginning, cf. Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," pp. 76-86, although I do not agree with his interpretation of Lukács or the Frankfurt School. Also, Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy from Lukács to the Frankfurt School."

CHAPTER IX

OBJECT DOMAINS AND HUMAN INTERESTS: THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE INTERESTS

Habermas, as we have seen, divides Marx's category of "sensuous human activity," "social labour," into two distinct categories: the self-generative moment, involving the development of technological power (forces of production), and the self-formative moment, which encompasses the organization of social, normative structures (social relations of production) and is the medium of the self-understanding (identity formation) of the human species. These distinctions are further explicated by Habermas in terms of the differences between "instrumental," or "purposive-rational," action and "communicative" action (social interaction). To reformulate the two moments of labor in terms of two distinct types of action is to split, as Wellmer put it, "Marx's concept of 'sensuous activity' into two components which are not reducible to each other--man as a tool-making animal and a speaking animal."¹

As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, in the sections "Structures of Action and Knowledge," this distinction between two types of action basic to the species is, Habermas contends, reflected epistemologically in the difference between natural (or "empirical-analytic") and

hermeneutical ("cultural") sciences. Each type of science generates a different form of knowledge and utilizes a different form of methodology. The distinctions are reflected, in turn, on the level of philosophical anthropology in Habermas' theory of cognitive interests. The theory of interests underlies his overall work in epistemology. It is to an explication of this theory that we must now turn.

The theory of cognitive interests is concerned to uncover the basic conditions for the possibility of knowledge. While accepting the need to understand knowledge as the result of the constituting activity of the cognizing subject, Habermas rejects the Kantian approach of locating such activity in an ahistorical, transcendental subject. Rather, starting with an essential tenet of historical materialism, viz., that history, social reality, and nature (as known)² are all a product of the constituting labor of the human species, Habermas understands knowledge in light of the problems man encounters in his efforts to "produce his existence and reproduce his species-being."

To speak in this context of a basis of interests is justified precisely because the cognitive strategies serving the creation of technical, practical and emancipatory (true) knowledge are related to general classes of problems pertaining to the reproduction of human life, problems which are rooted in the constituent elements of social systems.³

It is Habermas' contention that human existence and interaction with nature is structured in terms of certain fundamental and invariant

needs (the reproduction of social existence) which force man, as long as he maintains a species identity, to organize his experience in terms of a priori interests. That there is such a structure of basic needs, Habermas argues, follows from an understanding of man as essentially both a tool-making and language-using animal. As a tool-using animal, man must produce from nature what is needed for his material existence through the manipulation and control of objects. As a language user, that is, as a fundamentally social animal, man must communicate with his fellow men through the use of intersubjectively understood symbols and within the context of rule-governed institutions. Thus, with regard to the respective needs, the human species has an interest in knowledge which allows it to better control objectified processes and to better communicate with other men. That is, the interests

. . . result from the imperatives of a socio-cultural life-form dependent on labor and language. . . . They are the conditions which are necessary in order that subjects capable of speech and action may have experience which can lay a claim to objectivity.⁴

The interests which serve these needs can be recovered by an examination of the types of knowledge required for the development of these activities and an analysis of the conditions under which such knowledge is possible. Thus for Habermas, ". . . the functions knowledge has in universal contexts of practical life can only be

successfully analyzed in the framework of a reformulated transcendental philosophy."⁵ Epistemologically, such an analysis would be concerned to develop ". . . a theory which is intended to be capable of grasping systematically the constitutive conditions of science and those of its applications."⁶

The argument, in Knowledge and Human Interests, for the distinction between the natural (empirical-analytical) sciences and the hermeneutic sciences, proceeds on the level of an investigation of methodology. In this work Habermas' strategy was to

. . . "encounter" these deep-seated anthropological interests in the attempt to clarify the "constitution" of the facts about which the theoretical statements are possible.⁷

Through an examination of Peirce's and Dilthey's reflections on the nature of the natural and cultural sciences respectively, Habermas, as we have already seen, has attempted to clarify the logical structure of the methodology in the different sciences. The methodology of the natural sciences is structured to generate knowledge in the form of laws and theories which can account for regularities in observable phenomena. Particular phenomena are characteristically conceived only in terms which allow abstraction from their particularity and subsumption under general concepts. Through the use of such general concepts, knowledge in the natural sciences allows for the duplication of conditions and verification via the reproductivity

of results. The methodology of the cultural sciences, as we saw in the chapter on hermeneutics, is structured to allow the recovery of a particularized meaning of an action or expression which is necessarily lost in the generalized terms of language. Verification becomes a matter of consensus concerning an interpretation which can only be attained through the process of a dialogue.

From his investigation of Peirce and Dilthey, Habermas further concludes that ". . . each came up with different prescientific domains of objects of possible experience."⁸ These domains are prescientific insofar as they originate in the activities of everyday life, namely instrumental activity involving objects and communicative activity involving subjects. The respective sciences only systematize and formalize the procedures required for successful completion of these activities. That is,

. . . the object domains of the empirical-analytic and of the hermeneutic sciences are based on these objectifications of reality, which we undertake daily always from the viewpoint either of technical control or intersubjective communication.⁹

Thus taking as an initial fact the existence of the two distinct realms of knowledge as found in the natural and cultural sciences, Habermas argues for the existence of two distinct object domains of knowledge. This fact, he claims,

. . . is revealed by a methodological comparison of the fundamental theoretical concepts, the logical

construction of the theorems, the relationship of theory to the object domain, the criteria of verification, the testing procedures, and so forth.¹⁰

More specifically, knowledge claims of the empirical-analytic sciences ". . . grasp reality with regard to technical control that, under specified conditions, is possible everywhere and at all times."¹¹

Correspondingly, knowledge claims in the hermeneutic sciences ". . . grasp interpretations of reality with regard to possible intersubjectivity of action-orienting mutual understanding specific to a given hermeneutic starting point."¹²

These object domains, that is, those portions of reality disclosed and constituted from the standpoint of the cognitive interests underlying the natural and empirical sciences, can be differentiated on the levels of language, action, and experience.¹³ In the natural sciences, under ideally conceived conditions of instrumental action, sentences would ". . . belong to an either formalized or at least formalizable language."¹⁴ Theory in the rigorous empirical sciences is connected to action by means of certain operations and activities, in particular, systematic observation, experimentation, and operations of measurement. These actions and the monologic language required to express them objectify reality under the conditions of a "restricted mode of experience."¹⁵ For instance, within the transcendental framework of the empirical-analytic sciences, objects

constituted as observable are at the same time objects whose behavior can, potentially, be described in causal laws and consequently, objects which are instrumentally manipulable. It must be remembered that when describing the object domain of the empirical-analytic sciences, Habermas is not discussing an ontologically distinct realm of objects. Rather he is trying to delineate a general orientation which yields a viewpoint from which reality is objectified. That is to say, a knowledge-constitutive interest is to be understood as a basic, underlying mode through which reality is disclosed, constituted, and acted upon. Each interest defines a functional sphere of action as well as a conceptual framework, the latter being a system of concepts and categories which help structure facts about reality as confronted from a particular action-related point of view. Thus Habermas wants to hold that knowledge claims, i. e., statements which we take to be true about the world, must be understood in terms of the types of actions to which they are systematically related and that these forms of action can only be comprehended in light of the basic interests of the species. In other words, there is a systematic relationship between the form of knowledge claims and the uses to which such knowledge can be put. Thus to raise the issue of the object domain constituted by the empirical-analytic sciences is not to question what there is as much as to talk about how reality

can be meaningfully constituted from the point of view of possible experience and a related form of knowledge.

The discussion of the object domain of the empirical-analytical sciences and its relation to instrumental action involves an abstraction from everyday experience. The orientation given by the technical interest is a part of everyday life in the sense that an interest in manipulation and control of objects in our environment is a basic element of normal experience. To formalize the empirical-analytical sciences in terms of theoretical structure and methodology, however, is to attempt to isolate within the flux of experience an orientation and type of action. For these sciences, operations of measurement play a mediating role between language (theory) and experience.

That is,

. . . operations of measurement permit the reversibly univocal correlation of operatively determined events and systematically connected signs. . . . Only a theory of measurement, therefore, can elucidate the conditions of the objectivity of possible knowledge for the nomological sciences.¹⁶

In the hermeneutical sciences, the rules of ordinary language constitute the framework in which communicative action occurs. Communicative action necessarily involves the experiencing of others as subjects of a possible dialogue. Hence objects constituted from the point of view of communicative action must either be language-users or incorporate a dimension of meaningfulness (e.g., texts,

cultural objects, etc.). But to be constituted from the standpoint of possible communication does not mean that the object cannot also be regarded from the point of view of potential manipulation and technical control. Quite the contrary.

. . . "understandable persons" are simultaneously "participants in linguistically mediated interaction," hence something which can be both an object of instrumental action and a rival in interactions.¹⁷

Thus Habermas claims to have uncovered a link between the invariant needs of the human species (structures of action) and the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. Furthermore, he maintains that there is a connection between action which constitutes the objects of experience and allows for the accumulation of knowledge, the uses to which possible knowledge can be put, and the logic of inquiry of the existing sciences. "There is," he argues,

. . . a systematic relationship between the logical structures of a science and the pragmatic structure of the possible applications of the information generated within its framework.¹⁸

These connections, then, must ultimately be located by reference to the fundamental problems of existence and preservation within the framework of the cultural form of life of the human species. The successful solution to these problems is to be understood, Habermas argues, in terms of basic interests of the species in maintaining its existence and identity.

I term interests the basic orientations rooted in specific fundamental conditions of the possible reproduction and self-constitution of the human species, namely work and interaction.¹⁹

The interest ultimately reflected in the empirical-analytic sciences Habermas calls the technical interest. That reflected in the hermeneutical sciences he calls the practical interest.

Besides the technical interest man has in controlling objects in his environment and the practical interest in furthering mutual, intersubjective understanding, Habermas argues that there is a third cognitive interest, an emancipatory interest man has in freeing himself from hypostatized forces and conditions of distorted communication. As we saw in the section on hermeneutics, as soon as it is admitted that the history of mankind embodies repression and distortion, then one cannot assume an uncritical attitude toward any historically realizable consensus. That history is the history of domination and struggle is what Habermas attempts to demonstrate in his reformulation of historical materialism within the context of a theory of social evolution. This theory will be discussed later. For our purposes here, the point is that once we acknowledge the possibility of domination and hence of a forced and therefore false consensus, we have already acknowledged the need for a critical perspective. This need for a critical perspective follows from the need to establish the actuality of a genuine consensus.

The theory of interests, Habermas contends, is rooted in the human species' nature as a tool-maker and language-user. As such, the species can be seen to constitute its world and history. But the human animal, on Habermas' account, is also a self-conscious animal capable of consciously guiding its activities according to principles of knowledge and norms of action that it establishes. It is this capacity as a rational being, i. e., the capacity to self-consciously reason and make decisions in light of available knowledge, rules, and needs, a capacity dependent on the ability to use language, which allows the human species to rise above the level of mere animal instinctual existence. Thus the self-formative process of man is, in potential, a process whereby he consciously and rationally makes his history. But the history of man is not one of fully self-conscious deliberate activity. Rather social structures of repression and ideological distortion have prevented him from fully actualizing his rational capabilities. Thus he has an interest in knowledge which will enable him to overcome those barriers which retard the creation of a world that is rationally organized around self-conscious steering controls. The form of knowledge which allows one to overcome and dissolve distorting and repressive influences is self-knowledge through self-reflection.

Self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinates of a self-formative process of cultivation

and spiritual formation (Bildung) which ideologically determine a contemporary praxis of action and the conception of the world.²⁰

By bringing to consciousness the determinates of the self-formative process, on both the level of the individual and the species, the structures of distortion can be revealed, isolated, and under the proper objective conditions, destroyed.

The impetus to overcome conditions of ideological distortion and repressive power is identified with the emancipatory interest in knowledge. Historically, this interest is found as a prominent theme in German Idealism, particularly in Fichte's concept of interested self-reflection and Hegel's description of the self-formative development of consciousness in the Phenomenology.²¹ It is in man's potential ability to be a self-conscious, rational, and therefore free being that Habermas finds the basis of the emancipatory interest. The interest is an interest in reason, in man's capacity to be self-reflective and self-determining, to act rationally.

In self-reflection, knowledge for the sake of knowledge comes to coincide with the interest in autonomy and responsibility (Mündigkeit). For the pursuit of reflection knows itself as a moment of emancipation. Reason is at the same time subject to the interest in reason. We can say that it obeys an emancipatory cognitive interest, which aims at the pursuit of reflection.²²

The relationship between knowledge and interest is different for the emancipatory interest than it is for the technical and practical

interests. With the latter, the act of knowing is separable from the act of satisfying the interest. Knowledge in the natural and cultural sciences is not immediately or automatically utilized in such a way as to satisfy the need which gave rise to the interest in such knowledge. Theory can be engaged in independently of practical activity, i. e., of the utilization of the knowledge. There is, however, an immanent link between these moments which can be comprehended only through reflection on the conditions of possible knowledge. Habermas has attempted in his theory of cognitive interests to uncover this underlying connection. As concerns the emancipatory interest, the gap between theory and practice is of a different form. The need which gives rise to the interest in freedom is conceived materialistically as the experiencing of suffering and exploitation due to structures of power and patterns of distorted communication. The act of knowing associated with the emancipatory interest is that of self-reflection which reconstructs the history of an individual (or species) in such a way as to destroy the ideological distortions which had prevented complete self-knowledge. Through self-reflection, the individual can become aware of the compulsion, of the causality of fate, which these forces have exerted over him. He is, in this manner, able to gain self-transparency concerning his needs and motivations. Thus this same act of knowing frees the person from

the systematically distorted meaning structures. In this way, the act of knowing, i. e., the moment of theory, coincides with the act which achieves the goal of the interest, viz., emancipation from hypostatized forces. Furthermore, it is only through the act of reflection on the self-formative process of the species that man can become aware of the connection between knowledge and interest. Thus the true unity of knowledge and interest is only achieved in the emancipatory interest. "It is in accomplishing self-reflection that reason grasps itself as interested."²³

[It should be noted that Habermas does not intend to fall into an idealism which implies that the achievement of a rational consciousness freed from domination by ideological forces is the total concern of the process of emancipation. The practice of self-reflection is not co-extensive with the praxis of freedom. Rather, for Habermas, the practice of self-reflection is a necessary but by no means sufficient condition for the achievement of real, material freedom. Complete emancipation cannot be achieved until the social structures which create conditions of exploitation, domination, and distorted communication are eradicated. Therefore there is a gap between theory and practice for the emancipatory interest, precisely that which must be filled by a conscious, revolutionary politics. The interrelation between these two moments of the praxis of freedom must be

understood historically and dialectically. This interrelation Habermas has attempted to elaborate in his later work, especially in his theory of social evolution which will be discussed below.]

Interpreted materialistically, the interest in reason (emancipatory interest) follows from the exigencies of man's struggle for self-preservation. Seen in this manner, we can say that reason inheres in interest. Given the nature of the human species, it is Habermas' contention, as we have seen, that self-preservation requires successful performances on the levels of both instrumental and communicative actions. These actions are historically embedded in evolving structures of the forces of production and of normative institutions (social relations). These structures, in turn, are fashioned in light of the contingent conditions of objective and subjective nature. Thus far in history, these conditions have involved the establishment of structures embracing, to varying degrees, domination and repression. This is to say, as Habermas observes in accord with Marx, that

. . . for the species as a whole, the boundaries of reality are in fact movable. The degree of socially necessary repression can be measured by the technical control over natural processes. With the development of technology, the institutional framework, which regulates the distribution of obligations and rewards and stabilizes a power structure that maintains cultural renunciation, can be loosened.²⁴

At any given point in history, the institutional framework and level of technology of a society embody the accumulated knowledge

of the species. The achieved level of knowledge forms the precondition in terms of which the species' notion of self-preservation is formulated, the latter being dependent at any given time on the needs, expectations, and objective possibilities of a society at a certain stage of development.

The interest of self-preservation cannot aim at the reproduction of the life of the species automatically and without thought, because under the conditions of the existence of culture this species must first interpret what it counts as life.²⁵

The end or goal of self-preservation, then, is an evolving and dynamic one, an expression of the cumulative developments in the dimensions of both instrumental and communicative action. But as we have seen, the dialectic between the "forces of production" and the "structures of normative interaction" embody historically changing levels of repression and domination. This repression creates a potential for the perception of suffering and the frustration of needs.²⁶

The need to overcome this suffering can be expressed as ". . . the interest in that measure of emancipation that historically is objectively possible under given and manipulable conditions."²⁷ But what is objectively possible at a given historical moment is embodied in society's conception of its self-preservation. Habermas wants to maintain, however, that what is required for self-preservation at any given historical point is itself a product of cultural self-

interpretation. The concept of self-preservation itself embodies a normative element. Not only is it a description of those components necessary to life, it also includes a concept of what life should be.

. . . . the cognitive processes to which social life is indissolubly linked function not only as means to the reproduction of life; for in equal measure they themselves determine the definition of this life. What may appear as naked survival is always in its roots a historical phenomenon. For it is subject to the criterion of what a society intends for itself as the good life.²⁸

The need for self-preservation, then, is also an expression of the need for the good life, a need which is especially acute when there is a high level of consciousness of felt repression. But this interest in the good life, the interest in achieving conditions of emancipation, oriented in terms of the prevalent interpretation of self-preservation, is conditioned by the level of growth in the forces of production and normative structures. Thus the interest man has in emancipation is historically conditioned by the developments in the dimensions of his two primary interests, the technical and the practical. The emancipatory interest can be interpreted as the imperative for man to free himself from forces (of both inner and outer nature) which control him but which he would be able to control in practice under the proper, specifiable conditions. The actual historical form the imperative takes at any given time is a function of the social reality created by man's activities in the practical and

technical spheres of action and of the consciousness of suffering to which conditions of that social reality have given rise.

. . . the concept of the interest of reason, introduced by idealism, needs to be reinterpreted materialistically: the emancipatory interest itself is dependent on the interests in possible intersubjective action-orientation and in possible technical control.²⁹

One might well object at this point that Habermas' conception of a society having "a conception of its self-preservation," or of having a conception of "what it . . . intends for itself as the good life," etc., implies a reified conception of that society. Given the stress Habermas himself places on the capacity of any given asymmetrical distribution of power to distort communication, it is clear that he himself attempts constantly to avoid such an hypostatization of any given society's apparent social identity. However, in his theory of interests, there is a tension between a stress on the necessity for a hermeneutic analysis of social life, with its emphasis on the understanding and explication of contextually bound activities and self-images (of, e.g., individuals, groups, and classes), and a stress on the necessity to understand society qua system, about which very general and broad claims are made. Whether or not Habermas surmounts this tension we will continue to investigate below. But it is clear that if the general claims about a society are to be sustainable, Habermas will have to demonstrate methods

adequate to make and place them. These will have to extend sociological and historical modes of analysis and place at their center considerations of social evolution. Otherwise notions like ". . . the interest in that measure of emancipation that historically is objectively possible under given and manipulable conditions," will be suspect of being nothing other than a vague generality which cannot be empirically grounded.

* * * * *

There are three categories of knowledge, then, each of which can be regarded as the cognitive expression of a basic knowledge-constitutive interest of man. Each interest forms a structure of activity which is basic to the survival and development of the species, that is, the ". . . knowledge-constitutive interests take form in the medium of work, language, and power."³⁰ Each of these interests is reflected on the level of the logic of inquiry in a distinct methodological approach to the generation of knowledge. We have seen how Habermas uncovers the technical and practical interests through an examination, respectively, of Peirce's and Dilthey's analysis of the nature of the natural and cultural sciences. In an analogous manner, the emancipatory interest gives impetus to a third type of science,

critical science. Before examining the nature of this science, however, there are a number of points and distinctions which must be made.

