

ELEMENTS OF A RADICAL THEORY OF PUBLIC LIFE: FROM TÖNNIES TO HABERMAS AND BEYOND*

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Public opinion . . . deserves to be as much respected as despised

Hegel

Since the Bolshevik Revolution, all emancipatory political thinking has been concerned with the subject of public life. Initiated by Rosa Luxemburg's critique of the earliest phase of that revolution,¹ this tradition of autonomous political thinking is of considerable relevance to any deepened understanding of the growth of public spheres under late capitalist conditions. At least, this is the argument of the following essay, which can also be read as a tentative and by no means exhaustive survey of this tradition's achievements and failures.

It should be emphasised that the starting point of this survey is immanent. It seeks to avoid "mere moralizing" (as Hegel called it) by thinking with and against several important twentieth-century contributors to a theory of autonomous public life. The argument begins with Tönnies' path-breaking critique of public opinion. The narrative then broadens into an examination of Dewey's attempt to retrieve and radicalise the old liberal bourgeois principle of publicity. Dewey's defence of the principle of "free and systematic communication" is seen to be especially important, inasmuch as it foregrounds themes of vital importance to more recent critiques of late capitalism—especially to those of Jürgen Habermas.

During the past several decades, it is argued, Habermas has made the most interesting and ambitious contributions to a radical theory of public life. These contributions are analysed and evaluated in some detail. It is proposed that his recent preoccupation with a theory of universal pragmatics is less than fully consistent with itself. Weakened by several internal difficulties, and therefore unable to realise its guiding political intentions and implications, this theoretical project is marked by political retreats. Habermas' advocacy of new forms of public life, it is argued, is contradicted by the abstract-formal mode of reconstructive argumentation which has more and more come to guide his inquiries. The theoretical project of defending the principle of autonomous public life, the remaining third of the essay concludes, must accordingly move beyond the antinomies and formalisms of Habermas' otherwise important arguments. This project must seek to internalise a range of substantive theoretical and political questions, several of which are briefly analysed.

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Toward a Critique of Public Opinion

At the outset, it is important to appreciate the background historical context associated with the rise of theoretical defenses of public life. Evidently, the resurgence of a dissident tradition of public-political thinking during the twentieth century has not been without motivation. It must be seen as an effect of the general advance of bureaucratization since the late nineteenth century and, in particular, as a critical response to the dramatic expansion of corporatist relations between bureaucratically organised institutions of social and state power. As Hilferding and others first recognised,² this corporatist recasting of life was prompted by a number of decisive background developments. The most important of these included the cartelization of economic power within civil society; the emergence of organised capital and labour groupings; the formation of alliances between these "interest groups" and mass, bureaucratically structured political parties; and, finally, the tendency for bureaucratic states everywhere to claim new and expanded powers of organization, powers which were typically delegated to business, agricultural and labour organizations. These corporatist tendencies were considerably reinforced by the economic and political mobilizations of World War I, the heightened struggles between the extra-parliamentary left and right, and by the manifold attempts to "accredit" organised labour. Everywhere in the heartlands of the capitalist world, political stability was seen by the ruling groups to demand more bureaucratic and centralised structures of bargaining and control which defied the previous distinction between "private" power and "public" authority.

This call for bureaucratic centralisation necessarily accelerated the erosion of parliamentary influence and representative government. The locus of bargaining and policy-making from here began to shift to executive authority, to unofficial party or coalition caucuses, and to networks of state ministries. The formation of political consensus became more and more captive to processes of bargaining between key, bureaucratically-organised interests bent on the mobilisation of "public opinion". This bargaining and mobilisation process, it should be emphasised, did not result in the simple *repression* of public life. During this period of transition to 'late' capitalism, bureaucratic organisations increasingly struggled to mobilise and optimise "public opinion" for particular ends. The ruling corporate and state powers began to rely less upon old-fashioned, "public be damned" strategies; guided by techniques drawn from wartime propaganda and consumer advertising and through the assistance of "counsels on public relations",³ public life was to be normalised and put in order. The accumulation of capital, it seemed, more and more presupposed the accumulation of bureaucratic state power, of which the administrative accumulation of "public opinion"

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was to be a crucial aspect. Public opinion was to be neither simply obeyed nor evaded. With a high degree of scientific-technical accuracy, it could be expanded and "directed", fashioned to suit given interests.

This early twentieth century disciplining of public life by the "forces of order" was mediated by intellectual campaigns against what was anachronistically and misleadingly termed the "classical" theory of democracy and public opinion.⁴ A growing body of welfare- and post-liberal discourse⁵ now openly questioned the empirical and ethical validity of earlier liberal defences of "the public", especially their presumption of the male, property-owning "omnicompetent citizen".⁶ This questioning process typically sustained itself upon deep-seated beliefs in the fruitfulness of empirical-analytic inquiry. The motivational origins of "public opinion", it was said, could be uncovered and analysed. The effectiveness of public opinion management could in turn be measured. Pareto's insistence that public opinion must be seen as an instance of derivations—non-rational actions clothed in "idealistic" garb⁷ and Wallas' conviction that "the empirical art of politics consists largely in the creation of opinion by the deliberate exploitation of subconscious non-rational preferences"⁸—provide two illustrations of a more general tendency during this period to analyze the unconscious forces hidden behind the formation and manipulation of public life. Political men, it was claimed, skilfully exploit privately-motivated formulae and compulsive gestures in their efforts at "getting results" with crowds. Their emotional, erratic behaviour was in turn easily incited through the process of imitation and collective suggestion. Motives arising from maladjustments to the environment were said to be susceptible to transference; they could be displaced upon "public" objects and "rationalised" in terms of a more universal public interest.⁹ These kinds of discourses on the motivational points of origin of political action commonly merged with efforts at measuring "public opinion".¹⁰ Drawing implicitly on market consumer research,¹¹ the investigation of "public opinion" tacitly proposed an equivalence between the universes of consumption and politics. Publics, it was announced, could be probed and measured, even predicted. Proceeding from the assumptions that, first, individuals must necessarily hold opinions about all matters and, second, that these opinions could be statistically sampled, tabulated as "results" and mathematically reconstructed, "public opinion" was deemed to be synonymous with the automatic opinion of all and the considered opinion of none. It constituted the sum of empirically existing beliefs of individuals, whose formation within an ensemble of relations of power was accepted (in accordance with a nominalist epistemology) as quite unproblematic.