The three cognitive interests were said to be conceivable as generalized motives in terms of which systems of knowledge-constituting action could be understood. These systems of action determine the rules of inquiry according to which objectivity is constituted and knowledge systematically generated. Seen in this sense, the interests appear to function as transcendental conditions for the possibility of knowledge. It is only in light of the interest structure, the claim is made, that knowledge as we find it can be comprehended. Indeed, Habermas writes that:

As long as these interests of knowledge are identified and analyzed by way of reflection on the logic of inquiry that structures the natural and the human sciences, they can claim a "transcendental" status.³¹

But, as we have seen, Habermas' epistemology is not transcendental in the Kantian sense, or even in the sense in which neo-Kantian or phenomenological epistemology can be said to be transcendental.³²

There is, for Habermas, no ahistorical transcendental subject who provides the preconditions for the constitution of possible experience. Rather, the subject of the constituting activity is the human species. The conditions of the constitution of knowledge are the historical, material conditions in which the self-formative process of the species

has occurred. Habermas' epistemology starts from the fact of man as a natural animal who is both a product of and located in nature. Thus the cognitive interests are transcendental from the point of view of the generation of human knowledge, but are themselves naturalistically grounded. That is, the rule systems governing the activities of the species

. . . have a transcendental function but arise from actual structures of human life: from structures of a species that reproduces its life both through learning processes of socially organized labor and processes of mutual understanding in interactions mediated in ordinary language. These basic conditions of life have an interest structure.³³

Seen from this perspective, the cognitive interests ". . . assume an 'empirical' status as soon as they are being analyzed as the result of natural history--analyzed, that is, in terms of a cognitive anthropology, as it were."³⁴ "Empirical" is placed in quotation marks in the last quote because the recovery of these interests as emergent properties of the natural pre-history of man would be provided by a theory of evolution. But such a theory of evolution would itself have to be understood within the cognitive framework of the constituting interests. This being the case, it could not ". . . wholly divest itself of the form of a reflection on the pre-history of culture that is dependent on a prior understanding of the socio-cultural life form."³⁵ Habermas is aware of the circularity which thus

appears at this point in the interpretation of his theory of interests. Concerning this circularity, he writes in a footnote to the Introduction to Theory and Practice that:

The unavoidable circularity, in which we become involved as soon as we approach problems which may be equivalent to the traditional one of ultimate foundations--although this can very well be explained--may be a sign that, among other things, the concept-pair, "contingent-necessity" is no longer to be sharply separated on this level of argumentation. Presumably, assertions concerning contingency or necessity of interests of knowledge are meaningless, just like those about the contingency or necessity of the human race or the world as a whole.³⁶

Thus the category "cognitive interest" is neither merely a transcendental one nor simply empirical. Human knowledge can be conceived of as neither wholly instrumental in regard to an organism's adaption strategies toward its environment nor as ". . . the act of a pure rational being removed from the context of life in contemplation."³⁷ Likewise, the category of "cognitive interests" expresses the fact that man is both a product of his natural environment and the creator of his social reality. The cognitive interests exemplify, at the same time, both man's continuity with nature and his power over nature, in the sense that nature (qua nature as known) is the product of the constituting activity of man. History is natural and nature historical. "Thus 'interest' can be neither classed with those mechanisms of steering animal behavior that we can call instincts nor

entirely severed from the objective context of a life process."³⁸ In recognition of this dialectical tension, which epistemologically is located in the theory of interests, Habermas accords to the category of "cognitive interest" the somewhat problematic status of "quasi-transcendental."

As a result of the conceptual connection in his theory between the status of knowledge and the satisfaction of basic needs of the human species, Habermas has been accused of both naturalism and pragmatism. In light of the above discussion, it can easily be appreciated that the charge of naturalism on the part of certain philosophers with a theological or Hegelian orientation (Günter Rohrmoser, Michale Theunissen, Rüdiger Bubner) misunderstands Habermas' position. Likewise, the charge of antinaturalism (e.g., by Hans Albert) is equally misdirected. As concerns pragmatism, Habermas rejects the view that ". . . the success of instrumental action is a sufficient criterion of the truth of propositions."³⁹ "The truth of a proposition," he maintains, "is not established by means of interest gratification, but only by means of an argumentative redemption of the truth claim itself."⁴⁰ (It should, however, be noted that questions concerning the status of truth claims remain open in Knowledge and Human Interests and were unsatisfactorily dealt with. This, as we shall see, Habermas readily admits.)

It this were not the case, that is, if the conditions for objectivity were not distinguished from the conditions for the truth of a statement, then it would be impossible to distinguish true from false needs, legitimate from illegitimate practice, and ultimately to ground the emancipatory interest. The conditions for objectivity are linked, as we have seen, to the knowledge-constitutive interests. If truth is not distinguished from objectivity, then truth also must be linked to basic interests as together expressed in the interests of self-preservation. Under these conditions, the notions of truth and validity would be tainted with a pragmatic bias which would rob them of their traditional claims to being objective and disinterested. The danger, Habermas acknowledges in his discussion of Nietzsche in Knowledge and Human Interests is that:

The basis of knowledge in interest affects the possibility of knowledge as such. Since the gratification of all needs is congruent with the interest in self-preservation, any illusion at random can put forth the same claim to validity, as long as some need interprets the world through it.⁴¹

In order to maintain a critical perspective and the possibility of a critical science, to establish the claims of reflection and the potential for emancipation, Habermas must distinguish his theory of objectivity and the problem of meaning-constitution as being separate from that of truth and the recognition of validity.

NOTES

- ¹Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 86.
- ²Cf. chap. 7 on the theory of labor, p. 373, and also Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, especially chap. 3.
- ³Habermas, "Postscript," pp. 177-78.
- ⁴Habermas, Introduction to Theory and Practice, p. 9.
- ⁵Habermas, "Postscript," p. 181.
- ⁶Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 7.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 21.
- ⁸Habermas, "Postscript," p. 172.
- ⁹Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 8.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 195.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Cf. *ibid.*, p. 191 ff; also "Postscript," p. 172 ff.
- ¹⁴Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 191.
- ¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 192.
- ¹⁷Habermas, "Postscript," p. 174.
- ¹⁸Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 8.
- ¹⁹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 196.

- ²⁰Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 22.
- ²¹Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, especially chap. 9.
- ²²Ibid., pp. 197-98.
- ²³Ibid., p. 212.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 280.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 288.
- ²⁶For a discussion of the relationship between institutions of repression and felt needs, cf. Habermas' discussion of Marx and Freud in Knowledge and Human Interests, especially chaps. 11, 12.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 288.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 313.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 211.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 313.
- ³¹Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 21.
- ³²For a discussion distinguishing Habermas' position from the transcendentalism of the neo-Kantians, cf. Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," especially pp. 87-91. For Habermas' critique of Husserl and phenomenology, cf. Appendix to Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 301-17.
- ³³Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 194.
- ³⁴Habermas, "Postscript," p. 181.
- ³⁵Habermas, Theory and Practice, pp. 21-22.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 285.
- ³⁷Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 197.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 134.

³⁹Habermas, "Postscript," p. 179.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 297.

CHAPTER X

GROUNDING THE EMANCIPATORY INTEREST: THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

It was argued, earlier, that the dualisms between fact and value, science and criticism, etc., are clearly incompatible with the idea of a critical theory of society. One of the defining characteristics of the work of Lukács, Horkheimer, Marcuse, etc., was seen to be precisely the attempt to overcome the empirical/normative dualism and the diremption of theory from practice which follows from it. But it was argued that in the work of these authors there was too little elaboration of how, in a materialist theory of history, in a materialist critique, the notions of "reason," "truth," "objectivity," and "freedom," upon which their theory relied, might be grounded. If Habermas is to advance beyond their positions it becomes crucially important for him to address himself to these "problematics."

If critique, moving beyond the understanding interpretation of a context of meaning, accepts as its task the explanation of a systematically distorted communication, then it must have the mastery of the idea of undistorted communication.¹

The question becomes: how is the emancipatory interest rationally justified?

Habermas' recent philosophic work has been an attempt to develop systematically the philosophical underpinnings of a critical theory of society,² in a reformulation and defense of some of the central theses of classical philosophy: the inseparability of truth and goodness, of theory and practice, of fact and value. By providing a language theoretic reformulation of the epistemological presuppositions of historical materialism he attempts, as McCarthy put it, "to walk the fine line between naturalistic and transcendental philosophy."³ The starting point for this project is the claimed normative foundation of ordinary language communication:

. . . for in every act of speaking the telos of understanding is inherent. . . . Understanding is a normative concept; everyone who speaks a natural language is intuitively familiar with it and trusts himself to distinguish a true from a false consensus.⁴

The issues raised are worth exploring at some length.

Habermas stresses that language is a universal medium (along with work and domination) in which the social life of the human species unfolds. The stress, as we have seen, is not new in this work.⁵ Habermas views the history of the species as determined simultaneously by the reproduction of the material conditions of life (labor) and by the system of symbolic interaction that mediate all socio-cultural life. It is in explicating how the species unfolds through these mediums that reveals the emancipatory interest. We must

return for a moment to Habermas' earlier distinction between objectivity and truth.

Man is both a producer and a communicator, a tool-making and symbol-using animal. His

. . . production processes extract natural resources and transform the energies set free into use values. Socialization processes educate the members of the system to subjects capable of speaking and acting. The embryo enters this formative process and the individual is not released from it until his death (if we disregard limit cases of desocialization).⁶

Outer nature (i.e., the resources of the nonhuman environment) is appropriated in production and "inner nature" in socialization processes. For the specific form in which socio-cultural life reproduces itself the exchange with outer and inner nature is decisive.

Habermas argues that social systems socialize outer nature with the help of the forces of production. They organize and train labor power, develop technologies and strategies through instrumental action (according to technical rules) mediated by utterances capable of truth. Social systems also maintain themselves vis-à-vis socializing inner nature (in which needs are interpreted and actions licensed or made obligatory) through communicative actions (according to valid rules) mediated by norms in need of justification. There exists, Habermas contends, an evolutionary disjuncture between man and animal because at the socio-cultural stage of development (human)

animal behavior is reorganized under imperatives of validity claims.

This reorganization is effected in the structure of linguistically produced intersubjectivity. Linguistic communication has a double structure; communication of propositional content may take place only with simultaneous metacommunication of interpersonal relations.⁷

We cannot achieve a consensus about experience and propositional contents without at the same time a metacommunicative discourse about the choice of one among a variety of possible patterns of interpersonal relations. This, Habermas suggests, is an expression of the specifically human interpenetration of cognitive abilities and action motives with linguistic intersubjectivity. In this process language functions as a kind of transformer; "since psychic processes such as sensation, needs, and feelings are fit into the structures of linguistic intersubjectivity, inner episodes of experiences are transformed into intentional contents, that is cognitions into statements, needs, and feelings into normative expectations (precepts and values)."⁸

This transformation produces a distinction "rich in consequences" between the "subjectivity of opinion, of wanting, of pleasure and pain on the one hand, and the utterances and norms which appear with a claim to generality (Allgemeinheitsanspruch) on the other." Generality here means objectivity of knowledge and legitimacy of valid norms. More specifically, the objectivity of knowledge, e.g., of perception, "is guaranteed by the intersubjectively shared

structure of objects of possible experience," whereas the objectivity of valid norms, e.g., of prescriptions and evaluations is guaranteed by the universal intersubjective acceptance of norms of action and standards of evaluation." Both create, sustain, and ensure the community (Gemeinsamkeit) which is constitutive for the socio-cultural-life-world.⁹

In social practice, action-related experience is acquired and shared. Statements serving to convey experience are themselves action. The "objectivity of experience consists precisely in its being intersubjectively shared"; the possibility of which, we have seen, is ensured by the generality of language (whether for perceptive, descriptive, or evaluative statements). Yet, this objectivity of experience as stated in language is not to be conflated with the truth of statements about experience. "Objectivity of experiences means that everybody can count on the success or failure of certain actions; the truth of a proposition stated in discourses means that everybody can be persuaded by reasons to recognize the truth claim of the statement as being justified."¹⁰ What is required is an analysis of the difference between problems of object constitution and problems of truth, which, in Habermas' opinion, were "insufficiently worked out" in Knowledge and Human Interests. In his theory of Communicative Competence, Habermas seeks to demonstrate that

this can only be done in a systematic investigation of the general structures, the universal pragmatics, which appear in every possible speech situation and which are themselves produced through the performance of specific types of linguistic expression. An adequate conception, Habermas argues, can be developed only in terms of a universal pragmatics "which exhibits the normative basis of all communication and explains the possibility of systematically distorted communication."¹¹ The first important element of the theory rests on the distinction between everyday and theoretic attitudes, communicative action or interaction and discourse.¹²

A smooth functioning language game, in which speech acts are exchanged, are based, Habermas argues, on an underlying, background consensus. This is formed from the mutual recognition of at least four different types of validity claims (Geltungsanspruche):

. . . the claims that the utterance is understandable and that its propositional content is true, and the claims that the speaker is sincere in uttering it and that it is right or appropriate for him to be performing the speech act which he performs.¹³

In everyday interaction these four types of validity claims, implicitly raised, are naively accepted. But people can step into situations that have not yet been routinized or where routinized, taken-for-granted realities are disturbed. It becomes possible for situations to arise in which one or more of the implicitly raised validity claims

becomes problematic and where the background consensus might be disturbed in a fundamental way. When this occurs, specific forms of problem resolution, different for each type of claim, are needed to restore the original, or a new, background consensus.¹⁴ But the validity of questioned and problematic truth claims or norms can only be redeemed and established "discursively and only discursively."

The meaning of the truth or untruth of a statement does not consist in the conditions guaranteeing the objectivity of our experience but in the possibility of argumentative corroboration of a truth claim which is falsifiable in principle.¹⁵

Discourses help test the truth claims of opinions, and norms, which the speakers no longer presuppose. In the first case we have a "theoretic discourse" (which has the single purpose of justifying and judging the truth of the problematic opinion), in the second case, a "practical discourse" (where the suitability of the questioned norm is debated).

As opposed to other language games the speech situation of discourse "represents a certain break with the normal context" of interaction in that, ideally, it requires a "suspension of the constraints of action," "a putting out of play of all motives except that of a willingness to come to an understanding," and a "bracketing of validity claims," that is, "a willingness to suspend judgment as to the existence of certain states of affairs (they may or may not be the case) and as to

the rightness of certain norms (they may or may not be correct)."¹⁶

There is only one form of compulsion permissible in a discourse:

"the force of the argument." The cooperative search for truth is

the only permissible motive. The communicative structures of dis-

courses do not necessitate and force their participants to act. "Nor

do they accommodate processes whereby information can be acquired.

They are purged of action and experience."* On the other hand,

everyday attitudes, opinions, and evaluations, etc., of the normal

context of interaction contains--Habermas argues--an implicit

reference to discourse.

Inasmuch as interaction involves regarding the other as subject, it involves supposing that he knows what he is doing and why he is doing it, that is, that he intentionally holds the beliefs he does and intentionally follows the norms he does, and he is capable of discursively justifying them if the question should arise.¹⁷

This "model of pure communicative action" points implicitly to dis-

course as an immanent and possible form of communication. It

*It can be noted in passing that this series of points is vulnerable to the criticism that what is being presented is nothing more or less than an idealized account of discourse which has little, if any, basis in everyday social reality. (As we shall see, the same charge can be made about Habermas' whole analysis of speech.) Post-Kuhnian sociology of science could certainly show that this model of discourse has no counterpart in everyday scientific discourse.¹⁸ However, the charge, if it is to be made, must realize that Habermas by no means ends his analysis here.

involves the assumption that interacting subjects could, if the background consensus is brought into disrepute, discursively justify their beliefs and norms. What is the status of this assumption?

In Habermas' view it is, of course, obvious that "institutionalized actions do not as a rule fit this model of pure communicative action although," he goes on to argue that,

. . . we cannot avoid counterfactually proceeding as if the models were really the case--on this unavoidable fiction rests the humanity of intercourse among men who are still men.¹⁹

Habermas suggests that this supposition of accountability, this expectation "that the other could account for his behavior in the same way that (we are convinced) we could account for ours is a normal feature of functioning language games."²⁰ The assumption of accountability is, however, usually counterfactual to institutionalized everyday communicative interaction. But, Habermas wants to contend, the actualization of the factual in the counterfactual, "the exception, is the rule in human history. . . . That the assumption is counterfactual and that nevertheless persists as an expectation can . . . be explained in a theory of systematically distorted communication."²¹ The question is, if the argument is to develop, how can the counterfactual expectation be stabilized, i.e., how can "the rule" remain and persist qua counterfactual?

This can be achieved only through legitimation of the ruling systems of norms and through the anchoring of the belief in legitimacy in systematic barriers to will-forming communication. The claim that our norms can be grounded is redeemed through legitimizing world-views. The validity of these world-views is in turn secured in a communication structure which excludes discursive will-formation . . . the barriers to communication which make a fiction precisely of the reciprocal imputation of accountability, support at the same time the belief in legitimacy that sustains the fiction and prevents its being found out. That is the paradoxical achievement of ideologies, whose individual prototype is the neurotic disturbance.²²

Before talking about the individual prototype and the claimed import of the analysis for social theory, a number of further points need to be made. For if it is recognized that a claimed rule of interaction is a counterfactual or an ideality, the question arises: how can we exempt discourse itself from distortion? Consequentially, can a distinction between a true and a false consensus be made? Are there criteria for such a distinction? In light of our discussion of earlier attempts to sustain a foundation for critical theory, these questions become of particular importance. Habermas believes that a basis for answers to these questions lies in the explication of a consensus theory of truth.

In an earlier paper Habermas argued that philosophy must remain true to the central insight of its classical tradition that "the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life."²³ In his discussion of theories of truth

(particularly those prevalent in the analytic tradition, e.g., the semantic and correspondence theories)²⁴ he attempts to develop the claimed classical "connection." Leaving aside his critique of individual theories which would take us beyond the scope of this work, we can draw out the direction of his own analysis. As was mentioned above, a functioning language game rests, according to Habermas, on a background consensus about the truth of certain beliefs and the correctness of certain norms. If called into question, these validity claims can only be justified through discursive verification.

Experiences support the truth claims of assertions.
 . . . But a truth claim can be redeemed only through
 argumentation. A claim founded (fundiert) on experi-
 ence is by no means a justified (begrundet) claim.²⁵

In the context of everyday communicative action our assertions are about the objects of our experience. It is only when their truth claims are no longer presupposed, and are suspended and tested, do facts as facts become the theme of discourse. "Facts are not constituted, since they are not entities in the world but correlates of propositions on the level of argumentative reasoning."²⁶ What is constituted are the objects of possible action-related experience. But if and when statements are found to be in need of corroboration they break their link to the practical life in one respect only: their sentences and presupposed validity claims become sentences, etc., in a discourse. To uncover the notion of truth, it is argued, therefore requires an

analysis of the argumentative corroboration of a validity claim (i.e., of the elements of a discourse).

Discursive justification is a normative concept. Were every contingently conceived agreement to be understood as a "consensus," then the latter obviously could not serve as the criterion of truth. Truth is not the fact that a consensus is realized, but rather that at all times and in any place, if we enter into a discourse a consensus can be realized under conditions which identify it as a justified consensus. Truth means "warranted assertibility."²⁷

What is a founded consensus and are there criteria to distinguish it from any contingently achieved agreement? As McCarthy put it, "if the criterion which serves to distinguish a true from a false consensus itself requires discursive justification we are moving in a circle; if not, we have transcended the consensus framework in establishing it."²⁸

Habermas argues that there is only one way out of this dilemma and that is through a characterization of the "force of the better argument" expressed in terms of "the formal properties of discourse." What is required, he maintains, is an analysis of the logic of discourse which is in turn dependent on an explication of the notion of "providing rational grounds" or "rational motivation" in terms of "the formal (not in usual syntactical or semantical sense, but in the pragmatic sense) properties of argumentation." Against the oft-claimed centrality of the modality of formal logical necessity or

impossibility, Habermas contends that the fundamental modality is the pragmatic modality of cogency or soundness: the argument should rationally motivate us to accept, suspend, or reject the validity claim under dispute.

In an analysis that follows the work of Stephen Toulmin, Habermas analyzes the

. . . structure of an argument into the conclusion that is to be grounded, the data that is put forward as relevant, the warrant which establishes the connection between the data and the conclusion (e.g., a general law of physics, a universal moral rule) and the backing for the moment, that which establishes it as plausible (e.g., the observational and experimental backing for a hypothesis, the consequences of following a given norm for the satisfaction of accepted needs).²⁹

Having made this analysis he attempts to characterize the conditions which would "rationally motivate" or justify and ground a consensus. The central preoccupation is that the context of argument must "permit a progressive radicalization of the argument, there must be freedom to move from a given level of discourse to increasingly reflected levels,"³⁰ i.e.:

- there must be freedom to enter a discourse;
- to discursively check questioned claims;
- to seek discursive evaluation of methods, explanations, etc.; and
- to modify or throw out a given conceptual framework (metatheoretical discourse).

In attempting to "rationally motivate" and justify a line of argumentative reasoning we must, Habermas insists, presuppose that the outcome of the debate will rest simply on the force of the better argument and not be the result of "accidental" or "systematic constraints." "If we did not suppose that a justified consensus were possible and could in some way be distinguished from a false consensus, then the very meaning of discourse, indeed of speech, would be called into question."³¹ The condition for a grounded consensus, the context of discourse free of constraint or systematically distorted communication, can--Habermas further argues--be specified formally in terms of the pragmatic structure of communication itself. Habermas' thesis is that the structure is free from systematic distortion and constraint

. . . only when for all participants there is a symmetrical distribution of chances to select and employ speech acts, when there is an effective equality of chances to assume dialogue roles. In particular, all participants must have the same chance to initiate and perpetuate discourse, to put forward, call into question and give reasons for or against statements, explanations, interpretations and justifications. Furthermore, they must have the same chance to express their attitudes, feelings, intentions and the like, and to command, to oppose, to permit and to forbid, etc.³²

These last requirements refer to the organizational context of communication, since unconstrained discourse is only possible in a speaking-situation we name ideal. Such a situation is not only not

hindered by the forces which result from the structure of communication itself, but also not hindered by external contingent influences.³³

In other words, the conditions of the ideal speech situation must ensure equal opportunity for discussion, which is itself free from all domination, the sources of which can be conscious strategic behavior and/or the impediments of systematically distorted communication, i. e., ideology and/or neurosis. "Thus, the conditions for ideal discourse are connected with conditions for an ideal form of life; they include linguistic conceptualizations of the traditional ideas of freedom and justice. 'Truth' cannot be analyzed independently of 'freedom' and 'justice'."³⁴

It goes without saying that the conditions of the ideal speech situation are ideal. But this fact does not of itself bring the ideal into disrepute. It is Habermas' view, then, that

. . . the ideal speech situation is neither an empirical phenomenon nor simply a construct, but a reciprocal supposition (Unterstellung) unavoidable in discourse. This supposition can, but need not be, counterfactual; but even when counterfactual it is a fiction which is operatively effective in communication. I would therefore prefer to speak of an anticipation of an ideal speech situation. . . . This anticipation alone is the warrant which permits us to join to an actually attained consensus the claim of a rational consensus. At the same time it is a critical standard against which every actually realized consensus can be called into question and tested.³⁵

The conclusion of Habermas' analysis of the structure of communication is that it rests on a normative foundation. "In discussing we

assume the reality of an ideal speech situation. It is 'anticipated,' but as anticipated also 'effective'.³⁶ This anticipated situation of an ideal speech situation, of an anticipated life, which presupposes an ideal of reason, is, of course, rarely, if ever, approximated in speech situations. But the ideal as an ideal can serve as a standard for the critique of systematically distorted communication and as a guide for the institutionalization of discourse (i.e., on how social interaction should be institutionalized). Whether or not the empirical conditions for the approximate realization of this ideal of life and reason can be practically accomplished does not, in Habermas' opinion, "admit of an a priori answer." "The fundamental norms of rational speech which are built into universal pragmatics contain, from this point of view, a practical hypothesis."³⁷

The endpoint of the analysis is that the very structure of speech involves an anticipated form of life in which autonomy and responsibility are possible. Critical theory is, therefore, grounded on a normative standard, which is not arbitrary, but inherent in the very structure of social action. The theory is an attempt to reconceptualize the philosophical foundations of the relationship between theory and practice. In it Habermas seeks to defend the inseparability of truth and practice, of facts and values, of theory and practice. With this thesis stands his attempt (to date):

. . . to provide philosophical foundations for a critical theory of society, for a social theory designed with a practical intention: the self-emancipation of men from the constraints of unnecessary domination in all its forms. His argument is, simply, that the emancipated form of life which is the goal of critical theory is inherent in the notion of truth: it is anticipated in every act of communication.^{38, 39}

In summary, we can say that it is Habermas' intention to demonstrate that the a priori of experience (which lays down the objects and structure of possible action-related experience) is independent of the a priori of argumentative reasoning (which lays down the conditions of possible discourse). Both of these combine to define "the limits of empirical theories (which are built up from accumulated evidence)."

Theories can only be constructed, and progressively reconstructed, in the context of conditions pertaining to the nature of argumentation and within the limits of prior objectivation of experienceable occurrences.⁴⁰

Therefore, Habermas argues that the "unity of reasoning is compatible with a differential meaning-constitution of object domains. In all sciences, argumentation is subject to the same conditions governing the discursive redemption of truth claims."⁴¹ However, the argument for the "unity of argumentation," which is suggestive of an alternative conception of a unified science, must not be conflated with the program for the unity of theories themselves. The program for the unity of theories is obviously rejected in light of the attempt

to reconstruct (1) the link between theory formation and the logic of inquiry and (2) the "quasi-transcendental" conditions of how knowledge comes into being and is used.

There is, however, a unity between the a priori of experience and the a priori of argumentative reasoning, between action and experience with discourse. It is the knowledge-constitutive interests themselves which maintain this unity.

They preserve the latent nexus between action and theoretical knowledge. They are responsible for the transformation of opinions into theorems and of the retransformation of theorems into action-oriented knowledge. But they do not by any means obviate the difference between experience stated in a context of action and propositions about facts which have been corroborated in a discourse. Similarly, knowledge-constitutive interests do not obviate the difference between truth claims based on merely factual recognition and those that have been tested by argumentative reasoning.⁴²

It was my view that the systematicness of Habermas' response to the problem of grounding is not (as yet?) sufficient to show that his response to the issues is, in the last instance, adequate. The status of the analysis of universal pragmatics, central to Habermas' program, is ambiguous between philosophical anthropology and empirical sociology. Particularly, the status of the ideal speech situation as an ongoing feature of interaction is extremely problematic. But before making these points in detail there are several other central aspects of his thought which should be developed and

discussed, especially his conception of psychoanalysis as the "only tangible example of a critical science." It is in his discussion of Freud and psychoanalysis that we see how the theory of cognitive interests and the theory of communicative competence inform a conception of social science as a critical science.

NOTES

¹Habermas, "Summation and Response."

²For the requisite references, see note 8, p.417. Cf. especially the articles in which he elaborates his "theory of communicative competence."

³Thomas A. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," Philosophy of Social Science 3 (1973), p. 148.

⁴Ibid., quoting from Habermas, Theory and Practice, p.17.

⁵Cf., e.g., Habermas, "Labor and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena Philosophy of Mind," in Theory and Practice, pp. 142-69; "Technology and Science as Ideology," in Towards a Rational Society, pp. 81-122; Knowledge and Human Interests, chaps. 3, 11, 12.

⁶Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 11.

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 12-13.

¹⁰Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 170.

¹¹McCarthy, Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. ix.

¹²As has already been noted, McCarthy's "A Theory of Communicative Competence" is an excellent summary of Habermas' work in this area. It embraces the German as well as the English literature. My understanding of "the theory" derives from this work and follows the contours of its summary.

¹³McCarthy, Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. x.

¹⁴ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 139.

¹⁵ Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 166.

¹⁶ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," pp. 139-40 (emphasis added).

¹⁷ For a list of useful references, see Mulkay, The Social Process of Innovation: A Study in the Sociology of Science.

¹⁸ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 140.

¹⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Vorbereitende Bemerkungen zur einer Theorie der Kommunikativen Kompetenz," in his Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Social Technologie?? (Frankfurt: Meiner, 1971), p. 120, quoted in McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 130.

²⁰ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 140.

²¹ Ibid.

²² As in note 19 above.

²³ Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 317.

²⁴ His discussion of analytic theories of truth refers primarily to the essays edited by G. Pitcher, Truth (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: 1964). A brief summary and references to relevant papers can be found in McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence."

²⁵ Habermas, from an unpublished manuscript entitled "Wahrheitstheorien," p. 12, quoted in McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 142.

²⁶ Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 175.

²⁷ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 143, and quoting from Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," p. 140.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence,"
p. 144.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p. 145.

³² Ibid.

³³ Habermas, "Summation and Response," p. 131.

³⁴ Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," p. 65, quoted in McCarthy,
"A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 147.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ McCarthy, Introduction, Habermas, Legitimation Crisis,
p. xv.

³⁹ It is very important to note that the theory of communicative competence is still in relatively early stages of development. Many of the papers which McCarthy refers to in his summary are (as yet) unpublished. Although I will have, later, a number of critical remarks to make, the tentative nature of the theory should not be overlooked.

⁴⁰ Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests,"
p. 171.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 172.

⁴² Ibid., p. 175.

⁴³ Ibid.

CHAPTER XI

CRITICAL THEORY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

For Habermas, the theory of communicative competence provides a foundation for Critical theory. On Habermas' account, the normative model of ideal language use is not abstractly metaphysical (or excessively formal) insofar as it is founded in an analysis of the conditions of concrete speech situations. Furthermore, within the terms of theory, we saw that Habermas attempts to conceptualize the notions of truth, freedom, and justice. Thus he seeks to ground Critical theory while attempting to avoid the circularity in previous attempts.

In Chapter 9 we also saw that on the level of epistemology, Habermas seeks to uncover an interest in emancipation which arises out of the conditions of the human species' struggle for self-preservation. His emphasis on the unfolding of this interest from the actuality of human struggles makes plausible the contention that the attainment of the concretized conditions of truth, freedom, and justice are not beyond the immanent possibilities of human history. Whether these conditions will be achieved, however, is--Habermas stresses--an empirical and practical hypothesis. In his most recent book,

Legitimation Crisis, he seeks to investigate this hypothesis at considerably greater length. We will discuss some aspects of this work in the following chapter. In this chapter we will concentrate our exegesis on a central aspect of Habermas' work which has not yet been discussed, namely, his model of Critical theory (as critical science). We have already seen how the empirical-analytic and hermeneutic sciences are held to be constituted by the technical and practical interests respectively. We will now analyze the science which Habermas claims is directly related to the species interest in emancipation. It is this science, in Habermas' view, which is essential to the emancipation of man. For critical science provides man with the knowledge, knowledge immanently and closely tied to practice, which opens the path to freedom and truth.

In the theory of communicative competence there is an implicit claim that true human emancipation requires, initially at least, the attainment of a situation of undistorted communication. The increasing "approximation to such communication will necessarily lead to the practice required for the destruction of the material structures which create conditions of distorted communication" and will likely furthermore "be a safeguard against the emergence of ideological structures."¹ It is the central aim of critical science to generate the knowledge necessary to this task. The goal of critical science is

to facilitate the process of methodical self-reflection and thus dissolve barriers to undistorted communication and the development of a fully self-conscious self-formative process. In the practice and development of critical science, the material conditions which create the possibility of ideological domination are also disclosed, opening up the possibility of practical-action to overcome them.

The theory serves primarily to enlighten those to whom it is addressed about the position they occupy in an antagonistic social system and about the interests of which they could become conscious as objectively their own in this situation. Only to the degree that organized enlightenment and consultation leads those groups, toward which this is directed, to actually recognizing themselves in the interpretation offered, do the analytically proposed interpretations actually become consciousness, and does the objectively attributed situation of interests actually become the real interest of a group capable of action.²

If, according to the theory of communicative competence, the conditions of truth (and freedom) are realized only in the ideal speech situations, and if it is recognized that all human history so far has witnessed the presence of domination and distorted communication, then, the validation of all scientific knowledge of the world is inextricably intertwined with the conditions for the realization of the good, the just, and the true life. Therefore, the validation of scientific knowledge ultimately rests on a science which has a practical intent, which realizes the need to change the world, i.e., on critical science. According to Habermas, the developments of the natural and cultural

sciences are to be understood as interrelated aspects of the historical constitution of the world through the self-generative and self-formative processes of the species. These processes, he maintains, cannot be completely comprehended and the sciences established on a firm basis without first grasping and retrieving in theory and overcoming in practice the moments of historical domination and repression.

Thus, in the end, the true understanding of the meaning of knowledge in the natural and cultural sciences depends on a critical science.

Such a science

. . . tries to illuminate both human history and the practice of science as historical self-forming processes, and thereby restores to men an awareness of their position as the active, yet historically limited, subject of history. To recognize the processes of historical self-formation of human history is to become aware of the mechanisms of historical negativity and therefore to be able to generate a critique of existing structures by objectifying the objective possibilities of a social reality.³

Habermas contends that the only satisfactory example of a critical science is that of psychoanalysis as first developed by Freud.⁴

It is from this conception of psychoanalysis that he thinks many of the features of a critical science can be drawn. Psychoanalysis, Habermas argues, is ". . . the only tangible example of a science incorporating methodical self-reflection."⁵ It is through methodical self-reflection that the "deformations of distorted communication" can be overcome. As a consequence the subject can be freed from

the "causality of fate," from hypostatized forces and potentially from the underpinning structures of "second nature."

While taking psychoanalysis as the prototype of a critical science, Habermas transposes the model to the realm of social analysis and political practice. On Habermas' account, historical materialism can and must be (re)formulated as a critical theory of society which incorporates the insights of the psychoanalytic model with its emphasis on the role of critical self-reflection. Seen in this context, historical materialism becomes a critique of ideology with a practical intent. According to Habermas' interpretation:

. . . the critiques which Marx developed as a theory of society and Freud as metapsychology are distinguished precisely by incorporating in their consciousness an interest which directs knowledge, an interest in emancipation going beyond the technical and the practical interest of knowledge.⁶

Freud, on Habermas' account, developed an interpretive framework for the examination of the self-formative processes of individuals disturbed and in need of "therapeutically guided self-reflection." At first sight, psychoanalysis appears to be a process of methodical interpretation (of the analysand's behavior, dreams, etc.) and therefore a hermeneutical science. Psychoanalysis, Habermas points out, "provides theoretical perspectives and technical rules for the interpretation of symbolic structures."

Freud always patterned the interpretation of dreams after the hermeneutic model of philological [i. e., traditional hermeneutical] research. Occasionally he compares it to the translation of a foreign author: of a text by Levy, for example.⁷

However, by recognizing the presence of neurotic symptoms, i. e., repressed, omitted and distorted symbols and meanings and internal disturbances which result in the disruption of language games of ordinary speech on the level of both speech and behavior, psychoanalysis requires "a specifically expanded hermeneutics." As such the methods of psychoanalysis have to go beyond the usual procedures of traditional interpretation, in an attempt to take into account an additional dimension of meaning structures.

Psychoanalytic interpretation, in contrast to traditional hermeneutics, is directed at meaning structures that are not necessarily consciously intended. Freud appreciated and sought to demonstrate that gaps

. . . in the meaning texture of behavior and speech of the patient, gaps which are either unobservable or incomprehensible to the patient, are due to the repression and exclusion of undesirable symbols and meanings from the acting subject's consciousness.⁸

By aiding the analysand to reconstruct his or her life history, the analyst attempts to bring to the analysand's consciousness, meanings that have been lost. Psychoanalysis attempts to bring to consciousness that measure of life history that has been systematically repressed.

The need for psychoanalysis to go beyond the world of appearances and surface meanings to recover unconscious feelings and motives ". . . distinguishes the peculiar task of a hermeneutics that cannot be confined to the procedures or philology but rather unites linguistic analysis with the psychological investigation of causal connections."⁹

The methods and procedures of interpretation which Freud used to analyze the distorted meanings with which the analysand deceives himself or herself is called by Habermas depth hermeneutics.¹⁰

In the process of depth hermeneutics the analyst seeks to interpret observed speech and behavior not only on the level of the subject's conscious intentions but also on the level of the subject's repressed intentions. The meaning of observed actions, symbols, etc., can only be adequately understood in terms of the underlying unconscious factors which caused the actor to act as (s)he did. If the compulsive nature of neuroses is accepted, then the action or expressions being studied must be regarded as caused by a motive or force which remains on the level of the analysand's unconscious. A correct interpretation of the action or expression can be supplied by the analyst only with the successful uncovering of the unconscious "factors." In other words, when an attempt is being made to understand on the level of meaning what is recognizably a neurotic or distorted symbolic structure, whether in the dimension of speech,

action, or bodily expression, the assumption is made that the patient does not act with full self-transparency. The action or expression to be interpreted cannot be adequately understood in terms of the self-understanding of the analysand. Systematic reference must also be made to factors which are initially opaque to the patient.

It is not enough, however, for the analyst merely to present a correct interpretation to the analysand in order to have the latter accept it in such a way that (s)he can overcome his or her own distorted self-interpretation. The analysand, rather, must come to accept the reconstruction of his or her past, offered by the therapist, at a time when (s)he is reliving the emotions or experiences which lie at the base of his or her pathological attitude. This reexperiencing is awakened in the analysand during the course of the therapeutic process. Repression mechanisms are weakened through techniques which induce relaxation, free association, and suspension of the pressures of everyday life within the confines of the artificial environment of the therapeutic interaction. In this situation, the patient is aided to relive experiences in such a way that the emotions involved are felt as immediately present and real. Freud calls this process transference. Under the conditions of a "transference neurosis" at a point when the patient is reliving repressed emotions, (s)he is confronted by the analyst with an interpretation of his or her

past experiences. An attempt is made to compel the patient to reflect upon and accept the interpretation in such a way that (s)he realizes the true nature and source of the emotions.

. . . the physician's constructions can be changed into actual recollections of the patient only to the degree that the latter, confronted with the results of his action in transference with its suspension of the pressure of life, sees himself through the eyes of another and learns to reflect on his symptoms as offshoots of his own behavior.¹¹

The phenomenon of transference, then, is a crucial element in the process of emancipation in psychoanalysis.

Thus, for Habermas, Freud's psychoanalysis is seen to be essentially concerned with the construction of interpretations. But psychoanalysis is not conceived in any straightforward sense as a hermeneutic science. As with other hermeneutical sciences, psychoanalysis deals with the interpretation of meaningful symbols within a communicative framework. Like hermeneutical sciences, psychoanalysis begins with a subject/object the meaning of which is in question. If the interpretation is successful it ends with an interpretation of the subject/object. As in Gadamerian hermeneutics, the methodological procedures in psychoanalysis utilize a "dialogue" as the medium to gain access to data and test conjectured interpretations. However, unlike the hermeneutic sciences, psychoanalysis, as we have seen, employs interpretations which cannot, in the first

instance, be continuous and reflexive of the analysand's self-understanding. Thus psychoanalysis utilizes techniques which go beyond hermeneutics. The analyst is required to systematically investigate connections which are not apparent to the patient. Adequate interpretations can only be developed with the aid of explanations involving causal connections. Such explanations can only be developed, in turn, with reference to a general theory of hysteria, neurosis, the unconscious, etc., such as that constructed by Freud.¹²

In order to see this general point more clearly, it is useful to delineate the three levels into which Habermas analyzes the theoretical structure of psychoanalysis.¹³ The first level is that of metapsychology or metahermeneutics. "Metapsychology unfolds the logic of interpretation of the analytic situation of dialogue."¹⁴ It is on this level that we find, according to Habermas, Freud's theory of neurosis in terms of distorted communications, that is, an explication of "the connection between language deformation and behavioral pathology."¹⁵ Here we also find the ego-id-superego model and the theory of instincts. As to the grounding of this theory Habermas writes:

. . . basic metahermeneutical assumptions about communicative action, language deformations, and behavioral pathology derive from subsequent reflection on the conditions of possible psychoanalytic knowledge. They can be confirmed or rejected only indirectly, with regard to the outcome of, so to speak, an entire category of processes of inquiry.¹⁶

The metapsychological level is to be distinguished from that of general interpretation. On this latter level, ". . . empirically substantive interpretations of self-formative processes can be developed"¹⁷ within the theoretical framework supplied by metapsychology. The general interpretations are drawn from data collected from clinical experience and operate like theories in the empirical sciences. Thus a general interpretation ". . . is 'fixed' and, like a general theory, must prove itself through predictions deduced from it."¹⁸ In psychoanalysis, a general interpretation provides a narrative, in terms of the theory, of infant and childhood development (the most formative stages for Freud). This level is concerned with problems of patterns of interaction between child and parent, identification, development of motivational patterns and learning mechanisms (e.g., object choice), emergence of personality structures, etc. "This level then comprises an empirical theory in the form of a systematically generalized narrative depicting the psychodynamic development of the child."¹⁹ The general interpretation of childhood development thus allows a particular case history to be understood in terms of causal connections of the developmental sequence, modified, of course, in light of initial conditions and particularity of the case.

The third level is that of the interpretation of the individual or rather, ". . . reconstructions of individual life histories with a

therapeutic intent."²⁰ The actual events of the patient's life are pieced together using the facts that can be ascertained in accord with the logic of development of the general interpretation. Gaps and inconsistencies in the patient's memory are filled in and rearranged by the analyst in the process of therapeutic dialogue. In order to be able to make sense of the fragmentary and distorted information, the analyst must be able to rely on a theoretical structure which guides his insights into possible reconstruction. Each reconstructed individual life history can be viewed as a hypothesis generated by the theory. Verification, however, is not, as in the empirical-analytic sciences, merely a matter of establishing agreement concerning the results of an observation in light of a prediction. In psychoanalysis, verification of a reconstruction means the acceptance by the analysand of this account of his or her life's development. And it must be acceptance on a level of self-reflection such that the blockages, repressions, etc., are apprehended and dissolved by the patient, i. e., his or her neurotic symptoms are overcome. If this is successfully accomplished, the patient can gain a conscious understanding of his or her process of self-formation.