It is necessary to emphasise that these anti-democratic vindications of the measurement and manufacture of public opinion by no means went unchallenged. Tönnies' discussions of public opinion, best expressed perhaps in his path-breaking work, *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung*,¹² constitute one of the earliest and most insightful contributions to this resistance. Tönnies' contributions to a critique of public opinion are complex, and can only be sketched here. It suffices here to note that they form part of his more general concern (shared with Weber) to clarify the meaning of aspects of modern bourgeois society through

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the elaboration and inductive-empirical rendering of "pure", ideal-typical concepts. In contrast to Weber, however, Tönnies places the category of public opinion (*öffentlichen Meinung*) at the centre of his project. According to his schema, the modern civilising process—the triumph of *gesellschaftliche* formations over those marked by patterns of *Gemeinschaft*—distinctively transforms the predominant types of collective will.¹³ Modes of life structured by rationally-calculated contracts, state legislation and public opinion come to predominate. Contracts take the place of familial concord (*Eintracht*); legislation (*Gesetzgebung*) replaces the rustic folkways and mores of custom (*Sitte*); and, advancing beyond Weber, Tönnies emphasises that public opinion displaces religious faith. The latter have been, the former are becoming the decisive elements in modern social and political life¹⁴. In Tönnies' view, modern forms of collective will are increasingly structured by convention or calculation (especially at the site of economic production and exchange), by state legislation which seeks to regulate action by way of the establishment of rational-legal order and finally, by public opinion, which orients itself primarily to the political-ethical aspects of life in the associational type of society.¹⁵

Tönnies is convinced that the rise of public opinion is co-terminous with the disenchantment of modern bourgeois civilisation: "In recent centuries, the Christian religion has lost what public opinion has gained."¹⁶ Formerly detested and forcefully proscribed as detrimental to peace and respectability, public opinion more and more places this age under the spell of atheistic criticism and "divisive and disintegrating purposive thought."¹⁷ Public life and public opinion come to be seen as the principal powers in the political cosmos, lighting the paths of governments as a guiding star. The "public" comes to be loved for the enemies it makes: unproductive tyrants who choke public opinion; malefactors who avoid the detection of judges; the cowardly who criticise the general incapacity only in defence of their own. The past is confidently berated by the bearers of public opinion as an age of unreasonable darkness. To speak through Tönnies' categories, the form of modern collective will of which public opinion is a crucial aspect, ceases to be an "essential will" (*Wesenwille*), one defined by its traditional emotive or absolutist qualities. The modern collective will instead becomes identical with an "arbitrary will" (*Kürwille*), with forms of thoughtful action structured by the calculation of means of attaining ends reached through deliberation.¹⁸ In accordance with this tendency, the bearers of public opinion manifest their social and political power by way of their approval or disapproval of political events, by demanding that the state adopt certain practices and abolish certain abuses, by insisting upon administrative reforms and legislative measures, in brief, by exercising critical judgments, after the manner of a calculating judge, for the sake of an allegedly common interest.¹⁹

It should be noted in passing that Tönnies here opposes the tendency of his contemporaries to speak of public opinion as the sum total of vaguely articulated opinions on any matter. "Public opinion" is not synonymous with the *volonté de tous* (to recall Rousseau's categories). It does not consist in the mere sum of actually existing opinions of individuals; it is not the automatic opinion of all and

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the considered opinion of none.²⁰ For Tönnies, on the contrary, public opinion must be viewed as properly directed both to the scrutiny of existing relations of power and the formation of correct and good actions. The growth of public opinion under modern conditions presupposes "reasonable and deliberate" subjects who act in accordance with their considered opinions. It presupposes that these competent subjects can both define the boundaries and relations between individual, "private" opinions and the general opinion of a politically conscious public. Public opinion is "a common will which exercises critical judgment for the sake of a common interest and thereby affects 'private' forms of conduct and action in either a restraining or furthering manner."²¹

With reference to contemporary bourgeois societies, Tönnies again and again remarks upon the growing and already-tremendous influence of the belief in public opinion so conceived. This belief has become a question of habit, no longer a controversial matter. Tönnies advances the thesis that the belief that "public opinion" is "strong and forceful" has become a crucial, taken for granted aspect of public opinion itself.²² Through the course of the civilising process, the power of public opinion begins to resemble that of the various religious creeds which it has supplanted. "Public opinion" can be compared to a sacred and dominating faith, jealous of its own sovereignty and sure of its own self-vindicating truth. By contrast with its more tenuous status in earlier phases of modernity, "public opinion" becomes (to invoke Tönnies' physics-derived term) more "solid": to believe in the tenets of public opinion is established as a reasonable conviction, indeed a universal obligation. "Public opinion" undergoes something like a deification, assuming the phantasmic appearance of a living body over and above those who are its agents. It is increasingly represented "as a thinking being, and it is frequently either adored or maligned as if it were a Supernatural, quasi-mystical being."²³

It is precisely this deification of public opinion which provokes a measure of repudiation in Tönnies' analyses. The triumphant emergence of public opinion as a crucial aspect of modernity's collective will is a fundamentally ambiguous development. The persuasive strength of this "public opinion", it is observed, is inversely proportional to its authenticity. Tönnies observes Hegel's warning (issued in the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*) that public opinion deserves at once to be respected and despised. Of fundamental concern to Tönnies is the growing tendency of organised, private interests to transfigure public opinion. He pointedly emphasises that, in the history of the modern bourgeois world, public opinion has most often been the opinion of the dominant, urban, propertied and "educated" classes; "the public" typically excluded the plebian classes. It is nevertheless insisted that the novelty of the contemporary situation consists in its more subtle and transparent formation of (pseudo-) public opinion through administrative means. Nowadays, organised powers become intent on promoting both a favourable opinion toward their particular operations and goals, and a more generalised public opinion which is in accordance with their own perceived interests. Urged on by the imperative to struggle against, or collude with perceived opponents who are also bent on opinion-