In the final instance, the meaning of the process itself must be capable of becoming part of our [the patient's] consciousness in a critical manner, entangled as we are in the drama of life history. The subject must be able to relate his own history and have comprehended the inhibitions that blocked the path of self-reflection.

For the final state of a self-formative process is attained only if the subject remembers its identifications and alienations, the objectivations forced upon it and the reflections it arrived at, as the path upon which it constituted itself.²¹

Thus the ultimate verification of an interpretation/reconstruction in psychoanalysis depends on its acceptance and corroboration by the analysand. Through the psychoanalytic encounter and therapeutically guided self-reflection, the analysand can come to understand the unconscious factors which had been affecting his or her behavior. By systematically understanding and reexperiencing the history of the conditions that produced these motives and forces, the analysand can overcome their past unsuspected control of his or her life.

The unconscious motives, forces, etc., that dominate past behavior do so, Freud argued, precisely because the analysand is unaware of them and their true nature. Systematic repression and distortion in communicative and self-reflective capacities are held to prevent access to interpretations and meanings necessary to self-understanding. If the therapeutic interaction is successful, access is established to self-understanding; the analysand can have a true understanding of his or her motives, needs, intentions, the conditions of his or her life, etc. As a result the analysand can self-consciously reach an understanding, and potentially complete control, of his or her self-formative process. If this is the case, the adequacy of the

psychoanalytic encounter and interpretation will be reflected on the level of action and expression in the disappearance of neurotic symptoms. Thus in the end, verification is achieved only in and through practice.

At this point it is useful to note how Habermas conceives the respective roles of Verstehen and explanation in psychoanalysis. As we have seen, the initial appearance of psychoanalysis is that of a hermeneutic science. But there are important differences between hermeneutics and the currently presented conception of depth hermeneutics. First, in psychoanalysis (taken by Habermas as the model of depth hermeneutics), the interpretation to be achieved is of most immediate concern to object of investigation (the analysand) and not to the scientist-interpreter (the analyst). This is the opposite situation of concerns to that of the standard hermeneutical sciences. In the latter, the concern and interest of the scientist is in achieving an interpretation of a meaningful action or object. The consequences of achieving such an interpretation may have repercussions, previously noted, on the self-understanding of the object being studied. But the fact of such repercussions are only of secondary import to the interest guiding the scientist and science. On the other hand, for psychoanalysis, the interest guiding the science is the emancipatory interest. The importance of the interpretation proffered is primarily for the

analysand (the object of study). That the interpretation developed must be understood by the scientist-interpreter is a methodological necessity. But it is of secondary concern, Habermas contends, when seen from the point of view of the "interest structure of the science."

In psychoanalysis a simple hermeneutic procedure is insufficient given the fact the object/patient does not have full self-understanding, as manifested by his or her neurotic symptoms. The theory of psychoanalysis presents a way of understanding neuroses of various types as the consequence of sequences of causal, lawlike developments which act, prior to therapy as a form of "second nature" and are beyond the immediate control of the patient. These developments, which are the result of unconscious "factors," act upon the analysand as seemingly natural forces, i. e., as forces which are external to the patient's consciousness and which operate in a nomological, causal manner.

Within the terms of the psychoanalytic theory, when the action of these forces is described by the analyst, the patient is objectified and an explanation, similar in form to those of the natural sciences, given for his action. The speech of the patient is not taken, in the first instance as a dialogue to be interpreted with the intent of understanding the patient's consciously intended meaning.²²

Instead, verbal behavior is viewed and treated as the result of motives and forces beyond the patient's immediate control, and therefore as material to be explained.

In the psychoanalytic situation the analyst takes the analysand's utterances not as a discourse but as verbal behavior--i.e., as symptoms of objective conditions, which he, the analyst, tries to explain "from outside" in terms of a special sublanguage which the other (the former interlocutor) does not possess.²³

The level of "naturalistic," causal explanation in psychoanalysis (and other critical sciences) is called by Radnitzky a "quasi-naturalist approach."²⁴ This term is employed in order to indicate that the technical interest in explanation is subordinated to the practical interest in understanding. Although the two moments of analysis are "strongly interacting," the role of explanation is to mediate between the initial distorted self-understanding of the patient, and the final (assuming the therapy is successful) fully self-conscious self-understanding achieved. "Explanation, in the form of a reconstructed life history, is used to both understand, and overcome the objectifications of the unconscious forces of second nature."²⁵

Psychoanalytic therapy is not based, like somatic medicine, which is "causal" in the narrower sense, on making use of known causal connections. Rather, it owes its efficacy to overcoming causal connections themselves.²⁶

The causal connections which control and dominate the behavior of the analysand are posited, in terms of the general interpretation of psychological development, as a potentially understandable intentional structure. The respective "meaning structures" are uncovered through the process of a "depth hermeneutics" which functions on

the methodological levels of understanding and explanation.

The role of the analyst is obviously central in this process. The scientist-interpreter is required both for the development of possible explanations of apparent symptoms, and in the employment of those in the therapeutic dialogue to encourage critical self-reflection on the part of the analysand. The complementary utilization of explanation and understanding is necessary only while there is a gap between the expressed needs and self-understanding of the object/patient and his or her behavior, as manifest for instance in neurotic symptoms. "Theoretically, once the therapy has been successfully concluded and the patient is emancipated from domination by forces beyond his knowledge and control, explanation of his actions will coincide with his own understanding and the former method will be superfluous (to the recovery of an understanding of an individual action or expression on the level of meaning and intention)."²⁷

The question arises as to what the analogue of this process is at the level of social theory. Can the model be translated for use in social theory? Given our earlier questions about the usefulness of discussions of society qua systems which have identities or deformed identities,²⁸ we need to explore carefully how Habermas translates considerations at the level of individual development to the level of group and community development. Taking psychoanalysis

as the theoretical prototype of critical science, Habermas attempts to translate this model into social theory. His conception of social theory can be usefully elaborated within the terms of the above discussed three levels of psychoanalysis.

For Habermas, the level of metatheory is inclusive of his theory of communicative competence and his reformulated notion of historical materialism, including his basic philosophical anthropology and the theory of interests. This level supplies the basic framework and categories within which the theory develops. As with the metapsychology of Freud, the metatheory of the critical social theory is only indirectly empirical. Thus it can be argued against directly on the level of theory but can only be empirically falsified indirectly through falsification on a lower level. That is to say, that on the level of metatheory, empirical data cannot be brought to bear to falsify the theoretical claims. The theory can be opposed on philosophical grounds but empirical evidence can be used to reject it only insofar as the theory leads to false predictions on a lower level of theoretical application.

The middle level, corresponding to Freud's general interpretation, consists of a theory of social evolution constructed within the terms provided by the metatheory. On this level, Habermas talks of the development of the human species through the three

mediums of work, language, and domination. As we shall see, he speaks of the logic of development of both the forces of production and of normative structures (roughly, relations of production) within evolving social formations. This level obviously relies heavily on empirical data and must constantly be checked against the available knowledge in history, sociology, anthropology, archeology, etc. The third level involves the application of the general theory of social evolution to the development of a specific society or social formation, in particular that of capitalism. Here the task is to reconstruct ". . . the life history of a given society in an attempt to reveal and dissolve ideological distortions of communication as a part of a process of self-emancipation."²⁹ The attempt is made on this level to reveal the dynamic of social development of a society in such a way that the knowledge developed can uncover the sources of ideology and ultimately be used to overcome them. Part of this project involves the identification of potential crisis points in the social structure and thereby identification of social groups potentially amenable to the process of enlightenment. As with psychoanalysis, falsification on the level of individual reconstruction, and hence in the last instance, falsification of the entire theoretical construct, is judged ultimately only in terms of the presence or lack of emancipatory praxis which overcomes structures of domination.

Apel sums up the use which he, in accord with Habermas, sees in the psychoanalytic model.

I think that this methodological pattern of dialectically mediating communicative understanding by causal explanation is, in fact, the model for a philosophical understanding of all those types of critical social science which have their relation to the practice of life, not in the realm of social engineering, but in provoking public self-reflection and in emancipation of men as subjects.³⁰

* * * * *

In Knowledge and Human Interests, the notion of "reflection" is ambiguous. In a later work, Habermas himself notes that:

It occurred to me only after completing the book that the traditional use of the term "reflexion," which goes back to German Idealism, covers (and confuses) two things: on the one hand, it denotes the reflexion upon the conditions of potential abilities of a knowing, speaking and acting subject as such; on the other hand, it denotes the reflexion upon unconsciously produced constraints to which a determinate subject (or a determinate group of subjects, or a determinate species subject) succumbs in its process of self-reflexion.³¹

Habermas readily admits that these two modes of reflection, which he calls rational reconstruction and self-reflection, respectively, were not adequately distinguished in his earlier work.³²

A rational reconstruction explicates general rules of human competency in a given area or context, e.g., logic, linguistics, or

psychological and cognitive development. Habermas cites Chomsky and Piaget as key figures who have helped to bring about the systematic reconstruction of individual competences. In his own work, Habermas relies on rational reconstructions in at least two areas, i. e., in communication with his theory of communicative competence, and in epistemology with his theory of cognitive interests. While reconstructions depend on reflection, this reflection is not limited to a particular subject.

Rational reconstructions . . . deal with anonymous rule systems, which any subjects whatsoever can comply with insofar as they have acquired the corresponding competence with respect to these rules. Reconstructions thus do not encompass subjectivity, within the horizon of which alone the experience of reflection [in the sense of self-criticism] is possible.³³

Self-knowledge is enhanced by rational reconstructions in the sense that one "becomes familiar with the range of inevitable subjective conditions" which both make human action possible "and place limits on it." Such reconstructions can tell us what is entailed in successful participation in a functioning rule-governed context; that is, "it renders explicit the intuitive knowledge that is given with competence with respect to the rules in the form of 'know-how'."³⁴

On Habermas' account the impetus to develop a rational reconstruction of a particular area of competence emerges only in the context of a theoretical discourse. That is, it is only when we

bracket or suspend the imperatives of everyday action and reflect on "the conditions normally assumed in ordinary interaction" that we can engage in this type of theoretical activity. This type of reflection, as Habermas points out, "first took the form of a search for the transcendental ground of possible theoretical knowledge (and moral conduct)."³⁵ But while this form of reflection is related to what has traditionally been considered transcendental thought, Habermas stresses that in the context of his usage, it is better termed "quasi-transcendental." By the term "quasi-transcendental," Habermas seeks to stress that while this type of reconstruction has a "transcendental" function, i. e., highlights a priori conditions for the possibility of ordinary interaction, it (the reconstruction) remains empirical insofar as it explains the development and acquisition of empirical competences by empirical subjects.³⁶

Self-criticism, on the other hand, is a mode of reflection which

. . . brings to consciousness those determinants of a self-formative process of cultivation and spiritual formation (Bildung) which ideologically determine a contemporary praxis of action and the conception of the world.³⁷

Thus self-criticism is the mode of reflection which the analysand is encouraged to engage in during psychoanalysis. Unlike rational reconstruction, self-criticism is directly tied to practice insofar

as it is:

- a. brought to bear on objects of experience whose pseudo-objectivity is to be revealed; . . .
- b. brought to bear on something particular--concretely speaking--on the particular self-formative process of an ego, or group, identity; . . .
- c. characterized by its ability to make unconscious elements conscious in a way which has practical consequences. Criticism changes the determinants of false consciousness, whereas reconstructions explicate correct know-how, i.e., the intuitive knowledge we acquire when we possess rule-competence, without involving practical consequences.³⁸

In a therapeutic dialogue, as we have seen, a rational reconstruction is required in order to be able to isolate the potential causes of the neurosis. Such a reconstruction is needed to facilitate the process of systematic enlightenment through dialogue and self-criticism. Likewise within the context of a critical social science, the self-criticism which becomes a critique of ideology requires a theory of normal communication as well as a reconstructed history which locates the potential sources of ideology.

Habermas points out that the situations in which self-criticism can occur, e.g., in a therapeutic dialogue, are ". . . both more and less than a discourse."³⁹ Given that the analysand and analyst are not symmetrically related, i.e., that the analyst has access to more information and a greater range of speech acts than the analysand engaged in critical reflection, the therapeutic dialogue is less

than a genuine discourse. The therapeutic dialogue can only become a discourse through successful therapy. The psychoanalytic dialogue, on the other hand, "is more than a discourse because, as a result of the relation of critical reflection to action, claims to authenticity as well as claims to validity can be settled."⁴⁰ Only validity (truth) claims can be agreed upon under the conditions of a normal discourse. Claims to authenticity can only be decided in light of expectations of future courses of action. However, in a therapeutic dialogue, the validity of an interpretation can be established only through the process of critical reflection. This process of testing conjectured interpretations only comes to an end in and through practice, i. e., with the disappearance of neurotic symptoms. Thus validity claims concerning the systematic distortions in the analysand's life history and Bildung, can only be redeemed in discourses if at one and the same time the analysand can overcome his or her false consciousness and act with authenticity.

* * * * *

It should be noted that Habermas' interest in psychoanalysis is not restricted merely to the theoretical and methodological structures of the science. In addition he stresses that certain elements of

Freud's substantive theory can be usefully employed to supplement Marx's conception of power and ideology and his reformulation of historical materialism.⁴¹ Specifically, Habermas argues that in Freud's later work--in his contributions to social theory and social psychology--there are systematic insights into the origins and functions of social institutions which aid the elucidation of the concepts of social power and ideology.

Freud understood institutions as the manifestation of "historically required repression of instinctual drives" which result from ". . . the conflict between surplus impulses and the conditions of collective self-preservation."⁴² In order to fulfill its primary need for self-preservation, the species, faced with conditions of scarcity, is forced to adapt to its environment in ways which prevent "complete gratification of instinctual desires." The process of adaption is the central principle, Habermas maintains, behind Freud's conception of social organization. On Habermas' interpretation, Freud held that there was a similarity in the process of the socialization of the species and the socialization of the individual.

As long as the pressure of reality is overpowering and ego organization is weak, so that instinctual renunciation can only be brought about by forces of affect, the species finds collective solutions for the problem of defense, which resemble neurotic solutions at the individual level. The same configurations that drive the individual to neurosis move society to establish institutions.⁴³

The effectiveness of social institutions in facilitating survival must be understood, according to this theory, as occurring only at the cost of a repression of needs and motives. This repression is operationalized through the development of patterns of distorted communication on a social scale.

Freud, Habermas claims, distinguished, in a way similar to Marx, the forces of production from the relations of production. He understood that the level of necessary social repression was a function of the level of development of productive forces; that is, as the technical power of a society to control the forces of outer nature increases, the constraints of scarcity are progressively undermined, thus decreasing the degree of socially necessary repression. Thus as the level of necessary repression lessens, the institutional framework of a society can be changed to accommodate a higher level of needs gratification. The impetus for such a change arises out of the experience of members of a given society who suffer as a result of the repression of needs.

Beyond the level of general repressions which are imposed on all members alike, there are, of course, in class societies, Habermas points out, class specific privations and denials. Hence the most oppressed classes, who experience the most suffering and deprivation, are potentially the least integrated into society and the

most likely source of change.

There is a difference, significant from Habermas' point of view, in the way Freud and Marx viewed social institutions.

Marx conceives the institution framework as an ordering of interests that are immediate functions of the system of social labor according to the relation of social rewards and imposed obligations. . . . Freud, on the contrary, conceives the institutional framework in connection with the repression of instinctual impulses.⁴⁴

It is Habermas' contention that by conceiving of social institutions as the result of repressed needs and therefore as the source of distorted and limiting communication, Freud is able to give a better account of ideology than Marx. Marx, Habermas maintains, was unable, given his focus on production and labor, to view ideology and power as distorted communication. This is reflected in tendencies in the later Marx, sanctioned by some orthodox Marxist interpretations, to attempt to reduce the development of social organization to developments in the forces of production. Freud, on the other hand, by focusing on the development of socially expressible needs and motivational patterns, was able to perceive that the power of social norms ". . . is based on a defense which enforces substitute-gratifications and produces symptoms as long as it is a result of unconscious mechanisms and not of conscious control.⁴⁵ As Schroyer points out, although this view recognizes that a precondition of

emancipation is ". . . the extension of objective possibilities by the productive forces, there is no certainty that emancipation will follow automatically from greater technical progress."⁴⁶

In Habermas' view, historical materialism must be supplemented by a theory of ideology understood in terms of distorted communication. In this context, "ideology" can be defined, as Schroyer put it, as

. . . the compulsory suspension of doubt about its claim to validity. Ideologies are those belief systems which can maintain their legitimacy despite the fact that they could not be validated if subjected to rational discourse.⁴⁷

The process of emancipation, then, entails the overcoming of such systems of distorted communication. This process, in turn, requires engaging in critical reflection and criticism. It is only through reflection, as conducted socially through a discourse organized around the interest of emancipation, that repressive domination in all its forms can be unmasked. The power of ideology can then be destroyed in practice. The imperative for this practice follows from the process of reflection, enlightenment, and the successful uncovering of the sources of distortion and domination. In this way we can understand critical theory as, in the end, the critique of ideology.

* * * * *

As the critique of ideology, critical theory stands between philosophy and science. Like science it makes truth claims which are derived from a theory about the nature of the world and are verified in light of empirical results. But unlike traditional science, critical theory comprehends its own historical situations and realizes that its validity is dependent on its ability to understand itself and its genesis; that is, it is a reflexive theory which has the aim of

. . . achieving an explanation of social evolution which is so comprehensive that it embraces the interrelationships of [its] own origins and application.⁴⁸

This reflexivity also distinguishes critical theory from traditional philosophy. While critical theory is concerned with the traditional philosophical questions concerning the conditions of possible knowledge, the nature of freedom and justice, etc., it realizes that these questions cannot be answered in abstraction from the interests and activities of life practice. Critical theory understands the inadequacy of a purely contemplative philosophical stance and the need to go beyond (but not reject) reflection. Critical theory realizes, that is, that the resolution of philosophical issues can only take place in history under the achievement of certain concrete conditions and as the result of the conscious activity of the species.

In summary we see that Habermas makes the distinction between the different knowledge-constitutive interests and their correlated domains of human action at a number of levels.

These include:

1. The "quasi-transcendental level": the theory of cognitive interests distinguishes the technical interest in prediction and control of objectified processes from the practical interest in extending intersubjective understanding and the emancipatory interest in the maintenance of distorted free communication.

2. The methodological level: the argument is made for a logical distinction between empirical-analytic sciences which yield nomological knowledge that is technically exploitable, the historical-hermeneutic science which yields interpretative knowledge to expand and preserve understanding capable of orienting action, and the critical sciences--such as psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology--which yields knowledge that creates the possibility of action against the blocks to human emancipation.

3. The sociological level: where realms of purposive-rational actions are distinguished from the institutional framework in which they are embedded.

4. The level of social evolution: where the growth in productive forces and technical control of outer nature is distinguished from the extension of communication free from domination of inner nature.

In making these distinctions, Habermas hopes and intends to overcome the ambiguity of Marx's epistemological framework, its

tendency to reductionism, and orthodox Marxism's "reduction." The oft-proclaimed "dialectical" interdependence of the economic base and the socio-cultural superstructure "must be reflected at the categorical and methodological levels if critical theory is to avoid the extremes of economism and neo-idealism."⁴⁹ This is not to imply that in certain social formations, in certain epochs, there cannot be a predominantly "one-way" relationship from base to superstructure. But it is only theoretically informed empirical work that can uncover the respective relationships of concepts at the sociological and evolutionary levels.

Thus, for example, the theories of interests and communicative competence are not formal, abstract models to replace historical materialism. Rather they are intended to provide a satisfactory categorical framework for understanding history and social evolution. If they are to do this they must, in Habermas' view, be "linked convincingly with the precisely rendered fundamental assumptions of historical materialism."⁵⁰ This link Habermas began to develop in his discussion of the human species' characteristics and in his attempt to overcome the ambiguity he argued was present in Marx's epistemological framework and self-understanding (which was held to be in marked contrast to the concrete, dialectical character of the critique of political economy). It is to Habermas' discussion of

levels three and four that we must turn in order to uncover whether or not he makes good on his claim to be reorienting and systematizing social theory.

NOTES

¹Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, p. 1. In reality, of course, there is a dialectical relationship between the efforts to attain the conditions of an ideal speech situation and the destruction of the material causes of ideology, exploitation, and domination. The comprehension, to say nothing of the completion, of each task presupposes a necessary reference to the other. The process of achieving human freedom, if it is to take place in history, will necessarily involve the uniting of these two projects. For the purposes of Habermas' approach, it is useful, in the interests of theoretical clarity, to make the analytic distinction between conditions for linguistic rationality and freedom from ideological distortion and those for material freedom from exploitation and domination. It should be stressed, however, that an adequate understanding of either aspect necessitates an understanding of the interrelations of both.

²Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 32; also quoted in McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence, p. 148.

³Schroyer, "Toward a Critical Theory for Advanced Industrial Society," in Recent Sociology, ed. Dreitzel, pp. 224-25.

⁴Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, chaps. 10, 11, 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 214.

⁶Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 9.

⁷Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 214-15.

⁸Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, p. 4.

⁹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 217.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 218.

¹¹Ibid., p. 232.

¹²It should be noted here that Habermas criticizes Freud for failing in the end to understand the status of psychoanalysis as a critical science. Habermas suggests that Freud, because of his scientific understanding of science, lapsed into a positivistic misunderstanding of his own work. This positivist tendency is indicated, according to Habermas, in Freud's attempt to interpret psychoanalysis in terms of an energy distribution model, thus eliminating the hermeneutic dimension. For the development of the critique of Freud, cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 284-86.

¹³The discussion of Habermas' interpretation of the levels of psychoanalysis presented here relies heavily on a discussion by McCarthy, "Philosophy and Social Theory," Stoney Brook Studies in Philosophy, pp. 108-10. Also cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 253-73.

¹⁴Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 254.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 259.

¹⁹McCarthy, "Philosophy and Social Theory," Stoney Brook Studies in Philosophy, p. 109.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 260.

²²Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, pp. 9-10.

²³Radnitzky, Contemporary Schools of Metascience, p. 237.

²⁴Ibid., p. 236. Radnitzky provides an interesting and wide-ranging discussion of the psychoanalytic model and the role of explanation and understanding in a critical science (as developed by Habermas and Apel). In particular, Radnitzky develops Apel's notion of a tacking procedure back and forth between the quasi-naturalistic level of explanation and the hermeneutical level of interpretive understanding in a dialogic form. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 233-351.

²⁵Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, p. 10.

²⁶Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 271.

²⁷Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, p. 11.

²⁸Cf. pp. 453-54.

²⁹McCarthy, "Philosophy and Social Theory," Stony Brook Studies in Philosophy, p. 110.

³⁰Apel, "The a Priori of Communication," p. 34.

³¹Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 182.

³²Cf. *ibid*, pp. 182-85; Theory and Practice, pp. 22-24; "Summation and Response," pp. 99-101. In the latter two references, "self-reflection" is used instead of "self-criticism." I shall follow the usage of "self-criticism" as in the "Postscript," which appears to be the more accurate translation.

³³Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 22.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁵Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 182.

³⁶Cf. pp. 457-58 for an elaborated discussion of the term.

³⁷Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 22.

³⁸Habermas, "A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests," p. 183 (first emphasis mine).

³⁹Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 23.

⁴⁰Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 7, p. 14.

⁴¹Cf. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, pp. 214-90, especially pp. 274-90. In particular, Habermas draws on Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents, The Future of an Illusion, and the New Introductory Lectures.

- ⁴²Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, p. 154.
- ⁴³Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, p. 276.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 277.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 279.
- ⁴⁶Schroyer, The Critique of Domination, p. 155.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 163.
- ⁴⁸Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 1.
- ⁴⁹McCarthy, Introduction to Habermas, Legitimation Crisis,
p. xii.
- ⁵⁰Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 12.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL THEORY AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Habermas has argued that an essential characteristic of the human species is the organization of its behavior under imperatives of validity claims. As such, Habermas contends, man--who is both producer and communicator--learns and develops over time. This learning and development takes place in two dimensions: namely, in work and interaction. Man's autonomy was said to be dependent on the developments in these two dimensions, on the development of productive forces and on the alteration of normative structures. These developments, Habermas further claims, "follow rationally reconstructible patterns which are logically independent of one another."¹

According to Habermas the history of productive forces, technology, and secular knowledge is a history of "truth-monitored successes in coming to terms with outer nature." It consists of

. . . discontinuous but, in the long run, cumulative processes. For the explanation of the world-historical cumulative character of scientific and technical progress, the knowledge of empirical mechanisms is necessary but not sufficient. For the development of science and technology we must rather conjecture an inner logic through which a hierarchy

of non-reversible sequences is fixed from the outset.² Cognitive breakthroughs cannot simply be forgotten, so long as the continuity of tradition does not come to an end. Likewise, the development of cultural life, the alteration of normative structures works through discursive validity claims. Just as with the history of science, it is a directed process. The socialization and integration of inner nature has a cognitive component (" . . . the way from myth to religion to philosophy and ideology is a directed process in which the demand for discursive redemption of validity claims more and more prevails").³ As with knowledge of nature and technologies, so with world-views, the pattern of their development, Habermas argues, makes it possible to reconstruct the following descriptively enumerated regularities:

- expansion of the secular domain vis-a-vis the sphere of the sacred;
- a tendency from far-reaching heteronomy to increasing autonomy;
- the draining of cognitive contents from world-views (from cosmology to the pure system of morals);
- from tribal particularism to universalistic and at the same time individualistic orientations;
- increasing reflexivity of the mode of belief, which can be seen in the sequence: myth as immediately lived system of orientation, teachings, revealed religion, rational religion, ideology.⁴

The elements of world-views which sustain and secure social identity and social integration, that is, moral systems and interpretations of moral systems, follow with "increasing complexity a pattern which has a parallel at the ontogenetic level in the logic of the development of moral consciousness. A collectively attained stage of moral consciousness can, as long as the continuity of the tradition endures, just as little be forgotten as collectively gained knowledge--which does not exclude regression."⁵

The fact that evolution takes place in both dimensions in the form of directed learning processes which work through discursively redeemable validity claims does not imply that history follows or is to be explained by the logically necessary sequence of possible developments (which are rationally reconstructible). For example, Habermas notes, the history of science cannot be explained adequately by regulators internal to the scientific system. The "actual developments, innovations and stagnations, the occurrence of crises, the productive or unproductive working out of crises, etc., can be explained only with the aid of empirical mechanisms."⁶ Limits of a rationally reconstructible pattern of development "are reflected in the trivial experience that cognitive thrusts cannot be simply forgotten so long as the continuity of tradition is unbroken, and that every deviation from the irreversible development path is experienced as a regression which exacts its price."⁷

Before discussing the empirical mechanisms Habermas thinks are pivotal and the methods through which we can conceive them, a number of points that follow from the above should be noted. Habermas suggests that there seems to be a "conspicuous asymmetry for the form of reproduction and the logic of socio-cultural life world. While the development of productive forces always extends the range of contingency of the social system," evolutionary changes in the structure of norms and interpretating systems by no means offer a social system any number of selection advantages.⁸ Since the mechanisms which cause developmental thrusts in the normative structures are "independent of the logic of their development, there exists a fortiori," Habermas contends, "no guarantee that a development of the forces of production and an increase in steering capacity will release exactly those normative alterations which correspond to the steering imperatives of the social system."⁹ They might well be in contradiction¹⁰ (the possibility of which we will discuss in a moment).

In order to explore how Habermas arrives at a conception of the empirical mechanisms requisite to an analysis of social evolution and the development of social formations, we must return for a moment to considerations of his levels of analysis, approaches, and methods. In Legitimation Crisis Habermas is concerned with both moments of self-reflection: systematic reconstruction and criticism.

The first one-third of the book sketches in programmatic form the outlines of a theory of social evolution in which, in the second one-third, the developmental tendencies of late capitalism can be and are located. In the last one-third of the book Habermas engages in a critique of some contemporary social theoretic positions. It is the first one-third of the work which is the most relevant here.

In order to explore the developmental tendencies of any social formation, Habermas suggests that it is insufficient to look just to the preceding social formations. Given that evolutionary development is dependent on cognitive thrusts, we must, he argues, reconstruct the necessary and sufficient conditions of development and trace the immanent possibilities of evolution within the boundaries set by past and present conditions. The necessary conditions to be analyzed are the sequences of empirical events--the sufficient conditions, the sequences and direction of the inner logic of cognitive processes. The approach Habermas advocates for systematic reconstruction is articulated in terms of the question of social crises.

In a brief history of the concept of crises Habermas suggests that we associate the idea with an objective force which deprives a subject of a part of his sovereignty and the resolution of which effects a liberation of the subject caught in it. Habermas aims to systematically introduce a social-scientifically useful concept of

crises and argues that such a concept must grasp the connection between social integration and system integration, between the approaches of a hermeneutic, Verstehen, action theory and a naturalistic, objectivistic, behavioral-oriented systems theory.¹¹

We speak of social integration in relation to the systems of institutions in which speaking and acting subjects are socially related [vergesellschaften]. Systems are seen here as life-worlds that are symbolically structured. We speak of system integration with a view to the specific steering performances of a self-regulated system. Social systems are considered here from the point of view of their capacity to maintain their boundaries and their continued existence by mastering the complexity of an inconstant environment. Both paradigms, life-world and system, are important.¹²

Under the former we thematize the normative structure, values, and institutions (i.e., framework of social norms) of a society. "We analyze events and states from the point of view of their dependency on functions of social integration (in Parsons' vocabulary: integration and pattern maintenance), while the non-normative components of the system count as limiting conditions." Under the latter we thematize a society's steering or control mechanisms and the extension of the range of contingency." We analyze events and states from the point of view of their dependency on functions of system integration (in Parsons' vocabulary: adaptation and goal-attainment), while the goal values ['the value of the state variables characteristic of the goal state of a system'] count as data."¹³ If we reduce the latter to

the former (i. e., the paradigm of systems to the life-world) then issues of control are screened out; investigations and studies stay at the level of commonsense cultural knowledge and procedures (within situations immediately constituted through interaction) and deny that social phenomena are construable as determinate or bounded in their parameters. At best we are left with an idealistic concept of crises that rests on members' definitions of identity. But, as Habermas says, "a society does not plunge into crises only when and wherever its members say so."¹⁴ Furthermore, even if we supplement the analysis of normative structures with an analysis of limiting material conditions, it is at the expense of creating a weak dichotomy which does not make the connection palpable (i. e., we cannot explain the origin of the limiting conditions).

If, on the other hand we reduce the former to the latter (i. e., the paradigm of the life-world to systems) and understand society as a system, then "the fact that social reality consists in the facticity of recognized, often counterfactual validity claims" constituted by subjects is not taken into consideration. Here we are left with a systemic or structural concept of crises, e. g., environmental disturbances which overload system maintenance capacities and/or inherent contradictory system imperatives which are incompatible and cannot be hierarchically integrated. But structural contradictions

can only be designated as leading to crises if we are able to specify structures central to stability. Structures may fundamentally change without the system losing its identity. "The range of tolerance within which the goal values of a social system can vary without critically endangering its continued existence or losing its identity obviously cannot be grasped from the objectivistic viewpoint of systems theory."¹⁵

Habermas argues that both types of analyses and approaches have their point. The problem is to present their integration. This Habermas finds in a historically oriented analysis of social systems. The range of tolerance within which goal values may vary without a given system losing its stability depends primarily not on the flexibility and consistency requirements of normative structures, but on both components of goal values, the cultural values of the constitutive tradition and the non-normative requirements of system integration (i. e., survival imperatives). Until now, Habermas states, there have been insufficient tools and methods available to grasp this connection. Variation ranges for structural changes, he argues, can only be grasped in terms of a theory of evolution of social formations, which are themselves determined and defined by a fundamental principle of organization "which fixes an abstract space of possibilities of alteration in social states" (and which arises in evolutionary thrusts).

Therefore, organization principles can be seen to "limit the capacity of a society to learn without losing its identity." According to this definition steering can have crisis effects if (and only if) they cannot be resolved within the range of possibility that is circumscribed by the organizational principle of the society. Principles of organization of this type determine, firstly, the learning mechanism on which the development of productive forces depends; they determine, secondly, the range of variation for the interpretive systems that secure identity; and, finally, they fix the institutional boundaries for the possible expansion of steering capacity. 16

For Habermas the concept of an organization principle points to the fundamental empirical mechanism of any given social formation, the uncovering of which can determine the learning capacity, and thus the potential level of development of a society.

It is my conjecture 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 is the phenomenon that calls for explanation at the socio-cultural stage of development. Therein lies, if you will, the rationality of man. Only against this background does the overpowering irrationality of the history of the species become visible. 17, 18

In determining the possibility spaces for evolution in three developmental dimensions (work/production, interaction/socialization, steering/control), the principle of organization determines whether "and if so (a) how system and social integration can be functionally differentiated; (b) when dangers to system integration must result in dangers to social integration, that is, crises; and (c) in what way steering problems are transformed into dangers to identity,

that is, what type of crisis predominates."¹⁹ These crises can manifest themselves in four dimensions: as system crises in the economic and/or rationality of administration and State, and/or as identity crises in the form of legitimation or motivational problems. There are three potential sources of crises: the economic, the political, the socio-cultural.²⁰

Habermas proceeds by illustrating "Social Principles of Organization" in the social formations of precivilization (primitive communities) and traditional societies. In each case he shows how from the determining principle (respectively, kinship systems and class domination in a political form) one can derive the possibility spaces which it opens to social evolution and how definite types of crises can be derived from them. The first two examples are important, to ground an historical perspective. His main interest is, however, in exploring the organization principles of liberal and organized capitalist societies, examining their crises tendencies in order to locate the "possibilities of a 'post-modern' society, by which is meant a historically new principle of organization and not a new name for the surprising vigor of an aged capitalism."²¹

Habermas' study of organized capitalism cannot be discussed at any length here.²² Such a discussion would take us too far beyond the major themes of this work. An important point, however, should

be noted, viz., the claim of critical theory to be reflexive.²³ In Legitimation Crisis, Habermas attempts to demonstrate the theory's reflexivity by arguing first, that capitalism is creating the potential for a new organizational principle which itself embodies a level of consciousness compatible with the emergence of the highest stage of man's "inner cognitive logic." And by arguing secondly, that as such, what was held to be immanent and effective in the species' communicative interaction--the ideal of truth, freedom, and justice--is potentially realizable. And by arguing thirdly, that the potential of this new emerging principle of organization itself becomes the basis for the explanation of the historicity of critical theory. In short, developments internal to the progress of contemporary social practice form the historical preconditions for the possibility of a correct explanation and understanding of the history of the species. For these developments themselves reveal the immanent potential in the human species and thereby expose the full capacity of the species for the program and process of critical self-reflection and the fulfillment "of the ideal of truth, freedom and justice."²⁴

Critical theory, on Habermas' account, is the emancipatory interest become self-conscious and the new organizational principle is the embodiment of this interest. The theory of social evolution attempts to provide an explanation of how and why this interest is

thematized and concretized at a particular moment in history. In Chapter 14 we will attempt to assess these claims together with the other major theses of Habermas' work. But before we examine these issues further, it is first necessary, for purposes of completeness, to see one further area of implication of Habermas' views. We turn now to an exegesis of his theory of Political Organization, the theory of the relationship of theory and practice in practice.

NOTES

¹ Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 11 (my emphasis).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴ Ibid. For an elaboration of this argument see Jürgen Habermas, "On Social Identity," Telos 19 (Spring 1974).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸ For example, he suggests that "we cannot exclude the case in which a strengthening of productive forces, which heightens the power of the system, leads to changes in the normative structures which simultaneously restrict the autonomy of the system because they bring forth new legitimacy claims and thereby constrict the range of variation of the preferred values (ibid., p. 13).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ It is important to note that Habermas employs the concept of contradiction in two different theoretical languages corresponding to the differences between the logic of self-regulated systems and the logic of ordinary language communication. In the latter case, he argues, that "we may speak of the fundamental contradiction of a social formation when, and only when, its organizational principle necessitates that individuals and groups repeatedly confront one another with claims and intentions that are, in the long run, incompatible. In class societies this is the case." (Ibid., p. 27.) Systematically distorted communication which forces integration and represses needs no longer enables us to identify a contradiction between declared interests but assumes the ideological form of a contradiction between the intentions which the subjects believe themselves to be following and their, as we say, unconscious motives

and fundamental interests. At the systemic level, "contradictions" are introduced with reference to problems of system maintenance (e. g., when more problems are posed in a given environment than the steering capacity of a system can solve, logically derivable contradictions appear which require, on pain of ruin, an alteration of system structures: a change of elements which up to that point belonged to its "structural continuity"). See *ibid.*, pp. 25-28.

¹¹ It is worth saying at the outset that Habermas' partial adoption of systems theory and systems theoretic language is not an uncritical adaptation to his purposes. See Legitimation Crisis, translator's note, fn. 9, chap. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ Habermas differentiates different levels of learning: these follow from the fact that "we learn in two dimensions (theoretical/practical) and that these learning processes are connected with validity claims that can be discursively redeemed." "The level of learning which a social formation makes possible could depend upon whether the organization principle of the society permits differentiation between theoretical and practical questions and transition from nonreflexive (prescientific) to reflexive learning." For illustrations, see Legitimation Crisis, pp. 15-16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24. *Crisis*, chaps. 2, 3, 4.

²⁰ See Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, chaps. 2, 3, 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²² Habermas' analytic theory of advanced/organized capitalism is outlined and criticized at some length in the joint work by Larry Simon and myself, "Understanding Habermas," chaps. 9, 11. For a useful exegesis of Habermas' work on organized capitalism, see

Schroyer, "The Re-politicization of the Relations of Production: An Interpretation of Jürgen Habermas' Analytic Theory of Late Capitalist Development," in New German Critique, no. 7 (1975).

²³The concept of theoretical reflexivity was discussed on pp. 512-13.

²⁴See Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, chap. 7.

CHAPTER XIII

THEORY OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Our discussion of critical science has thus far concentrated on the relationship between theory and practice in theory. As we have seen, critical theory is designed to help create the conditions for the possibility of a political practice directed toward emancipation from distorted communication in all its forms. Critical theory understands that its ultimate verification can only be demonstrated in practice, i. e., through the establishment of conditions of freedom and truth. However, critical theory, Habermas also contends, is reflexive. It comprehends itself as the historical result of emerging emancipatory practice. In other words, critical theory understands itself as both the result of the struggle for social fulfillment and as an essential catalyst in this process. The question now arises, how, in light of the theory, is this practice, i. e., the political struggle for emancipation, to be organized and carried out? How can self-reflection, as an essential moment of liberation, be made a part of the political task? What is Habermas' conception of the theory of the relationship between theory and practice in practice?

In order to answer these questions, we need to turn again to the model of psychoanalysis as a critical science.¹ On Habermas' conception, psychoanalysis links theory with practice through methodically incorporating self-reflection. But how can the psychoanalytic model be transferred to the level of social and political interaction? Are there safeguards that can be applied to guide its application and sanctions that would help avoid its abuse?

Habermas points out that the practice of psychoanalysis itself is governed by several such safeguards and sanctions.² For example, the basic theorems of the theory which claim to be valid and true must be defensible in scientific discourse. Further, the sufficiency of a particular interpretation is dependent on a critical test, i.e., successful self-reflection on the part of the analysand. There are also various types of professional and social standards and ethics which legally or morally check possible abuses in the patient-therapist relation. Above all, in psychoanalysis there is (ideally) the voluntary submission of the patient to the therapy.

What are the analogous safeguards and sanctions at the level of social and political interaction? In political struggles, there does not seem to be any overriding authority who can impose sanctions. Nor does it appear that we can easily speak, when reflecting on conflict and revolutionary conflict between classes, of the voluntary

submission of one class to a group, party, etc., for the purpose of systematic enlightenment.

In recognition of these questions and problems, Habermas was led to make distinctions in the function and organization of the political process of enlightenment. Three levels are differentiated. The first is ". . . the formation and extension of critical theorems, which can stand up to scientific discourse."³ On this level theory is established via rational scientific procedures, the aim of which is the generation of true claims about the socio-historical world. The validity of these truth claims rests ultimately on their redeemability in a discursively generated consensus. The second level is ". . . the organization of processes of enlightenment."⁴ This is the level on which the theory generated is therapeutically applied. The aim here is to enlighten those to whom the theory is addressed about the actual nature of socio-historical reality. The aim of this process is to eradicate the repressive structure of communication which blocks individuals'/groups'/classes' capacities to locate themselves in society and history and to articulate their interests. Through the systematic application of the theory developed by theoretical discourse, and self-reflection on the part of the subject/object of investigation, the theorems can be tested in the only way which can lead to their genuine confirmation.

The third and final level is concerned with ". . . the selection of appropriate strategies, the solution of tactical questions, and the conduct of the political struggle."⁵ This level must be clearly differentiated, Habermas emphasizes, from the second level. While the theory which is developed on the first level can be used to legitimize the organization of the process of enlightenment, it cannot in a like manner be used to justify particular political actions.