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making, all organised interests must strive to transform a possible "public" disfavour into a favourable regard. Public opinion is worked on, manufactured: "Public opinion is belaboured, with the frequent result that *the* public opinion is *made* thereby."²⁴ The influence of the organised press (then the leading medium of formal communication) is especially crucial.²⁵ The press more and more represents itself as the organised expression, indeed, as the "reflection" of a public which is in reality an agglomeration of power-seeking, private interests. This commanding, opinion-shaping role of the media flows equally from its formal aspects (e.g., oligopolistic patterns of ownership and control; the layout of "news"), its selective (or "biased") content (editorials, disguised advertising, intentional or unintentional falsification of events) and its systematic links of dependency with other social power groupings. The symbiotic relationship between organised capital and the press is seen by Tönnies to be particularly decisive, inasmuch as advertising, which is the main business of newspaper is simultaneously a crucial tool in the organisational strategies of commercial and industrial capital.²⁶ Tönnies therefore concludes that the logic of the production, exchange and consumption of "judgments and opinion" tends to assume that form common to all commodities: "In this form of communication, judgments and opinion are wrapped up like grocers' goods and offered for consumption in their objective reality. It is prepared and offered to our generation in the most perfect manner by the newspapers, which make possible the quickest production, multiplication, and distribution of facts and thoughts, just as the hotel kitchen provides food and drink in every conceivable form and quantity."²⁷

It was Tönnies' hope that the subordination crystallised within this planned commodification of public opinion would soon come to an end: "public opinion does not yet risk accepting 'socialism', but it does no longer dare reject it."²⁸ The expansion of mass education and reforms of the media, he hoped, would foster the "public" acceptance of the need to democratise the formation of its own opinions. Of course, Tönnies' anticipation of a "public ennobling of humanity"²⁹ was not to be realised. Everywhere in the organised capitalist world, there emerged during his time a deep skepticism within higher circles about the competence of autonomous, politically active publics. This skepticism resembled the earlier conservative turn against Enlightenment. Democratic, public life was denounced as a false, fluctuating and transitory illusion. Far from being the vital and necessary principle of states, it was reckoned to lead them along false paths, to expose them to continual disturbances. This denunciation at the same time served to justify the bureaucratic management of public opinion. In view of the imminent threats it posed to the stability of the present order, the authority-usurping and perhaps non-rational "public" was increasingly advised not to proceed beyond the point of a passive conformity. The depoliticisation of all spheres of life was viewed as an indispensable condition of the restoration of "democratic" order. Public business was from here on to be guided more safely and efficiently by expert administrators checked only occasionally by a public said to be incapable of leading an autonomous existence. The abandonment of the unworkable fiction of the "omnicompetent citizen" was deemed imperative.³⁰

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Weber's famous defence of a plebiscitarian leader-democracy anticipates and summarises these developments. Under conditions of mass democracy, he concluded, "public opinion is communal conduct, born of irrational 'sentiments'. Normally it is staged or directed by party leaders and the press." As a consequence of the expanded role of the state and the necessities of bureaucratic command, general depoliticisation had become imperative: "In a democracy the people choose a leader whom they trust. Then the chosen man says, 'Now shut your mouths and obey me. The people and the parties are no longer free to interfere in the leader's business.'" ³¹

II

Public Life Defended: Dewey on "free and systematic communication"

Such arguments for depoliticisation were by no means uncontested. In addition to Tönnies, several other critics sought to expose the authoritarian potential of the administrative production of public life. So to speak, these critics tried to rescue and radicalise the old bourgeois principle of public life, to turn it against aging bourgeois society itself. These attempts—from Rosa Luxemburg's critique of Lenin and Trotsky, to John Dewey's concern over the "eclipse" of public life—form something like a background tradition against which more recent theoretical defences of autonomous public life can best be understood. Here, the influential case of John Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (1927) can be briefly analysed. Building on the criticisms of Tönnies, this work broaches the theme of the "eclipse" of public life through the insistence that the "common sense" political philosophy of the times functions to vindicate the power of ruling officials. According to Dewey, this common sense draws upon false allusions to an already bewildered, no longer existing "public". The bourgeois publics which reflected parliamentary-representative forms of state have passed away. Whatever their former veracity, the old principles of civic life (such as those embodied in the early American self-governing communities) have become worn out. They serve merely as a litany monotonously recited by those who administer: "the Public seems to be lost; it is certainly bewildered. The government, officials and their activities, are plainly with us . . . Politics . . . tends to become just another 'business': the especial concern of bosses and the managers of the machine."³² The symptoms of this eclipse of public life are manifold, yet by no means related in an evidently simple way. Dewey mentions the declining participation in formal political events; the proliferation of opinion-making by way of hired "publicity agents"; privileged access of big business to the state and the media; the growth of centralised, machine-like political parties; the unprecedented increase in the number, variety and cheapness of amusements

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which serve as powerful diversions from political concern; the growing "authority" and role of scientific-technical expertise in state planning; and so on.³³ He insists that this "eclipse" of public life has no parallel in earlier phases of modern life. This is because the formalisation and centralisation of political activity is expressive of the universal hold of bureaucratisation upon everyday life. Mass production tends no longer to be confined to the factory.³⁴ Nowadays, many correctly sense that "they are caught in the sweep of forces too vast to understand or master. Thought is brought to a standstill and action paralyzed."³⁵

These claims about the unprecedented enervation of public life should not be interpreted as laments for a golden past. In opposition to the positivistic new liberal and post-liberal discourses on publicity, Dewey defends a radicalised version of the old bourgeois theory of a critical, power-scrutinising public. Dewey speaks carefully: "the public" is not yet. To form themselves into a more genuine public, marginalised political forces or "publics" (unfortunately unspecified by Dewey) must agitate and organise to break existing forms of institutionalised power.³⁶ The panacea for an ailing democracy is more democratic public life. This would be possible only insofar as these forces or "publics" established themselves as a self-directing, heterogeneous public, guided its day-to-day functioning, and shared its effects. This recovery of public life would have as its necessary pre-requisite a radical expansion of "free and systematic communication."³⁷ This proposal is striking, inasmuch as it foreshadows a central theme within later critiques of late capitalism. Dewey is certain: the possibility of public life would depend upon a radical expansion of those conditions which promoted discussion, debate and the formation of genuine agreement between transacting citizens. Only through "communication and enlightenment" (the radical opposite of force³⁸) could the "naturalising", apolitical tendencies of the present be eroded. Dewey supports this proposal through the invocation of a rudimentary philosophical anthropology. He distinguishes mere spontaneous, interconnected behaviour, the universalisation of which the present promotes, however incompletely, from genuine action.³⁹ The latter is equivalent to forms of activity "saturated and regulated by mutual interest in shared meanings". The capacity for action is peculiar to the species. This faculty is defined by our ability to produce signs, through which enduring collective experience can be transmitted, considered, and wilfully ruptured and reconstructed. In accordance with this ontology, Dewey defends the possibility of a liberation of action through the defence of autonomous public life. So conceived, public life would presuppose "face-to-face relationships" and the developed capacity of citizens to individuate themselves through the "give and take" of argumentation. It would sustain itself upon the promotion of a "critical sense and methods of discriminating judgment" and, conversely, the shattering of "emotional habituations and intellectual habitudes."⁴⁰ "Public opinion", for the first time, would thereby become synonymous with those critical judgements formed and entertained by those who actively constituted the public. There could be no democratic public life without full "publicity" in respect of all matters which concerned it. This is Dewey's maxim: Whatever obstructs and restricts communication also limits and distorts

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the formation of a democratic and many-sided public.

Through this thesis, Dewey effects a radical inversion of the conventional (Weberian) meaning of the concept of the political. No longer equivalent to the struggle for power over others or the legitimate territorial organisation of the means of violence, politics must in future become synonymous, Dewey suggests, with those processes through which a public organises itself. This self-government could be implemented through the public's own officials. These officials would be constituted to perform their functions of caring for those who have "empowered" them.⁴¹ "The state" would thereby become identical with an ensemble of public institutions continually searched for, scrutinised, criticised. By virtue of the open-endedness of political life so defined, "the just state" would be a figment of the anti-political imagination. With respect to questions concerning both form and content, there is no single state which can be said to be best, save that which itself maximises autonomous public life—and therefore its continual self-transformation. The formation of states would of necessity be an experimental process, open to the contingencies of historical creation.

III

Habermas: From undisturbed freedom to publicity

Dewey's defence of the possibility of free and systematic communication need not at this point be analyzed further. Reinforced by the brief remarks on Tönnies, the sketch of Dewey's theory of self-government serves merely to foreground the contours of recent developments in the critical theory of public life. During the past several decades, the single most decisive contribution to this development, within the German-speaking world at least, has undoubtedly been that of Jürgen Habermas. Concerned to develop insights into a range of problems pertaining to communicative competence and systematically distorted communication, Habermas' theoretical project can properly be seen as guided by concerns which have directly political implications. These concerns, which remarkably parallel those of Tönnies and Dewey, are by no means marginal within either his earlier or later writings. Habermas has consistently and provocatively emphasised that late capitalist societies are profoundly threatened by bureaucratic, anti-political tendencies. From even before the time of his classic account (in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* [1962]) of the "refeudalisation" of the liberal capitalist public sphere, through to his more recent writings on communication, Habermas has remained preoccupied with problems of public life. Highly critical of the advance of bureaucratic organisation in all spheres of activity, he has consistently written on behalf of the possibility of a "post-modern" order, in which life would properly be organised around the principle of the maximum feasible sharing of

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responsibility and face-to-face involvement, participation and democratic control. Following Tönnies and Dewey, Habermas emphasises that public life under late capitalist conditions becomes the object of bureaucratic administration. He too recognises that the persuasive strength of public opinion is often enough inversely proportional to its authenticity, that authentic public opinion is therefore not the mere sum of actually existing opinions of individuals and groups. Habermas also denies that we are "by nature" apathetic, "private" and apolitical beings. Current levels of disinterest in questions of power and politics, the widespread inability (or unwillingness) to actively deliberate, criticise and effect decisions through common involvements within autonomous public spheres—all these well-known features of daily life under late capitalist conditions are seen by him to be a temporary and highly contingent consequence of a bureaucratic, disciplinary and highly unequal society. Like Tönnies and Dewey before him, he therefore remains convinced of the need to argue on behalf of the counter-bureaucratic goal of "public, unrestricted discussion, free from domination."⁴²

Unfortunately almost all English-speaking interpreters of Habermas' *oeuvre* have so far failed to adequately acknowledge this point.⁴³ Preoccupied with *other*, less political themes, they forget that Habermas' defence of forms of non-bureaucratic rationality is already displayed within his earliest works of the 1950's. These writings are evidently structured by the distinction between the sphere of necessity and the realms in which the goal of undisturbed freedom (*Muße*) can be realised. The later Habermas was to retain this distinction between the spheres of necessity and freedom, amending it with the more explicitly political themes so prominent in the above-cited works of Tönnies, Dewey and others during the 1920's. While the distinction between the toil and unfreedom of work and an autonomous realm of freedom was to be preserved, the latter realm would be specified through considerably different arguments. This shift of perspective is evident in numerous works from the time of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. The textual evidence suggests that this 'political' turn in Habermas' work developed under the immediate influence of both Jaspers' theory of "limitless communication" and, especially, the works of his student, Hannah Arendt.⁴⁴ Through the distinction between two types of progress founded on the work-communication dualism, Habermas launched a radical critique of late capitalist societies. This critique no longer focuses upon the problem of "undisturbed freedom" and the need for "cultural creativity". It is argued that the general advance of bureaucratic-administrative organisation is systematically obliterating all authentic forms of communicative action. Habermas indicts late capitalist bureaucratisation processes for their radical monopolisation of the *whole* of social and political life, for their crushing of free and systematic communication *outside* or *beyond* the realm of social labour. Recalling Aristotle, he insists that purposive-rational, bureaucratic activity can only ever be appropriate in a *limited* domain—that of work. Political life, by contrast, must develop outside of the boundaries and imperatives of bureaucracy and its hierarchic, centralised relations of command and obedience. The democratic

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opposition to late capitalist social formations must reassert the classical goal of citizenship, pursue the vision of speakers and actors as competent *zbon politikon*. Within the realm of the political, or so Habermas urges, classless, "post-modern" societies would strive to abolish the categories of "above" and "below". In principle, all relations of power embedded within the realm of communication would at all times become the possible object of discursive scrutiny by any or all speaking actors.