Decisions for the political struggle cannot at the outset be justified theoretically and then be carried out organizationally. The sole possible justification at this level is consensus, aimed at in practical discourse, among the participants, who, in the consciousness of their common interests and their knowledge of the circumstances, of the predictable consequences and secondary consequences, are the only ones who can know what risks they are willing to undergo, and with what expectations.⁶

That is, theory cannot dictate and justify action. Theory can be used to create agents capable of full participation in decisions concerning action and it can be used to support arguments in favor of certain courses of action. But it cannot be used, in any automatic or mechanistic way, to generate and justify strategy. Nor can a theory in any way ensure success of any strategic action. Therefore, Habermas maintains, that in the theory of the relationship between theory and practice in practice, there is, in the last instance, a "dualism." Theory is not reducible to the contingencies of practice. This "dualism" Habermas would vigorously defend.

Habermas here wants to differentiate clearly the process of enlightenment from the process of political action and the process of confronting a political opponent with whom any constructive dialogue (and therefore a therapeutic dialogue) is impossible. Critical theory directly embodies a form of practice, i. e., the organization of enlightenment, as part of its theoretical and methodological structure. This practice involves a special type of interrelationship between participating groups, as determined by reference to the psychoanalytic model. The limits of this practice are also the limits of practice which can be directly derived from theory. As the result of the process of enlightenment, if it is successful, self-conscious agents free of ideological distortions will be "forthcoming." These agents, as persons capable of participating in a political struggle to create the material conditions of freedom, must be included in any process of strategy formation. The procedure for deciding on questions of strategy is the practical discourse. As we have seen, such a discourse has as a condition that the consensus arrived at, if it is a genuine consensus, must result from a dialogue involving all self-conscious, emancipated agents. Since the ultimate rational authority is the discursively generated consensus, theory cannot dictate a particular strategic practice. Insofar as a consensus of all self-conscious and participating agents

is attained concerning a course of action, the strategy decided upon can be informed by theoretical argumentation. But the theory, in and of itself, has no authority aside from the agreement of the partners to accept it in the attained consensus of the practical discourse. While a practical discourse can and must interpret the theory, the theory cannot be used to question the authority of the discourse.

Habermas recognizes, of course, that under the pressures of actual immediate events, it may well prove to be impractical, if not impossible, to implement a practical discourse in order to formulate strategy. In such cases, actions must be taken as the situation demands.

There are situations in the face of which such considerations are either scurrilous or simply ridiculous; in such situations we must act as best we can--but then without appealing to a theory whose capacity for justification does not extend that far.⁷

The theory of political organization is meant to provide a model to which actual practice should attempt to conform. The virtue of such a model, Habermas suggests, is in clearly demarcating the various functions involved so that political organization can avoid elitist or mechanistic practice.

Habermas stresses this point by distinguishing different preconditions which he argues must be present on the three levels. On the first level, that of theory, it must be accepted as a precondition

that ". . . those engaged in scientific work have the freedom to conduct theoretical discourse."⁸ Only under this condition can a scientific theory be developed in the most rational way. On the second level, that of the process of enlightenment, practice must be organized so that ". . . those who carry out the active work of enlightenment commit themselves wholly to the proper precautions and assure scope for communications on the model of therapeutic 'discourses'."⁹ This condition must be met if deception and exploitation are to be avoided. On the third level, that of political struggle, there is yet a different precondition if it is to be legitimate, viz., ". . . that all decisions of consequence will depend on the practical discourse of the participants--here too, and especially here, there is no privileged access to truth."¹⁰ It is Habermas' contention that a political organization or party must adhere to these differentiated functions and preconditions if it is to achieve its goals. Not to recognize that strategy must be decided upon under conditions different from those of the practice of enlightenment or theory is to run the risk of conceiving of practice instrumentally and to fall into a "science of apologetics." As Habermas says: "The autonomy of theory and enlightenment . . . is required for the sake of the independence of political action."¹¹

None of that said above is intended to minimize the importance

of the level of strategy. Rather, Habermas intends to maximize one's appreciation of the risks involved in day-to-day political practice, risks which "no theory can dissipate." Nor can political participants avoid or escape these risks. Likewise, nothing said above was intended to imply that we should not engage in strategic action. It is rather that Habermas seeks to stress that if and when we engage in such activity, we do so with no illusions as to the nature of its status.

The moment of emancipation looks to the future, to the Bildung and freedom of the subject. The moment of enlightenment looks to the past, to the self-formative process of the subject. The moment of political struggle takes place between these two moments. And here there are no guarantees. But if the struggle is successful, we can overcome the asymmetry between the enlightened and unenlightened and unite and equalize all subjects in the same process.

NOTES

- ¹Cf. Habermas, Theory and Practice, pp. 25-40.
- ²Ibid., p. 29.
- ³Ibid., p. 32.
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 33.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 37.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Ibid., p. 33.
- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 34.
- ¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER XIV

A CRITIQUE OF HABERMAS

Habermas' work is a major and extensive attempt to reformulate the philosophical foundations for a critical theory of society; a social theory designed with a practical intent, the self-emancipation of men from the constraints of unnecessary domination in its multifarious forms. Central to the project is the argued connection between truth, freedom, and the good life. Is this argument defensible? The argument for the connection is crucial to Habermas' overall program; with it stands or falls his attempt to overcome the separation of fact and value, description and evaluation, science and criticism, and theory and practice.

The analysis of speech reveals Habermas' claims that speech is oriented toward the idea of truth. The analysis of truth, the argument suggests, leads to the concept of a discursively achieved consensus. The analysis of the "consensus," it is contended, shows this notion to involve a normative dimension.

The analysis of the notion of a grounded consensus ties it to a speech situation which is free from all external and internal constraints, that is, in which the resulting consensus is due simply to the force of the better argument. Finally, the analysis of the

ideal speech situation shows it to involve assumptions about the context of interaction in which speech is located.¹

The end result of this argument is, as we have seen, that the very structure of speech is contended to involve the anticipation of a form of life in which freedom and autonomy are possible. On Habermas' account, the critical theory of society makes this its starting point.

No matter how the intersubjectivity of mutual understanding may be deformed, the design of an ideal speech situation is necessarily implied in the structure of potential speech, since all speech, even of intentional deception, is oriented toward the idea of truth. This idea can only be analyzed with regard to a consensus achieved in unrestrained and universal discourse. Insofar as we master the means for the construction of the ideal speech situation, we can conceive the ideas of truth, freedom, and justice, which interpret each other--although of course only as ideas. On the strength of communicative competence alone, however, and independent of the empirical structures of the social system to which we belong, we are quite unable to realize the ideal speech situation; we can only anticipate it.²

The theory of Communicative Competence, of "pragmatic universals," is both ingenious and extremely controversial. This theory is, as Wellmer has pointed out, at one and the same time, "an attempt to explicate the universally valid pragmatic rules which every 'competent' speaker-actor has learnt to master; no less is it an attempt to provide a linguistic explication of the traditional ideas of truth, freedom, and justice, an explication which tries to show that these ideas are operative--and how they are operative--in any

symbolic interaction. Correspondingly, the theory of pragmatic universals also provides an explication of the idea of 'systematically distorted communication,' an idea which is of fundamental importance for Habermas' re-interpretation of historical materialism."³ The very basis of this idea and of Habermas' critical theory rest on an analysis of the structure of communication and its claimed normative basis. The question is, is the analysis of the structure of communicative interaction adequate? The supposition of the ideal speech situation and, therefore, the presence of the ideas of truth and freedom as anticipations in speech, are argued to be operative in any symbolic interaction. The question is, how are they? Is this analysis, of vital importance to Habermas' argument, satisfactory?

It was suggested earlier that in Habermas' view we assume, in discussing, "the reality of the ideal speech situation. It is 'anticipated,' but as anticipated also 'effective'."⁴ The question remains: how can we make this claim about human interaction? How is the notion of the ideal speech situation generated in social interaction? On Habermas' definition, universal pragmatics deals with speech acts in abstraction "from the variable components of the speech situation." It examines only "the general structures of speech situations in general."⁵ This characterization does not apply, however, to the specification of the ideal speech situation.

This specification is "formal" in the sense that it abstracts from the different methods and strategies proper to the resolution of different types of problems. It is also "formal" in that it employs the concepts of universal pragmatics. But in requiring symmetry of chances to exercise the different speech acts it clearly involves the dimension proper to empirical pragmatics, that is, the empirical conditions which vary from speech situation to speech situation.⁶

But what is Habermas abstracting from when he labels the conditions of the ideal speech situation as "formal"? When one normally speaks of formal properties of arguments or statements (e. g., in the context of logic), the bases of abstraction are usually quite clearly determined. This clarity is absent in Habermas' analysis.

On the one hand, Habermas argues that the theory of communicative competence is a metatheory, the elements of which are indirectly empirical. At this level of theory, Habermas contends, empirical data cannot be brought to bear to falsify the theoretical claims. The theory or the elements of the theory can only be directly opposed and challenged on philosophical grounds. (Empirical evidence can be used to reject the theory only insofar as the theory leads to false predictions on a lower level of theoretical application.)⁷ Thus Habermas appears to attempt to immunize the theory of communicative competence from a direct empirical critique. But the argument and demonstration that the ideal speech situation, for example, is a presupposed or anticipated property of communicative interaction,

cannot be made simply by philosophical reflection. This Habermas clearly recognizes when he argues, on the other hand, that the normative model of ideal language use is not abstractly metaphysical (or excessively formal) insofar as it is founded in an analysis of the conditions of concrete speech situations. In walking "the fine line between naturalistic and transcendental philosophy," Habermas seeks to ground critical theory in such a way as to avoid the circularity in previous attempts. Thus Habermas appears to be claiming that the ideal speech situation is an empirical property of communicative interaction per se.

Thus Habermas is ambiguous concerning the status of the claims of the theory of communicative competence. However, despite this ambiguity, it does appear that when Habermas discusses the theory directly he does make strong empirical claims about the nature of communicative interaction. He contends that certain arenas of social interaction are governed by certain rules or conventions constitutive of dialogue. The ideal speech situation, he claims, is operative in any symbolic interaction. But the question arises: From what empirical data are these claims derived? Habermas offers us no empirical analysis of practical social communication that might uncover and, therefore, ground in social life this ideal speech situation. From the school of ethnomethodology, Coulter has charged that

this ideal speech situation, as a model of human competence, "seems more inspired by its exemplification of cherished ideals"⁸ than by empirical analysis. The charge, that Habermas' version of critical theory imports abstract, formal standards and ideals into analyses of social life and history, can only be avoided if Habermas shows how, and at greater length and detail than previously, the ideal speech situation can be uncovered in communicative interaction. Otherwise, Habermas appears to be making the absurd claim (which he clearly is not) that communicative interaction can be understood context-free. If the ideal speech situation is not to be regarded as an imported, outside standard to social interaction, Habermas will have to show how it is present as a convention in the ongoing accomplishment of everyday life. Habermas would do well to bear in mind one of the central tenets of the ethnomethodologists--namely, that the rational properties of practical activities be recognized, assessed, categorized, and described within social situations of organized common practices.⁹

Whether or not the ideal speech situation embodies only abstract, formal, decontextualized rules (or methods) of action, that are consequentially "imposed on" (and hence irrelevant to) human interaction in some or all of its manifestations is as yet an open question. To know whether or not the standard of an ideal

speech situation is immanent in human interaction and, therefore, whether or not it might be attainable, we need an account of competent rule usage in communicative interaction and an analysis of what counts as competent rule usage in various social settings. What seems to be required here is an analysis of the socially organized nature of cognition, of the indexicality of all types of interaction. It should be noted, however, that such an analysis must explore these areas with a broader, historical conception of social context than that used by Garfinkel's ethnomethodological program, i.e., it must avoid the problems associated with Garfinkel's conception of indexicality.¹⁰ This type of investigation would not only seek to analyze the rules and conventions constitutive of social action in the immediate situation of the action's production, but would also seek to account for the historical genesis of these rules, etc., within the movement of larger historical contexts.* Such an enterprise, which is perhaps akin to Habermas' intention in developing a theory of social evolution, might or might not reveal that certain rules are primary and common to the orientation of all human action and interaction.

*It is recognized that the precise nature of such an analysis has yet to be worked out. Likewise, a precise and operational concept of indexicality has yet to be developed. In the absence of these specifications and developments, the above suggested program for further investigation into Habermas' theory of communicative competence must, of course, be given a tentative status.

The satisfactory discussion of these issues is crucial to Habermas' program. For if the ideal speech situation is inadequately "grounded," not rationally or empirically justified, the critical base of Habermas' program falls away. The whole conceptual schema that allows Habermas to talk of distorted communication, "deformations of pure intersubjectivity," ideology, etc., is, as yet, on very fragile grounds. Without development many of the problems associated with other attempts to ground critical theory will be reproduced here. For example, parallel charges such as those Merleau-Ponty brought against Lukács¹¹ could here be made; it could be said that Habermas bestows on human life an abstract ideal--unconnected with what is immanent or immanently possible in interaction. His analysis of speech might be regarded as being charged with a "conceptual mythology." Habermas' claim to have advanced beyond previous schools of critical theory will be in doubt if he fails to develop what is, as yet, a speculative metatheory. Likewise, Alfred Schmidt's claim that Marx's critical theory has been "ransacked again and again" in search of an ultimate epistemological "foundation" that can only be abstract and formal, will, with Habermas, beget of yet another example.¹² If the Habermas program fails, none of these remarks should suggest to the reader that we are thrown back on, for example, the classical positions of a positivism or a

hermeneutics. But it is to suggest that the questions we have begged of these schools have not yet received adequate answers and that they might well not if taken in the direction of Habermas' work.

A further difficulty can be highlighted with the theory of communicative competence and Habermas' conception of the ideal speech situation. Even if we accept for a moment the analysis Habermas makes, the question arises as to whether or not the symmetry of the ideal speech situation is a necessary or sufficient condition of rational discourse. McCarthy has cast doubt as to whether it is.

On the one hand, the argument for its necessity can be made plausible only if "rational" is taken in the very strong sense of perfect rationality proper to the philosophical tradition. At the level of theoretic explanation--for example in the natural sciences or in mathematics--what counts as rational discourse does not seem to require this symmetry, does not seem to be incompatible with any number of psychological, moral, political, etc. peculiarities of the participants so long as these do not occasion a departure from the standards accepted within their discipline. It is only if this level of discourse is regarded as resting on presuppositions which themselves must be discussed (foundations of science) and ultimately upon assumptions about the nature and limits of human knowledge that rational discourse as such may plausibly be argued to imply complete freedom from the constraints of ideology, neurosis or any form of domination. But to make this case for even the more reflected forms of knowledge would clearly require a much more detailed analysis than Habermas has yet offered.¹³

On the other hand, as McCarthy points out, it is extremely difficult to see how Habermas' notion of "formal" symmetry is a sufficient

condition for what he argues and describes as the structure of rational argumentation. How does this symmetry requirement ensure the capacity and freedom to move from level to level of discourse?

The freedom, for example, to consider alternative conceptual schemata or to reflect upon the conditions of knowledge seems to require presuppositions about the reflective capacities of the participants and about the cultural traditions to which they belong. It is, to say the least, rather unclear how these are already covered by the symmetry requirement.¹⁴

The necessity or sufficiency, as well as the importance of the symmetry requirement is extremely problematic.

This point raises another difficulty internal to the terms of Habermas' theory of objectivity and truth. The validation of all scientific knowledge of the world, in Habermas' view, is inextricably intertwined with the conditions for the realization of the good, the just, and the true life. In absence of the realization of these conditions there can be no ultimate verification or falsification of any, it would seem, knowledge claims. As a consequence, the theory of communicative competence is itself, given we are clearly well short of the ideal speech situation, unproven. On the other hand, it is ultimately unverifiable until the conditions of the ideal speech situation are realized. It cannot on this account be proven or falsified until the ideal speech situation is achieved. Therefore, all knowledge

claims are ultimately grounded on a ground that cannot be ultimately tested until the specified conditions are realized. The claims for the centrality of the ideal speech situation cannot, within Habermas' own terms of reference, be settled or ultimately justified at this time! Habermas, therefore, cannot claim to have grounded critical theory. At best, he can claim that the truth claims of the theory remain unfalsified; but the theory awaits verification.

There are, then, major problems with the Habermas' theory of truth. But having said this, it must of course be remembered that Habermas attempts to historize the concepts of communicative interaction, communicative competence, discourse, etc. In the outline of a theory of social evolution he discusses the consequences of the "evolutionary disjuncture," the fact that man is oriented to validity claims. In his view, as we have seen, there is a different logic of development in the realms of work and interaction. This claim raises another series of questions which are also, in fact, questions to Marx.

Habermas' claim that there are logics of development in history (which do not discount regression) seems to tread the fine line between the stronger claims of Hegelian teleology and historical relativism. His work, in arguing the centrality of cognitive functions and development is enormously suggestive, but as suggestive--as he himself

readily admits--highly programmatic. The questions that are raised speak to the enormously complex issues as to whether or not we can talk of progress in history and, if so, in what sense and generated by what mechanisms. Marx, it would appear (or might be argued) wants to hold on to a theory of progress. His view might be that man's powers, needs, and consciousness unfold in history with the development of his capacity to master outer nature. In the last analysis, Marx might argue, the logic of development of consciousness can be understood in terms of the logic of development of production, the logic of development of social labor. In other words, human progress is dependent on the unfolding through labor of man's powers and needs in history.

Habermas is, as we have seen, unconvinced that we can discuss the logic of development of social life in this way. Neither he nor Marx, however, have (obviously) adequately clarified the relationships between realms of human interaction. For Habermas' argument, it is crucial that the irreducibilities and interdependencies of productive forces, world-views (or moral systems) and steering (control) capacities be clarified. This I take to be his task in attempting to develop a theory of social evolution. Leaving aside, for a moment, the important questions as to whether such a general theory is at all viable, the need for further development and clarification

is crucial if this aspect of his work is to be more than of hypothetical import. Without an elaboration of the theory, and detailed historical and anthropological inquiry, the "theory" of social evolution and progress will remain speculative. A clarification of the two realms of action is also important to the theory of interests. The exact nature of the irreducibilities and interdependencies of the two realms needs to be clarified and specified. Without such a specification we might discover that there are good reasons why Marx could only speak generally about social labor. (I will return to a discussion of the theory of interests in a moment.)

The discussion of a logic (or logics) of development in history carries with it its own dangers. In an entirely different context Adorno pointed out that:

To suppose, if only methodologically, anything like an independent logic of culture is to collaborate in the hypostasis of culture, the ideological proton pseudos. The substance of culture, according to this argument, resides not in culture alone but in its relation to something external, to the material life-process. Culture, as Marx observed of juridical and political systems, cannot be fully "understood either in terms of itself . . . or in terms of the so-called universal development of the mind." To ignore this, the argument concludes, is to make ideology the basic matter and thus to establish it firmly.¹⁵

The position that Adorno is attacking is a view that Habermas would also have no sympathy for. In his view, culture cannot be under-

stood outside the development of the totality of human practice. But Habermas does want to talk of a logic of development of communicative interaction and world-views that cannot be reduced to the logic of the development of work, etc. In so doing, his argument carries with it a certain tendency to legitimate certain forms of ideology, and hence social repression, in history as being necessary at various stages. (I believe that this view was also a tendency in Marx.) It becomes extremely important for Habermas to elaborate when in any given society he considers it to be legitimate and when surpassed, i. e., what is the relationship between necessary and unnecessary social repression in changing social epochs?¹⁶ Otherwise, we risk, as Adorno put it, "making ideology the basic matter" and thus contributing to establishing it firmly.

There are several other problems that carry over into Habermas' discussion of "logics of development" in history. One of the most important of these problems arises with his claim that immanent to the crises development of capitalism, is the emergence of a new organizational principle which embodies a level of consciousness compatible with the highest stage of man's "inner cognitive logic." This claim we noted at the end of Chapter 12 is closely tied to Habermas' contention that critical theory is reflexive. Both claims are controversial. In order to understand Habermas' position better, it

is worthwhile noting some of the major points he makes about the changing nature of consciousness in organized capitalism.

In Habermas' view, the ideology of liberal capitalism is being undermined and ever more replaced by "Science and Technology as Ideology," the instrumentalism of capitalism, etc. This view was first expressed in Towards a Rational Society and is given central importance in Legitimation Crisis. The argument for the undermining of the ideology of liberal capitalism is central to Habermas' contention that in the changing structure of consciousness the grounds for a new "organization principle" might be located, i. e., a principle that creates the possibility of discursive will formation: a democratized society. This is the principle of organization of a "post-modern" society and not one that could support capitalism (or as some prefer, a "post-industrial" society). Habermas seeks to demonstrate that, just as Marx thought that in the womb of an old mode of production a new one was born and developing, so a new and more developed form of consciousness is emerging that will not support capitalist value relations.