This thesis remarkably parallels that of Dewey in particular. Yet the novelty and decisive political importance of Habermas' theory of communication consists in its development of what remains as merely a hint in Dewey's philosophical anthropology. It attempts to philosophically ground, and thereby substantiate the vision of democratic, public life. During the last decade or so,⁴⁵ this grounding has been attempted through the so-called theory of universal pragmatics, whose arguments seek to elaborate the universal rules in accordance with which all communicative action is produced and reproduced. In view of the trajectory of these arguments, it is somewhat surprising to hear frequent remarks (in private, at least) that the theory of universal pragmatics is of little political relevance. Such impatient and disillusioned allegations have to be handled with the greatest of care. Indeed, only partial sympathy is extended to these allegations in the reading of Habermas proposed here. Thinking with and against Habermas, the remainder of this essay accepts some of the force of these allegations without, however, rejecting *in toto* the significance of his contributions to a radical theory of public life. His valuable advocacy of alternative forms of public life, it is proposed, is contradicted by the mode of reconstructive and abstract-formal argumentation which sustains his project, especially in its most recent phase. As a consequence of this contradiction, or so it shall be argued, this ambitious and brilliant project cannot follow up on its own aims and political implications.

Habermas' persistent ambivalence about the political status and implications of the theory of universal pragmatics can be seen as a key symptom of this contradiction. Especially in his more recent writings, for instance, he humbly warns against treating the preliminary results of this theory as an "ideal" to be practically realised. The claims of universal pragmatics, Habermas believes, must be argued for *theoretically* and at the "level" of inquiries which are at the outset not committed to any particular political project. The theory of universal pragmatics is intended as an abstract-formal, universalist account of "human" competences. It is not a theory with immediately political intentions, and certainly does not depict actual or possible forms of life. Habermas does not always consistently observe these caveats, however, and it is precisely this ambivalence within his inquiries—his simultaneous denial and acknowledgment of their substantive political implications—which serves as the starting point of the following immanent criticism of his writings on language and communication. Commonly enough, for example, the theory of universal pragmatics is said to be concerned only with highly restricted, "clear case" forms of communication—with "consensual" forms of speaking and acting—the analysis of whose logic, it is further claimed, can nevertheless be cumulatively extended to cover other *deriva-*

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tive forms of action, including, presumably, public-political action itself. Elsewhere, for instance in a reply to Apel,⁴⁶ Habermas' abstract-formal references to "the species" and its dependence on language are developed into the conclusion that we are fated to rely on the "non-deceptive use of language", whose rules can be reconstructed by way of a theory of universal pragmatics. Such talk of a species competence which *can* be exercised by every adult speaker of a natural language understandably heightens the suspicion that Habermas' concerns are immanently political. This suspicion is again reinforced, finally, by his flexible, sometimes careless deployment of concepts associated with the theory of communication into his political recommendations, and vice versa. The concepts of "discursive will formation", "communication freed from domination" and "public, unrestricted discussion" are just three of several of these migratory concepts; freely travelling to and fro across the boundaries of his "theoretical" and "political" writings, such concepts arouse the expectation that Habermas' theoretical project is guided by explicitly political concerns—concerns which are nevertheless firmly denied. Once more, or so I argue below, the theory of universal pragmatics is evidently marked by a self-paralyzing contradiction. Unable to realise the political promise of its own claims, the theory stimulates the need for its own transcendence—in the direction of a radical theory of public life.

IV.

Toward a General Theory of Communication

A critical re-reading of the theory of universal pragmatics and its associated claims—concerning the ideal speech situation, communicative competence, the problem of ideology, and so on—must form the point of departure in this strategy of transcendence. Concerned to rescue the theory of universal pragmatics from lapsing into depoliticised and overly formalistic claims, this re-reading so to speak feeds upon the expectations which the theory's claims have themselves generated. These political inferences are strongly evidenced in the theory's concern to analyze the "universal validity basis of speech"⁴⁷ and, thereby, the general capacities necessary for the *competent* performance of public speech acts. In view of this goal, Habermas might be seen as the Kant of the theory of speech and action. His universal pragmatics aim at an elucidation of the fundamental dialogue—constitutive universals which underpin or "preconstruct" each and every speech act. Habermas denies that the logic of our speaking and acting is mysterious, merely conventional or simply arbitrary. The theory of universal pragmatics instead attempts a summary of the unavoidable and universal presuppositions which all adult speakers—irrespective of their natural language or dialect or particular historical context—must master competently if they are to

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engage in intelligible communication at all.⁴⁸

In attempting this summary, Habermas acknowledges the crucial importance of the stress placed upon the "performative" aspects of speech by the "ordinary language philosophy" tradition from the time of Wittgenstein. He nevertheless insists that the well-known descriptivism which plagued Wittgenstein's analysis of language games must be transcended. The analysis of the "pragmatic" dimensions of communicative action must no doubt encompass the dynamics of particular speech acts within particular contexts—but only by reconstructing the general, unavoidable and therefore *universal* principles which structure *all* speech acts.⁴⁹

Further to this claim, Habermas makes a crucial assumption. Communication, he argues, is a matter of performing speech acts in accordance with binding systems of rules which, even if only implicitly or intuitively, we *already and always* follow. Such rules or presuppositions are at the same time assumed to generate and describe that intersubjectivity which makes possible mutuality of understanding between competent speakers. These "anonymous" presuppositions, to use Searle's expression, are "constitutive rules" in the strict sense that they do not merely regulate but also create or preconstruct all forms of communicative action.⁵⁰

In respect of this assumption, and drawing upon the work of Apel, Habermas insists that all unbroken or "undisturbed" communicative activity, regardless of its superficially heterogeneous character, presupposes a cluster of interrelated rules or claims.⁵¹ These so-called validity claims (*Geltungsansprüche*) together form a kind of background consensus (*Hintergrundkonsensus*) upon which all ordinary communication depends. This deep-rooted rule-structured consensus establishes the conditions of communicative action among the species; it constitutes a "species competence."⁵² All participants within "language games" always and already, that is, *involuntarily* presume that their communicative actions are self-consciously in accord with this consensus and its general rules, whose existence can in turn be vindicated or made plausible through discursive argumentation. In brief, communication already presupposes (among the interlocutors concerned) a tacit agreement about what it means to communicate. Conversely, communicative action already presupposes some measure of awareness of the possibility of the breakdown of communication because of speaking actors' failure to fulfil the so-called validity claims.