The argument Habermas develops to support this position is, in essence, that the general development of organized/advanced capitalism, and in particular, the increasing expansion of the state into formerly private realms of determination, has significantly

altered patterns of consciousness and motivation formation. The continuation of this tendency will lead, he maintains, to a motivation crisis. Habermas speaks of such a crisis when "the socio-cultural system changes in such a way that its output becomes dysfunctional for the state and for the system of social labor [i. e., the organization principle of society]." ¹⁷

The discussion of the motivation crisis is enormously complex. ¹⁸ I will only briefly indicate its main points and directions. The major motivational "dimension" of capitalist societies is characterized by Habermas as bourgeois privatism (specifically, civil and familial-vocational privatism). By privatism is to be understood a high interest in the social system's output (e. g., money, social status, leisure, social stability) and a low interest in the inputs into the decision and legitimizing processes (e. g., participation and control). It is this motivational orientation, Habermas contends, which is being systematically eroded.

The argument which supports this thesis has two parts: (1) that the traditions which produce these motivational patterns are being eroded and (2) that no normative structures are developing which can serve as functionally equivalent replacements of the eroded structures. As regards the first part, Habermas identifies the chief components of bourgeois ideology and tradition as the achievement

ideology, possessive individualism, and the orientation toward exchange value. In Habermas' view the market mechanism is weakening. As a result of this, the state is seen to be increasingly socializing the costs and goals of the accumulation and legitimation processes. As a consequence, Habermas argues, there is a steady undermining of the persuasiveness of bourgeois beliefs. Additionally, as the sector of the population which no longer reproduces its life through labor for exchange value (e.g., welfare clients, students, the criminal, and the sick, the unemployable, etc.) grows, the socialization effects directly dependent on the market are reduced and lessened.

As regards part (2), that no equivalent replacement structures are emerging which will generate privatism, Habermas analyzes and discusses three elements of the contemporary cultural formation: scientism, modern (post-representational) art, and universalistic morality (equality, democracy, etc.). He takes these elements to be "indicative of the logical development of modern cultural values." The contention is that in each of these areas, the logic of development is such that the normative structures no longer promote the reproduction of privatism and that they could only do so again at the cost of a regression in social development (i.e., increased authoritarianism). In each of these areas, he argues, the normative

structures embody tendencies toward universality and critique which are potentially threatening to the inequalities of the economic and political systems.¹⁹

Habermas does not want to commit himself to the view that the current motivation crisis will lead to a crisis productive of a post-modern society. Rather he sees in the systematic erosion of bourgeois ideology "signs," "strong tendencies" to indicate its possibility. But it is also clear that to the extent that he regards these developments as revelatory of the immanent potential of the human species for the program and process of critical self-reflection, he must regard them as both important and significant. The claim of critical theory to be reflexive is, after all, closely tied to the claimed progressive changes internal to contemporary social practice.

Habermas' position rests--as he himself recognizes--on complex empirical questions. These questions cannot be taken up here at any length. However, I would like to indicate briefly a tendency in his views to (1) overestimate the degree to which liberal capitalist ideology has been eroded, and (2) be too quick to gloss complex empirical phenomena. Both these points can be taken up in reference to contemporary discussions amongst sociologists about the nature of consciousness that pervades contemporary life.

In separate surveys of a substantial number of studies debating

the nature of the social cohesion of capitalist societies, Mann and Giddens have both concluded that there is clearly a great deal of evidence of dissensus and various degrees of class consciousness and conflict at political, industrial, and cultural levels.²⁰ However, they warn against the tendency, prevalent in much contemporary social science, to make too simple generalizations about the similarity of experiences between any one country or tradition and another. They stress both the importance of cross-cultural empirical data and the absence of much reliable data of this kind. They highlight that to the extent that reliable studies exist on the changing nature of consciousness, they reveal a picture of complexity and ambiguity that does not lend itself to easy generalizations. Patterns of consciousness change significantly across countries and cultures. A multitude of different types and levels of class consciousness are found in different countries and within countries.

At the empirical level there is no ready evidence to support Habermas' contention of the potentially imminent realization of a communicative ethics, of the highest stage of man's "inner cognitive logic." There appears to be very little evidence to suggest a general change in normative structures that embodies tendencies to universality and critique. To the extent that any general characterization of contemporary social consciousness can be made it should suggest,

as Mann argues, that a dual consciousness is often found in many working-class communities and work places.²¹ This implies a relatively radical qua populist interpretation of concrete everyday events but a relatively conservative, privatistic interest in dominant political parties and processes. Many dominant institutions and processes are perceived and hypostatized as "natural," "the way things have been and always will be," in which existing social structures are taken to be "in the order of things."²² In other words, much knowledge of abstract general issues is the result of interpretation through categories and language not held and felt to be applicable to the characterization of more immediate needs.

In short, given the available empirical data in contemporary sociology (and the absence of empirical evidence in Habermas' own work), there does not seem to be a sufficient basis to locate the emergence of an organizational principle of a "post-modern society." Contemporary changes in normative structures have, at best it seems, a very ambiguous relationship to discursive will formation, universality, and critique. This is not to say that some of Habermas' suggestions are not powerful and useful, but it is to say that I consider his views both an overestimation of the degree to which capitalist ideology has been eroded, and too "quick" and "sweeping" in their assessment of immediately past and contemporary developments.

As a consequence, the status of notions like the "inner logic of development of practical consciousness," the "potential realization of the highest stage of development of man's inner logic," and the "reflexivity of critical theory," are all problematic. First, given the enormous differences between levels of critical reflection found in contemporary society,²³ the general claim about there being an "inner logic of development of practical consciousness" (at the phylogenetic level) needs to be much more carefully specified if it is to be sustained as a useful concept. Second, given the significant differences in degrees of "critical," emancipated consciousness across cultures and within cultures,²⁴ and the general unavailability of empirical evidence to trace the claimed imminent formation of the "highest stage of development of man's inner logic," the contention that such an evolutionary stage is potentially realizable is extremely weak and unsupported. Third, as an inevitable consequence of what we have said above, the claim of Habermas' version of critical theory to be reflexive is tenuous. Developments internal to the progress of contemporary social practice do not seem, in any obvious sense, related to the categories and concepts of his version of critical theory.

* * * * *

One of the central tenets of Habermas' philosophical position is that the empirical-analytic sciences are to be sharply distinguished from the cultural-hermeneutic sciences, both on the level of epistemology and on that of methodology. His views, as we have seen, are based on his reflections on philosophical anthropology and his theory of cognitive interests. A criticism critics have made of this position is that Habermas, in attempting to differentiate the various sciences, has accepted a positivist model of the natural sciences. For example, in a recent review of Knowledge and Human Interests, Richard Miller wrote:

. . . Habermas' effort to create an unbridgeable gap between natural science and other kinds of science increasingly relies on an unintentional parody of the natural sciences in which questions of whether given particular events confirm or disconfirm given natural-scientific theories is regarded as essentially unproblematic.²⁵

A second and oft-made criticism is that the technical interest, which Habermas claims informs the empirical-analytic sciences, is too narrow a basis on which to found the variety of disciplines which are normally considered natural sciences. The criticism suggests that if Habermas is to convincingly argue that there is an underlying connection between all knowledge in the natural sciences and a basic interest in control and manipulation of all natural objects, then he must provide an account of such a link with respect to certain problem

cases, e.g., astronomy and the theory of biological evolution.

These criticisms misunderstand the intent of Habermas' writings on the natural sciences.²⁶ Habermas is not concerned to explicate the internal logic of the natural sciences and to describe this logic in such a way that it can be used to give an account of the history of the natural sciences. In fact, as we previously noted in Chapter 12, Habermas explicitly denies that he is making such a claim. "I am not claiming that the history of science can be adequately explained by regulators internal to the scientific system."²⁷ Nor is Habermas recommending a model of how natural science should ideally proceed. Rather, Habermas' intent is to demonstrate (cf. Chapter 9), through an analysis of the logic of scientific inquiry, that there is an inherent connection between certain types of knowledge claims and certain forms of human activity. Further, he wishes to claim that certain forms of human activity, in particular, the manipulation and control of objects, and communication between men and women, are necessary to the survival of the species, given the natural and defining needs of the species and the nature of the world in which it finds itself. This being the case, Habermas argues that certain forms and structures of inquiry and knowledge claims, for instance, the form of nomological, causal explanation in the natural sciences, are a result of, and ultimately are to be understood

as, a natural and inherent consequence of the situation of man in the world.

Thus, that science does not function and operate according to a model of science which Habermas (supposedly) discusses is not to the point, for he is not attempting in his epistemological writings to give a descriptive account of science. Rather, he is attempting a metatheoretical examination of the underlying structure and logic of knowledge and its systematic relation to action. He is seeking to uncover the "a priori" (i. e., quasi-transcendental) conditions for the possibility of knowledge. All he needs in order, for example, to begin his argument as it concerns the natural sciences, are two things. First, that the inherent and fundamental "needs structure" of the species is of the form he claims it is; and secondly that the structure of knowledge and explanatory claims in the natural sciences are of a certain type, namely, law-like generalizations concerning externally observable and measurable objects, generalizations which characteristically record the results of interactions between objects in terms of such concepts as causation, etc. Given this understanding of Habermas' project, two areas of questions and criticisms can be posed.

First, can Habermas establish that there are three and only three basic cognitive interests, the technical, the practical, and the

emancipatory? Or, to express this question differently, can Habermas demonstrate that certain rules are primary and invariant to the orientation of all human action and interaction? And, secondly and more generally, has he adequately established that there is the type of linkage that he claims between human interest and structured activity, and knowledge? Has Habermas adequately demonstrated that there is a "systematic relationship between the logical structures of a science and the pragmatic structure of the possible applications of the information generated within its framework"?²⁸ It is my view that concerning all of the above questions, Habermas' work needs to be more explicit, developed, and detailed if his epistemology is to be convincing.

A number of points can be made in connection with the first area of questions. In Knowledge and Human Interests Habermas attempted to uncover the three interests by systematic reflection on the work of Peirce, Dilthey, and Freud. But this strategy of investigation, although enormously fruitful and suggestive, cannot establish the claim that man historically is oriented to three basic interests. For one cannot uncover and establish these interests by systematic philosophical reflection alone. The theory of interests, like the theory of communicative competence, does in fact make strong empirical claims about the essential orientations of the human species'

activities. To establish and justify the thesis, viz., three interests, one needs to investigate, as Habermas now emphasizes, the evolution of the species. Such a project is only in the earliest stages of development. Therefore, the claim that man's history is essentially structured along the dimensions Habermas suggests must at this stage be regarded as conjectured knowledge. A theory of evolution might or might not reveal that certain rules are primary and invariant to the species' development.

Having said this, we must note another difficulty. A critical objection can be raised by the (Winchian position two and Gadamerian) hermeneutic tradition to the claim that one might or could ever uncover invariant needs of the species, e.g., a generalized interest in emancipation. For the meaning of emancipation, Gadamer, for example, might well point out, is contextually bound to traditions. When comparing the meaning of emancipation across traditions across time, Gadamer might argue, we are more than likely not comparing similar phenomena. As we saw in Chapter 5, the problematic of what is to be counted "as doing the same thing" is enormously complex. For Gadamer we can mediate traditions, but the mediation is always a mediation for us. Therefore, the meaning of the claim that there is an invariant emancipatory interest is inextricably bound to "our" tradition. Rational reconstruction is

always for Gadamer, reconstruction within the presuppositions of our own tradition, which is to say, in short, that there is no basis, no transcendental viewpoint, from which to construct the history of the species. Given the weaknesses of the theory of communicative competence, it is not clear how Habermas would or could respond to these objections. However he might respond, systematic attention to these issues is a necessity if his program is to develop.

The second area of questions has two parts. The first concerns the viability of the link between action and knowledge, i. e., do action structures provide the conditions for the possibility of knowledge, etc.? The second concerns the relationship between knowledge and use, i. e., does the claimed pragmatic structure of knowledge imply use for control and manipulation?

First, it seems important to note that, with respect to the linkage between action and knowledge, Habermas' position on the empirical-analytic and hermeneutic sciences is both insightful and at a certain general level correct (I note criticisms and questions in the next paragraph). It does appear that if man did not need to control and manipulate the objects in his immediate natural environment he would not need knowledge of regularities, etc. Likewise, it does appear that the hermeneutic project is inextricably linked to the particularities of human practical activity.²⁹ On these basic points I am

sympathetic to Habermas' position. However, the link between knowledge and the emancipatory interest seems much more problematic. The problems here were reflected in our earlier criticism of the theory of communicative competence (vital to the grounding of the interest) and the claim of critical theory to be reflexive. If there are systematic problems with both of these positions then the claim that psychoanalysis, for example, as a mode of knowledge is linked to an invariant emancipatory interest is extremely dubious. On this point Habermas' work needs considerable development if it is to be satisfying.

The two major points that were made to the first set of questions, however, obviously apply here. If the three interests have not been shown to be invariant, then, the link between knowledge and interest might well not be transhistorical. The following kinds of questions arise. Is there a link between, for example, a technical interest and nomological knowledge throughout history? Can "primitive" communities be said to manifest this link? Presumably, these communities share a technical interest, but do they share knowledge of the form Habermas contends, i. e., nomological knowledge? Habermas' theory of evolution will have to address these questions if his epistemology is to be found adequate. Likewise, the question also arises here as to the meaning of these claimed links. In the

absence of a viable theory of communicative competence it is not clear how Habermas could respond to the hermeneutic point that, for example, the meaning of this link is always, in the last instance, tradition bound. If members of a primitive community have a technical interest and have a mode of knowledge that approximates the nomological form, then, the relationship between interest and knowledge will have a connotation that is contextually tied to their tradition. A rational reconstruction of interests, a hermeneutician would contend, is always a reconstruction for us. As such, a theory of interests cannot have the status Habermas claims for a rational reconstruction.

Similar problems carry over into Habermas' discussion of the relation between knowledge and use. But before addressing these problems a number of points can be made concerning the charge mentioned above (by some of Habermas' critics) that the technical interest provides too narrow a base on which to found the empirical-analytic sciences. Natural science, these critics would argue, does more than provide information which is technically utilizable. For example, the knowledge generated by the natural sciences, it might be contended, allows man to feel more "at home" in a universe filled with "chaos, contingency, and danger." This charge, as usually made, (again) misunderstands the level on which Habermas'

epistemological argument is developed. His theory (of a technical interest) is not narrowly instrumentalist. He is not claiming that all knowledge produced by the natural sciences must have a direct, immediate, or obvious application for the manipulation and control of the environment, and only such an application. Nor does the expressed intention of the scientific community or of any particular scientist have to include a concern for the technical usefulness of knowledge. His theory of cognitive interests is clearly not, as some of his critics have maintained, psychologistic. Rather, Habermas is concerned, as we have argued, with the form and structure of knowledge in the empirical-analytic sciences and the underlying connection with basic human interests.

However, having said this, certain problems clearly remain. For if certain forms of empirical-analytic knowledge do not have any obvious direct "technical application," could it not be argued that, given that the link between knowledge and use is not "immediate," is (at best), as a consequence, the link between knowledge and interest weak for certain sciences, e.g., astronomy? For if an empirical-analytic science has no obvious application to technical control, etc., the question arises as to how we can contend that a technical interest is the constitutive basis of that science. Could not a case be made that knowledge of the stars fulfills an interest, for example, in

"making man more at home in the world"? Habermas needs (again) to be much more explicit on the nature of the links between knowledge and use, and knowledge and action.

* * * * *

A series of different questions and criticisms can be raised in connection with Habermas' theory of the relationship between theory and practice in practice. How, in any concrete situation, can the psychoanalytic model, in its differentiated functions as discussed above (Chapters 11 and 13), be applied to political activity? Can we derive a proposal for concrete political organization from Habermas' writings?

In order to operationalize Habermas' theory of the practice of enlightenment, it is necessary to be able to identify those social classes or groups who can and will participate in the process of an emancipatory political-therapeutic dialogue. That is, it is essential that the theory be able to identify those groups to whom it can be fruitfully and effectively addressed. If the theory fails to do this, the charge can be made that Habermas' notion of the feasibility of a program of social emancipation is utopian.

Marx was able to avoid the charge of utopianism in his day by

being able to identify both the subject of enlightenment and the subject of revolutionary activity with a class, he argued, had the potential power to ultimately transcend conditions of domination. Marx's theory of capitalist development sought to account for the conditions that made an emancipatory practice objectively possible. Habermas also recognizes the need for a theory, such as his, to be able to identify the subject of emancipation, the revolutionary subject. Does Habermas' theory indicate classes or groups which might fulfill this function?

In Legitimation Crisis, Habermas argues that the objective conditions of capitalist organization may have altered sufficiently in the last one hundred years to make it less likely that the proletariat will assume the role traditionally assigned to it by Marxist theory. Habermas does not, of course, rule out the possibility of the proletariat assuming the role of revolutionary subject. Rather, he argues, it is a matter which cannot be settled by theoretical reflection alone. The issues involve a number of empirical hypotheses. These hypotheses are delineated by Habermas in his presentation of a typology of possible crisis tendencies in late capitalism.³⁰

In his discussion of contemporary crisis tendencies, Habermas is hesitant to commit himself to predictions about future social development. However, he does indicate that certain developments

in late capitalism may be producing various disaffected groups who could be receptive to the process of enlightenment and the development of a radical or socialist consciousness. These groups include women, students, racial minorities, welfare constituents, etc. While these groups are marginal to the production process, their disaffection, Habermas contends, is evidence of emerging patterns of motivation which are dysfunctional to the capitalist system of social labor. But the question arises as to whether or not Habermas would want to argue that these groups, even if the tendencies he outlines are exacerbated, are situated in a way sufficient to be able to provide the basis for fundamental social change. If they are not (and if capitalism can only be overthrown by the power of the working class as many Marxists argue), then the disaffected groups he mentions cannot, even if they act together, perform the role of revolutionary subject. As a consequence, an organized process of enlightenment aimed primarily at these groups would not produce the hoped-for results.

It could be argued by Habermas, however, that changes and developments in the above-mentioned disaffected groups could be sufficiently disruptive to "the system," thus impeding the reproduction of capital. These developments would intensify structural problems and as a consequence systemic crises. These crises, in turn, perhaps might help to create the conditions whereby working-

class consciousness would radically change. The result might be a situation in which the working class would have an increasingly radical consciousness and a will to act. If this last possibility proves to be the case, then, a concrete and realistic political program might be devised in line with Habermas' work. Habermas, however, needs to be more exact and explicit in his social theory, not only as to the possibility of major social change and crises, but also as to which groups might be affected by the various crises and therefore which might be susceptible to political organizing, and generally, what political possibilities might be present or imminent.

A further question arises as to how Habermas conceives the role of "psychoanalyst" at the social level. Who is to be the instigator or promoter of the process of enlightenment? Is there to be a revolutionary party and, if so, of what organizational form? Once again it needs to be said that Habermas' position on these issues is not clear and needs to be made more explicit. In a recent interview he indicated that a whole series of tactical possibilities cannot be closed off at the present moment.³¹ Tactics and strategies which he mentioned include most things from organizing at the work place to efforts at radical reform within existing political institutions. Although, as we have seen, Habermas does provide a model of political organizations, which emphasizes certain "safeguards,"

restrictions, etc., it would seem to follow that actual organizational structures would, at least in part, have to depend on the nature of the activity engaged in.³²

Finally it may be noted that there are problems with Habermas' conception of the organization of enlightenment as it is envisaged on the model of the psychoanalytic dialogue. In Chapter 11 we noted that central to Freud's theory of "enlightenment" (on Habermas' interpretation) was a process of transference. That is, it was held to be necessary for the analysand to re-experience that which lay at the root of his or her neurosis. It is not enough for the therapist to merely present a correct interpretation; only if a re-experience occurs (of the experiences that caused the neurosis), can the analysand successfully transcend his or her distorted self-understanding and neurotic behavior. The crucial question here is: what political or social experience can be taken as analogous on the level of social enlightenment to transference within the psychoanalytic situation?

Habermas does not address this question directly. It is clear, however, that a discussion of it is important if Habermas is to successfully argue that the organization of enlightenment at the social level can be fashioned after that at the psychoanalytic level. In defense of Habermas' position, it might be contended, as Simon and I have pointed out:

. . . that a social crisis, if severe enough, causes conditions in which people are forced to confront their needs in a way that is more immediate and stark than is normally the case. At such times, mechanisms of distorted communication might be sufficiently weakened so as to allow people to recognize the nature and form of their social repression and exploitation. If so, then they might be more generally receptive at these moments to a theoretical account of their self-formative process which corrected for experienced distortions.³³

This sketch of an argument might be suggestive of what Habermas has in mind by transference at the social level. But as it stands, it is obviously an insufficient answer to the question. The usefulness of the psychoanalytic model as a model for political emancipation must be questioned if Habermas cannot more adequately address this problem.