Habermas asserts that four such primordial claims can be identified: first, that speakers' utterances can be understood by others; second, that the knowledge or propositions which speakers are attempting to communicate are "true"; third, that speakers are in mutual agreement concerning the normative rules which they establish and within whose boundaries they speak and act; and, finally, that speakers are "authentic", that is, sincere in speaking and therefore trustworthy.⁵³ These claims to, respectively, intelligibility, truth, rightness and veracity can here be analyzed more fully. In the first place, communication can only be sustained or remain undisturbed if speakers make both their relations with others (as expressed in such performative utterances as promising and announcing) and

the meaning of the propositional content of their utterance *intelligible*. This comprehensibility clause is partly fulfilled (as Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence has stressed) when speakers utter sentences that are grammatically well-formed. However, agreement through communication is also and always conditional upon the deployment of inter-subjectively valid or meaningful symbols, i.e., upon a shared, reciprocally-recognised awareness of the "significance" of chains of signifiers. Only if these two aspects of the intelligibility claim are satisfied does it become possible, in Habermas' view, for speaking actors to recognise the meaning of symbols from their own standpoint and that of others at the same time. In the absence of this "interlacing of perspectives"⁵⁴, speaking actors could only ever assume the position of mute animals, drowned within an unintelligible ensemble of private meanings and utterances.

In addition to this presumption of comprehensibility, communicating actors raise additional validity claims. The second of these operates within the "referential" dimension of speech (Frege⁵⁵), in accordance with which contexts are objectified and spoken about as "the" world. Inasmuch as speech acts purport to say something about something or someone else (i.e., about the totality of existing affairs, or what Habermas sometimes calls "the external world"), all unbroken communication presupposes that speaking subjects mutually recognise the propositional truth of their exchanged speech acts. Certainly, Habermas opposes Austin's suggestion that all four validity claims concern propositional truth.⁵⁶ He nevertheless maintains that all standard speech actions always contain a "constative" or propositional component. All continuous communication presumes that interlocutors share and agree upon their knowledge through the deployment of propositional sentences which truthfully represent a really existing state of affairs.

Thirdly, undisturbed communication presumes that there already exists a genuine and mutually-recognised accord between speakers. All uninterrupted communication presupposes that parties *can* and *do* recognise the appropriateness or rightness (*Richtigkeit*) of the normative rules to which their speech acts contribute, and in accordance with which those acts (of recommending, promising, prohibiting, etc.) are structured as acceptable or "legitimate". The ensemble of speech acts which make up communicative activity cannot therefore be understood as the achievement of isolated, purposive-rational actors. All "successfully" executed communicative action already and always infers that participants' actions are in conformity with certain normative expectations. Such action supposes that hearers accept and enter into the "offers" proposed by speakers, into what Habermas calls the "social world" of normatively-regulated, interpersonal relations.

Fourth, and finally, communicating actors always infer that their exchanged speech acts satisfy a condition of mutual trust. In addition to presumptions about the intelligibility, validity and legitimacy of utterances, all uninterrupted interaction presumes that speakers are authentic and sincere in expressing themselves (i.e. in divulging what Habermas calls their "particular inner world") and are therefore worthy of the trust accorded to them by their hearers. Communication

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can only continue undisturbed if, and only if, speakers suppose that they already act in accordance with a "sincerity rule".⁵⁷ All communicating actors infer, in short, that the truthfulness or veracity (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) of their utterances need not, indeed must not, be called into question.

One point should be noted immediately about this validity claims schema, a point which is of considerable relevance to a radical theory of public life. The theory of validity claims launches perhaps the most novel insight in Habermas' recent writings: within all undisturbed communicative action, it is said, the above cluster of interdependent validity claims serves as an immanent standard against which the "authenticity" of communication can be evaluated. These claims counterfactually *anticipate* what, under late capitalist conditions, has not yet come to pass: free, systematic communication. "In communicative action", it is insisted, "participants presuppose that they know what mutual recognition of reciprocally raised validity claims means."⁵⁸ By way of this thesis, Habermas acknowledges Gadamer's thesis (drawn in turn from Heidegger) that a "deep common accord" (*tiefes Einverständnis*) is presupposed within all communicative interaction.⁵⁹ This fundamental insight is turned back on Gadamer's philosophic conservatism. For this deep-seated common understanding (in accordance with which speaking actors engage each other) cannot be described, as Gadamer wants to claim, in terms of an enduring, customary tradition which exercises a largely unquestionable power over its bearers. The "supporting consensus" which sustains all communicative action, rather, has a profoundly political or *public* character. Communicative action already and always presupposes the emancipatory, political goal of subjects' living together and reaching agreement through reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, common accord and mutual trust. Although they rarely in fact achieve this under late capitalist conditions, all communicating speakers and actors necessarily and unavoidably proceed *as if* their speech and action were competent and situated within a genuinely public arena. To invoke Habermas' expression, all unbroken or undisturbed communication both *presupposes* and *prefigures* an "ideal speech situation", wherein "communication is not only not hindered by external, contingent influences, but also not hindered by forces which result from the structure of communication itself."⁶⁰

V.

On Communicative Competence

Through the ideal speech situation thesis, Habermas strengthens his case for the "recovery" of the classic Aristotelean category of politics (as public speaking and acting) against late capitalist bureaucratisation. At least, the political *impli-*

cations of the theory of universal pragmatics become rather more explicit. For Habermas urges that the principle of the "ideal speech situation"—the conviction that social relations could be organised "according to the principle that the validity of every norm of political consequence be made dependent on a consensus arrived at in communication free from domination"⁶¹—is implicit within all communicative action. Whomever enters into a communicative relationship implies a mutual obligation to make their utterances intelligible, to provide good grounds for their assertions, as well as mutual obligations to justify their values in a trustworthy way. This means that the capacity to freely and competently engage in rule-structured communication is continually present, as it were, behind the backs of all those who speak and act within a communicative setting. Contrary to Gouldner and others⁶² this communicative competence cannot thereby be spoken of as a "norm"; strictly speaking, communicative competence is always and already supposed and anticipated even before attempts are made to reconstruct and defend it by way of a *theory* of communicative competence.

Communicative competence therefore has (in Freud's sense) an *illusory* status. It is an ever-present, "wishful" anticipation within all communicative action. To engage the speech and action of others unwittingly implies the *will* to engage in consensual speech and action emancipated from all forms of domination. "Our first sentence," Habermas says in one of his earliest and most daring formulations, "expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus."⁶³ This intention cannot be analyzed as either a moralising, regulative principle (Kant) nor as an extant empirical reality (an *existing* concept, in Hegel's sense). It must be understood, rather, as an "operationally effective fiction"⁶⁴ which communicating participants must reciprocally and unavoidably impute to one another. All communicative action supposes, in short, that this illusory "fiction" should be given its due, that it has (here Habermas adopts the language of Lask⁶⁵) a certain worthiness to be recognised or acknowledged (*Anerkennungswürdigkeit*).

As a consequence of its positing of the ideal speech principle, Habermas' universal pragmatics may be taken to *imply* or infer a radically political vision: that of communicative competence, of *Mündigkeit*, of individuated and autonomous citizens learning to deliberate, speak and act for themselves in autonomous public spheres. This inferred vision is particularly evident in both his earliest writings on communication and his more recent writings on ego development.⁶⁶ So envisaged, communicative competence would be conditional upon the fulfilment of three necessary conditions.

In the first place, the attempt to foster communicative competence would depend upon the development of symmetrical, reciprocal relations between speaking actors. This reciprocity would facilitate "an unlimited interchangeability of dialogue roles",⁶⁷ such that no one speaker (or group of speakers) could rightly monopolise the powers and means of assertion, disputation and persuasion. Under conditions of authentic public life, the speech and action of individuals and groups could not legitimately be sacrificed before abstractly defined or allegedly imperative opinions and norms ("the national interest", the "dicta-

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torship of the proletariat" etc).⁶⁸ Genuinely *intersubjective* communication would be conditional upon the reciprocal self-representation of individual speaking subjects who acknowledged each other. In respect of this mutuality, Habermas insists that communicative competence ought not be confused with Chomsky's notion of "linguistic competence". For Chomsky, such competence consists in individuals' creative mastery of an abstract network of linguistic rules, with the aid of which they can correctly produce chains of utterances.⁶⁹ Habermas rightly objects: Chomsky misleadingly assumes that this system of "generative" linguistic rules is somehow innate. Individuals' production and reproduction of these rules is wrongly assumed to be a process which unfolds monologically, that is, according to an "informational model of communication".⁷⁰ It is as if each sender and receiver of utterances is already and always an entity for itself, a solitary entity already outfitted with certain pre-established language rules, in terms of whose universal applicability and meaning communication with other individuals becomes possible. Habermas is adamant that this formulation thoroughly depreciates the "pragmatic" and intersubjective dimensions of competent speaking and acting. Public, communicative competence is, and would always be, conditional upon subjects' "practical" mastery of dialogue-constitutive rules, their performance of speech acts within a language-structured context of intersubjectivity. This capacity for intersubjectivity is already anticipated under conditions of undisturbed communication: "Utterances are never simply sentences. Even if they do not expressly make pragmatic relations their subject, they are integrated from the beginning into a form of intersubjectivity of mutual understanding owing to their illocutionary force [i.e. to the fact of their 'doing something in saying something' in relation to others]."⁷¹

The non-identity or autonomy of individuals and groups would constitute a second necessary condition of democratic, public life. Conceived as the development of genuinely intersubjective "communities" of speaking actors, democratic public life would not be incompatible with processes of individuation. According to Habermas, individuation could only be developed in and through genuinely democratic processes of public life. Such individuation is by no means "ontologically given", as Chomsky and others assume. While beginning in the early phases of psycho-sexual development, individuation could only ever be *accomplished politically*, through the development of a subtle interplay of "nearness and distance" between public, speaking actors. Autonomous public life would be marked by the same paradox analyzed in Hegel's famous model of the quarrelling lovers: Individuals, Habermas implies, would assert themselves against non-identical others by way of the recognition of themselves in others.⁷² Individuation would therefore presuppose a growing capacity of subjects to distinguish (and insist upon the difference between) their inner, "private" and "outer", public worlds.⁷³ In the course of their public activities, subjects would unavoidably express themselves and their inviolable "distance" from others, at the same time as they depended upon and interacted with others, with whom they would always and already be conjoined in a subtle, language-mediated relationship of "nearness". This dialectic of identity and non-identity would also operate at the

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level of relations between different collectivities. A democratic, public society can only be envisaged as pluralistic, as maximising individuation and group diversity within a community setting. Habermas' implied model of democratic, public life therefore recognises no fantastic futures, in which existence would become free, easy and ridden of division. Future public life, he infers, would openly recognise, indeed encourage, a plurality of groups and political divisions.⁷⁴ Under "post-modern" conditions, the real antagonist of democratic, public life would not be the presence of particularities—competing claims, political quarrels and disputes—but, rather, the denial of their legitimacy.

The implication that reciprocity and individuation are two necessary conditions of public life infers a third: the unfettering of critical discussion. Liberated from any form of official evaluation from above, discussion under conditions of genuine public life would be unrestricted. No dogmatically fixed or majority opinion could permanently avoid being made the object of public debate and criticism. Political 'space' would be created, wherein the hitherto "minority" position of a fraction of the public could become, through sustained, unrestricted and compelling argument, acceptable to broader sections of the political community. Obviously, such unfettering of communication would depend upon the equalisation of speakers' access to the available means of communication. (It would no doubt also depend upon a radical reconstruction of the currently available means of communication, although Habermas does not directly discuss this problem.) Only thereby could participants "horizontally" initiate discussion about their needs, invoke hypotheses which shattered the ruling truth claims, and perpetuate such communication through further questions, answers, demands, recommendations, promises, etc. This would imply, in (the likely) cases of breakdowns of agreement, citizens' capacity to temporarily suspend action, so as to "move over" into "discourse" (as Habermas calls it⁷⁵), that is, into deliberation freed from the constraints of organisation and action. Through such discourse oriented to reaching agreement, public discussants could fully exploit the "double structure" of speech acts by communicating about states of affairs as well as about their communication as such.⁷⁶ Relying upon discursive argumentation, subjects' hitherto repressed or heteronomously-constructed needs and principles could be mutually redefined and acted upon. The validity of social and political principles would cease to be dependent upon the already established "authority" of groups or persons holding these principles. Imposed norms would be distinguished from norms which were in principle capable of discursive justification; at this level of communicative competence, norms could be "normed".⁷⁷ Only under such conditions of uncensored discussion would it be justified to equate existing political agreements and compromises with genuine agreements and compromises reached without violence. Authentic public life would be structured by the principle of "rational speech". In accordance with this principle, or so Habermas implies, the truth of judgments and observations about "facts" would be synonymous with a public consensus reached, guaranteed, yet always contestable through unlimited and permanently renewable communication. This formulation contradicts Arendt's classical thesis that truth-telling is

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anti-political and that public-political life is therefore properly the sphere of opinionated agreement and consent.^{77a} Nietzsche's observation that truth must always be equivalent to the solidification of old metaphors is also emphatically rejected. Pitted against mere opinion and old metaphors, the so-called consensus theory of truth insists that the validity of utterances (and their claims to propositional truth, normative appropriateness and veracity) cannot be decided without reference *both* to the competency of those who decide and to the conditions under which agreements are reached. The truth of any politically-negotiated consensus, in short, could not be decided without reference to the (non-) fulfilment of the validity claims upon which all communication is grounded. Conversely, "public opinion" could only be considered authentic if it had been achieved (and was capable of further renewal) under the three above-mentioned conditions of autonomous public life—conditions which maximised critical and unforced argumentation between individuated, equal and communicatively competent citizens.