* * * * *

Habermas takes as central to his work the reexamining of theory and practice in both theory and practice. As we have seen, however, Habermas' positions are open to a variety of criticisms. Although he has successfully raised a plethora of key questions, he has not (as yet?) developed convincing answers. Habermas seeks both to unite and differentiate theory and practice. In his theory of communicative competence he attempts to ground theory and theory's

standards in constituent elements of practice, and yet maintain a critical distance from the contingencies and immediacies of practice. This theory we have found wanting. As a consequence, the foundation of his conception of critical science is in doubt.

In his theory of interests he attempts to link knowledge and human interests, but these claimed invariant links have also been criticized and questioned. The theory of systematic enlightenment and emancipation was modeled after the psychoanalytic dialogue. But this model, as currently employed by Habermas, leaves open several unaddressed questions. We have also found that the theory of evolution and progress, which might sustain many of Habermas' theoretical reflections, is promising but still speculative. Likewise, Habermas' work on the contemporary epoch and the potentiality of emancipatory political practice is both insightful and insufficiently developed. On Habermas' account, the ultimate verification of his theory can only come, as we have noted, in practice. However, without adequate stipulation of the ways in which we are to proceed toward the eventual practice which might vindicate his theory, the program appears incomplete if not simply inadequate.

In the absence of satisfactory answers by Habermas to the above questions and criticisms, the success of his program remains in doubt.

NOTES

¹ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 154.

² Habermas, "Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 372.

³ Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," p. 98

⁴ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 147.

⁵ Habermas, "Vorbereitende Bemerkungen zu einer Theorie oder Kommunikativen Kompetenz," p. 107, quoted in McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 151.

⁶ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 151.

⁷ This position was elaborated on pp. 499 ff.

⁸ Coulter, "The Ethnomethodological Programme in Contemporary Sociology." The following remarks are inspired by and owe a debt to the paper above and many conversations with the author.

⁹ This ethnomethodological tenet was explicated on pp. 280-88.

¹⁰ These problems were discussed on pp. 285-88.

¹¹ See chap. 6, pp. 335-48.

¹² Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, p. 108. As an example, Schmidt cites the Austro-Marxists.

¹³ McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 151.

¹⁴ Ibid., no. 1, trans. Sami and Sidney Weir, in The Journal of Applied Social Psychology, p. 297.

¹⁵ Adorno, Prisms, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (London: Neville Spearmen, 1967), p. 29.

¹⁶ For a discussion of what Habermas means by social repression, see chap. 11 and his discussion of Marx and Freud in his Knowledge and Human Interests, chap. 12, pp. 274-90.

¹⁷ Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 90.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, chap. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Michael Mann, "The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy," American Sociological Review 35 (1970); Mann, Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class (London: The Macmillan Company, 1972). See also Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, especially chap. 11.

²¹ See Mann's work, *ibid.*

²² This hypostatization of the social world has been analyzed by Marx in his theory of fetishism. The effect of "fetishism" is the animization of things and the reification of social and productive relations. For a very useful introduction to this theory, see I. I. Rubin, Essays on Marx's Theory of Value (Detroit: Black and Red, 1972), chaps. 1-7. Also see Norman Geras, "Marx and the Critique of Political Economy," in Ideology in the Social Sciences, ed. Robin Blackburn (London: Fontane, 1972).

²³ For a lengthy list of relevant references see Giddens, The Class Structure, chap. 11 and the notes of that chapter.

²⁴ See Mann, Consciousness and Action, chaps. 1, 2.

²⁵ Richard W. Miller, a review of Knowledge and Human Interests, Philosophical Review (April 1975), p. 264.

²⁶ I owe this point to Larry Simon. It was stressed in our joint paper, "Understanding Habermas," pp. 25-26.

²⁷ Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, chap. 2, p. 149, fn. 3.

²⁸ Habermas, Theory and Practice, p. 8.

²⁹The arguments for these respective positions were made in the sections entitled "Structures of Action and Knowledge," in chaps. 4 and 5, and in chap. 9.

³⁰See Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, chaps. 3-7.

³¹"Habermas Talking: An Interview," introduced and conducted by Boris Frankel, Theory and Society, vol. 1, no. 1 (1974), pp. 37-58.

³²See Introduction, Habermas, Theory and Practice, pp. 28-32, and Dallmayr, "Critical Theory Criticized," pp. 221-25.

³³Held and Simon, "Understanding Habermas," chap. 11, p. 23.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: REFORMULATING THE QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

In our discussion of the Critical tradition we have seen how the search for ultimate foundations, a grounding for Critical theory, is a quest riddled with problems and ambiguities. The tensions we uncovered in Weber's thought, and the multiplicity of problems we found in the respective traditions of Positivism and Hermeneutics, have not found resolution in the Critical tradition. Its attempt to sustain a theory of unity of theory and practice has been shown to be inadequately developed.

From our arguments in the first two parts of this thesis it is clear that the oft-thought cleavage or dualism between theory and practice masks certain relationships of continuity. However, I have argued and stressed that these relationships of continuity do not entail that the unity of theory and practice be regarded as a simple reduction of either practice to theory, or theory to practice. Rather the relationship, I have contended, must be conceived as one of difference within unity. Positivism fails to recognize the dimension of unity in the relationship between theory and practice. As a consequence, positivism is unable to account for itself and, therefore, is unable to justify itself. If we regard the sciences,

for example, as formal, self-enclosed systems, then it becomes impossible to comprehend them as human activities. Theory is both of practice and immanently related to practice in a variety of ways. Yet, if the need for differentiation is not recognized, as is often the case in the hermeneutic tradition, then the terms and categories of theory are reduced to that of practice. As a result, theory falls into a relativism and descriptivism and is unable to justify its understanding and explanation of events in the world as something more than a layman's everyday account.

We have seen, however, that serious difficulties arise in certain attempts to elaborate a ground from which the theory of the unity and distinctness of theory and practice can be defended. But the failure of the critical school to have uncovered an ultimate ground that is both of practice and independent of its immediacies, etc., does not imply that we are forced back on a position of, for example, a positivism or a hermeneutics. It does not imply that the problematic of ideology, or more generally the problematic of using terms that are not part of an ongoing everyday life or tradition, raises false/pseudo issues and problems. Nor does it imply that that the distinctions between:

---systematically distorted communication and undis-
torted communication;

---false consciousness and true consciousness;

---the authenticity of tradition and the authority of tradition;

---the authority of tradition and the truth content of tradition; and

---understanding and critical understanding.

were pseudo distinctions.

At the outset of this thesis we said that a critique of ideology must be able to:

1. give an account of the concept of ideology.
2. support its pretensions to a critical perspective by grounding its vision of ideology-free intersubjectivity, i. e., clarify and justify in the notion of ideology, a necessarily implied conception of a "self-conscious" and "self-transparent" actor. In short, it must be able to elucidate the difference between false-consciousness and true-consciousness.
3. give a reconstruction of the natural-historical development of ideological structures of intersubjectivity.

What can we make of these demands in light of our discussion so far and, in particular, in lieu of the criticisms of critical theory in Parts 3 and 4?

Let us begin by examining the issues raised by the second demand. We have argued that the problematic of grounding a critical perspective is still a problem. An important question, however, remains: Might it be that the series of philosophical questions

that arise when the problems of "ultimate foundations" emerge in Critical theory are themselves a misplaced series of questions? We have seen that attempts to ground critical theory, for example, on the claim(s) that the human species has an interest or need structure that is invariant and immanent, can be objected to on several levels. These included criticisms and questions as to the internal consistency of the theories, the insufficiency of empirical evidence to sustain claims made, and the potentially variable status and meaning of these claims themselves (an objection motivated by the hermeneutic tradition).

Given all the problems that weigh on attempts to find absolute standards for the foundation of a critique of ideology, it can clearly not be ruled out that the problem of grounding admits of no ultimate solution. Furthermore, given the objections we have made from the perspectives of the hermeneutic tradition, it appears that the search for absolute foundations implies a task that is theoretically implausible. But that a series of criticisms can be made of the Critical tradition's attempts to ground critical theory does not imply that a critique of ideology is necessarily illegitimate and an unfounded imposition on social life. That there are no ultimate grounds does not imply that there are no critical standards that can be defended in argument, dialogue, and theoretical discourse.

The question arises, however, what basis might we have for these standards? What is their status?

In Habermas' discussion of psychoanalysis he continually emphasized the need to elaborate and justify a presupposed concept of normality. Likewise he stressed the necessity for critical theory to ground its conception of undistorted communication. As a consequence of the arguments he gave that underpinned these views, Habermas was led, like some of his predecessors in the critical tradition, to search for an absolute foundation--a position which would give the critical theoretician justified and ultimate authority to unveil the ideological content of all thought. We have already criticized this position. It is clear, however, that if a critical science is to remain a justified project in the human sciences, a basis or bases for criticism must be established. While psychoanalysis and a critique of ideology do entail and require a conception of "undistorted communication," or "true consciousness," etc., I see few sound reasons why this conception requires the status of ultimate foundations. In my view we do not need to follow the theoretical path of Habermas et al. in order for there to be justifiable standards for critique, standards of criticism which might be systematically applied by social theory.

The fact that we have no "ground" does not mean that we

cannot present evidence and develop arguments for a certain theory of what might be immanent or potential in the human species (e. g., a capacity of a given kind for self-knowledge, self-fulfillment, dialogue, etc.), or of what is imminent and potential in social developments (e. g., in struggles or crises). Proposed theories must, of course, be systematically placed at risk, i. e., in circumstances where they can be tested. The given theory of properties, or potential properties, of the species and life-circumstances should be clearly delineated and open to the criticism of those engaged in theoretical discourse. If a certain theory can sustain criticism and systematic attempts at falsification, as mapped out in a research program, then, this theory can become a basis for criticism in social theory. For this to be the case, the properties which such a theory interprets must be shown to be

- a. natural-historical properties of the species (for example, qualities of species-being, or species needs); and/or
- b. historically developing (for example, new needs which cannot be satisfied under the present system of labor); and/or
- c. objectively possible, concrete alternatives (for example, a new principle of organization for a given specified social unit); and/or
- d. historically necessary (for example, to the survival of man, or as the most rational way to overcome systematically reproduced social problems).

Thus the unification of science and criticism in a critique of ideology will be the unification of the empirical and normative. Empirical in that the elements interpreted and explained by the theory were shown to be properties of the social world. Normative in that these properties could naturally become part of standards to uncover and expose ideological conceptions of reality. (I shall define the concept of ideology in a moment.)

However, it should be noted that these critical standards will not be ultimate justifications, or grounds. Rather, they will have the status of what one might call quasi-reconstructions. They can be thought of as reconstructions because they provide knowledge of, e. g., species characteristics and/or immanent properties of the species and/or imminently realizable social developments, given conditions x , w , etc. The claim here is that the critical standards are empirically grounded and reflexive of the competency (or potential competency) of the species in certain specifiable circumstances. These reconstructions cannot have the status which Habermas, for example, bestows on the theory of communicative competence. They are better thought of as quasi-reconstructions because such reconstructions will always embody interpretations that are historically and culturally intertwined and bound to traditions, and thereby limited by the stock of knowledge, concepts, rules, methods, and

procedures of "our" time.

If we cannot uncover such standards the dualism between science and criticism will be justified. Systematic criticism will be "returned" and bound to the realm of ethical theory. Without such standards the role of theory becomes much more like that which Weber maintained. But that we should continually and systematically investigate potential bases for critical standards is crucial if we are to justifiably avoid the relativism with regard to value that is entailed in Max Weber and the neo-Kantians, Hermeneutics, and Positivism; or the skepticism entailed in the self-understanding of certain critical theorists (who seek to systematically criticize the existing order but reject the quest for some positive basis for critique). Such a skepticism, we saw in Chapter 6, always entails (variously explicated) presuppositions in need of justification. The critical skeptic might well be able to point out "alternatives," closed-off "possibilities," etc. However, if these are to be anything other than utopian suggestions, they need a justified basis, an empirical foundation.

Such standards, if or when they are uncovered, can take on the function of Habermas' "metatheory" without the entailed absolutist commitments. This does not imply radical relativism. Rather it implies the recognition that justified value positions, those values

that have been empirically grounded, will not be justified "for all time," will not have the same connotation "for all time." Such standards and values are relative to certain historical and cultural contexts but, nevertheless, can, within those terms, be objective. In short, value-judgments have a cognitive content and admit of truth in specified contexts. Values can "themselves be facts about actual or potential human satisfaction"¹ and development.

Our given quasi-reconstructions must, of course, be subject to the given and appropriate scientific procedures for testing proposed "theories," hypotheses, etc. But this type of test, as Habermas has well argued, is insufficient for a critique of ideology. Ultimate verification is achieved only in and through practice with the eradication of blockages to self-understanding. The analytic dialogue between theorist and his/her subject/object, whether mobilized in a university or through political parties, is the basis for the critical test of critical theory. As Habermas wrote:

The theory serves primarily to enlighten its addressees about the position which they occupy in an antagonistic social system, and about the interests of which they could become conscious as objectively their own in the situation. Only to the extent that organized enlightenment and counsel lead to the target groups recognizing itself in the proffered interpretations does the analytically proposed interpretation become an actual consciousness, and the objectively attributed interest situation the real interest of a group capable of action.²

As in psychoanalysis, so too in the critique of ideology, ultimate confirmation is dependent on "unconstrained acceptance by the addressees and the successful formative processes resulting from this."³

The true interpretation makes possible the truthfulness of the subject in the experiences with which he had previously deceived himself and others.⁴

Ultimate verification is successful emancipatory reflection because the critique of ideology is concerned to uncover and demonstrate a reality unrepresented, unknown and unthematized in the pre-interpreted world of everyday life where actors' frames of meaning are distorted by ideology. Only through the dialogic process can the theorists' account of reality be set free as reality, can the theorists' interpretations and theses become part of lived life, and become a dominant theme in the actual consciousness of a group and/or a class. The Critique of ideology is also, then, the process of dialogic interaction between theorist and his/her subject/object, whereby the theorist attempts to make the theory count in the meaning structures of everyday life. Therefore, and paradoxically, the critique of ideology is committed to interpreting, describing, analyzing "what is," and changing the world as a consequence.

Thus the theorist concerned with the Critique of ideology must be both engaged in theoretical reflection and discourse, and engaged in the dialogic process of enlightenment. Only through

active involvement in both processes can the theorist "discover" the world and "verify" or "corroborate" his/her findings. Only in this manner can the seemingly formal and abstract character of the theories, concepts, and categories of theoretical discourse become part of the constitutive practice of the preinterpreted world of everyday life.

The concept of ideology, commensurate with this revised and modified account of critical theory, must not entail an absolutist conception of true consciousness. Rather, the notion of ideology that might be defended would be one that implies an empirically grounded account of actual and/or potential consciousness, i. e., a concrete and historically realizable concept of reason. The definition of ideology could be that which was ours at the outset. In Chapter 2 I stated that "a body of beliefs is ideological insofar as it prevents an adequate confrontation with the nature of its own status." By "prevents" is implied either that a body of beliefs contains presuppositions which prevent it from understanding its own origin and status (as we saw was the case, e. g., with certain strains of positivism) or that a body of beliefs is systematically distorted in situations of domination. Therefore, certain beliefs can be ideological as a result of the force of their presuppositions and/or as a result of the force of might and power. Beliefs that are ideological can be seen to obscure reality in, at least, one of five ways: these include claims to:

1. represent a totality when, in fact, the set of views are partial and one-sided.
2. employ pertinent categories, concepts, and terms, which are, in some sense, inappropriate.
3. have an adequate and substantive theory of a given set of phenomena, which can be demonstrated to be false.
4. have a certain epistemological or methodological status, which is, in perhaps a variety of ways, incorrect.
5. have a theory which justifies actions, when these can be shown to be pseudo or false justifications.⁵

Ideologies, then, could not be validated if systematically tested in theoretical or practical discourses. However, the possibility of particular discourses occurring is itself dependent on historical and cultural circumstances. As a consequence, a given position which is found to be ideological at point t_1 , might not be thought to be falsifiable at t_0 (due to the [then] current stock of knowledge, concepts, methodological techniques, etc.). Having said this, it can be noted, that the views expressed above are clearly not incompatible with Habermas' claim that the concept of ideology implies the eventual dissolution of a false consciousness (whether conscious or unconscious) in an emancipatory dialogic process, as process mediated by communication and reflection.

On this account critical theory might well proceed by examining:

- a. the consistency of meaning between verbal and nonverbal expressions and actions;
- b. the possibility of systematically excluded meanings which might inhibit self-expression and communicative interaction; and therefore,
- c. assess the possibility of a deceptive self-understanding, the possibility of ideological distortion.⁷

An example of a study in line with such a procedure is contained in Claus Offe's suggestion to examine the ideological legitimation mechanisms of a political system by

- 1. proceeding immanently by putting unactualized claims against the [sic (their)] systematic avoidance in practice;
- 2. identifying systematic rules of exclusion practiced by a political system;
- 3. showing how administrative processes have unintended, [and intended] systematically arising "misunderstandings";
- 4. or by comparative procedure that reveal rules of exclusion in one system in relation to another.⁸

We saw that a given conception of Critical theory was often argued to imply a particular conception of (critical) method. What approach, or series of methods, would be appropriate to pursue the types of analysis suggested above? Habermas' account of the relation between the causal-nomological sciences and the hermeneutic sciences in his idealized account of psychoanalysis (which is further concretized in his approach to the investigation of social crises) is, in my view, an excellent discussion of the respective roles of these

⁷ Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 100. This attempt, however, to...
⁸ Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 100. This attempt, however, to...
 ...has been...

approaches for a critical social science. His attempt, however, to ground these approaches in the human species' interests has been questioned and criticized. But in absence of an ultimate ground for these enterprises, it (again) does not follow that there are no sound arguments for each approach. Without an absolute ground in the subject's needs or interest structure, the arguments for the justification of respective approaches perhaps falls back on a position that we originally started with and criticized, i. e., on an argument from method. Weber made this position his own, although as we have seen, he provided few arguments to support his views. Certain of the writers we discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 also made such a position their own. With each of these authors I attempted to highlight the limitations and inadequacies of the argument from method. However, we have also seen the limitations and inadequacies of certain of the objections we made against their positions; particularly with respect to the "criticism" of their seeming failure to ground their choice of ultimate theoretical principles and methodological procedure.

In light of the development of this work it is clear that I have no systematic response to these issues. Nevertheless, I would like to stress my accord with an underlying common impulse to the works of Lakatos, Gadamer, and Habermas that defends the necessity of

testability, sophisticated falsificationism, criticism, and discourse in all theoretical work. Assertions of all kinds must be open to relevant intersubjectively established controls, if they are to be established as something more than assertions. Furthermore, within this "criticist" frame it seems clear that the question as to the applicability of any series of methods, standards, controls, etc., is dependent on the theoretical and practical context of investigation. As we saw in our discussion of the empirical-analytic, the hermeneutic, and the critical sciences, the question as to viability of a given approach is contextually bound to the questions we ask (or can ask) of social life. The problem of the systematic adjudication between assertions is not a problem that can, in the last instance, be settled over and above the context of inquiry. The warrantability of assertions is dependent on the context of our questions and purposes. The nature of the responsibility of finding a justified response to a question, or series of questions, cannot be explicated independently of the context of the types of questions we pose. Different types of questions imply different types of methods which, in turn, entail different conceptions of what counts as explanation and understanding. Within the context of the themes of this thesis it appears important to stress that within social science, no single approach has ultimate authority. In where, when, what, why, how questions,

addressed to different characterizations of social action, the applicability of various methods changes. Likewise, the criteria of sufficiency in understanding and explanation change with the context of questions generated. Within the framework of the investigation of the theory of theory and practice in theory, the questions as to the applicability, correctness, and limitations of various approaches, methods (and their implied conceptions of understanding and explanation) might usefully be further explored.

* * * * *

Thus, in the end, while this thesis has clearly not established the viability of any mode of procedure or approach, it might have served to highlight the respective limitations of certain approaches to social science. The limitations of my own concluding remarks are also only too apparent. The remarks clearly have a tentative status. They are intended to be suggestive of a direction for further thought and work. It is, of course, recognized that if a useful direction has been indicated, its clear articulation has yet to be made.

NOTES

¹Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, p. 392.

²From the Introduction of Theory and Practice, p. 32, quoted in and trans. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 148.

³McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," p. 148.

⁴Ibid., pp. 147-48.

⁵These five points were developed by Miles Morgan in a lecture entitled "Marx's Concept of Ideology" (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, March 1975).

⁶I owe this point to discussion with Larry Simon.

⁷These points are drawn (and are adapted for my purposes) from Habermas' and Wellmer's critique of Gadamer. See Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, pp. 31-41, and his "Communication and Emancipation," p. 92.

⁸Schroyer, summarizing the position of Claus Offe, in "The Re-politicization of the Relations of Production: An Interpretation of Jürgen Habermas' Analytic Theory of Late Capitalist Development," p. 128.

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