VI.

Systematically distorted communication

From the time of his earliest formulations of the theory of universal pragmatics, Habermas was of course acutely aware that numerous mechanisms serve to repress and conceal these conditions of public, communicative competence. He never assumed that Socratic forms of communication are everywhere and instantly possible. Late capitalist patterns of communication, he recognised, are also the site of the exercise of pseudo-compromise and violence; precisely because of this, they cannot be described as (genuine) communication at all. Indeed, no previous society has lived in conformity with the principle of "rational speech,"⁷⁸ The history of all hitherto existing societies—including those in the modern world which have had universal-democratic pretensions—has been a history of systematically deformed communication, and struggles to overcome that repression. Every known social formation has been marked by attempts to distort the universal capacity to speak and act politically, to check its conflict potential through skewed distributions of state and social power, property and communicative ability.

Habermas' advocacy of free, systematic communication finds itself in opposition to these authoritarian tendencies. In relation to the past, the theory of universal pragmatics implies the need for dissipating the nature-like grip of authoritarian traditions over the present. Their dogmatic truth claims must be criticised, their important insights preserved.⁷⁹ With direct reference to the conditions of late capitalism, the theory of universal pragmatics also commits itself to the distinction between an imposed, "actually achieved consensus" and a

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genuine or "rational consensus" without deception.⁸⁰ Thereby it concedes the substance of Tönnies' thesis that public opinion must frequently be doubted, that this opinion's persuasive strength is often inversely proportional to its authenticity. This fundamental distinction between a rational and actual consensus is plausible, Habermas argues, because the promise of unfettered speech and action immanent within all communication itself serves as a "measure" of the degree to which every actually-achieved consensus is false. To illustrate this thesis, Habermas invokes the metaphor of the trial. The ideal of communicative competence is said to serve as a "court of evaluation" (*Bewertungsinstanz*), within which any existing consensus can be brought to trial, and interrogated concerning its alleged claims to be a warranted consensus. Genuine opinion is not necessarily equivalent to the sum of actually existing opinions; it is not identical with the automatic opinion of all and the considered opinion of none. Actually existing agreements between speaking actors have no ultimate finality, as has been claimed in recent theoretical discussions of power and interest.⁸¹

Granted this distinction between two forms of consensus, Habermas infers that false or inauthentic agreements can be induced by at least two interrelated processes: speakers' "internalisation" of authoritarian power relations (through the familial supervision of their psycho-sexual development, for example) and the uneven distribution of dialogue possibilities between nations, classes, regions, social groups and individuals.

Under such conditions of induced misunderstanding and deception, Habermas insists there can be no presumption in favour of a rational consensus on the prevailing distribution of power. Any falsely induced consensus finds its limits or "otherness" in the always implied logic of free and systematic communication. Free and systematic communication therefore names its foe: systematically deformed communication. Habermas explicitly invokes and defends Walter Benjamin's sarcastic warning: "Pessimism all along the line. Absolutely . . . but above all, mistrust, mistrust and again mistrust in all mutual understanding reached between classes, nations, individuals. And unlimited trust only in I.G. Farben and the peaceful perfection of the *Luftwaffe*."⁸²

Guided by this warning, Habermas is led to speak of distorted communication as the mutilation or the dumbfounding of potentially free, speaking and acting subjects. Such destruction of the capacity for public, communicative competence may assume either of two generically interrelated forms. In cases of psychotic character deformation, the destruction of communicative action results from faults internal to the organisation of speech acts themselves.⁸³ These psychotic deformations (analysed by Freud, upon whom Habermas explicitly draws) are seen to have originated within the young child's experience of suffering, and its attempted repulsion through unconsciously motivated forgetting. Typically, deformed communication of this first type displays a distinct dissonance between actors' utterances and their actions and accompanying gestures. The relatively coherent structure of undisturbed communication disintegrates; utterances, actions and bodily gestures become estranged from each other. Added to this, physically deformed communications can be described in terms of their evident

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contravention of patterns of speech which are mutually recognised as binding or conventional. The absence of grammatical sense or the utilisation of opposite words (and, therefore, the peculiar mingling of conventionally incompatible meanings) might be taken as instances of this contravention. Finally, psychotically deformed communication displays a certain compulsive repetitiousness and rigidity. The chronically 'reflective' action of undisturbed communication degenerates into recurrent, stereotyped behaviour, whose emotiveness is often unexpectedly catalyzed by "external" stimuli. The daily life of psychotic actors is held captive by certain archaic "palaeosymbols", by the private "inner foreign territory" (Freud) of compulsive fantasies and emotion-charged images. Accordingly, psychotics cannot easily dissociate their private fixations upon archaic symbols from their publicly-expressed utterances, actions and bodily gestures.

Psychotically deformed communication should be analytically distinguished, in Habermas' view, from a second form of distorted communication—that of "pseudocommunication". In contradistinction to psychotic communication, pathological disturbances or blockages within patterns of pseudocommunication assume a transparent form. These disturbances are not recognised by speaking actors to be destructive of their subjectivity as such. Communication is invisibly marked with "unrecognised dependencies". Labouring under the illusion that they have reached genuine agreement through communicatively competent negotiations, interlocutors' mutual misunderstanding and self-misunderstanding perpetuate themselves without interruption. The validity claims of speech are naively assumed, even though they remain in fact unfulfilled. Under such conditions of voluntary servitude, "participants do not recognise any communication disturbances. Pseudocommunication produces a system of reciprocal misunderstandings, which are not recognised as such, due to the pretence of pseudo-consensus".⁸⁴

VII.

Political Action as Therapy?

The boundaries of this typology of distorted communication are obviously incomplete. The silent pseudo-consensus induced by the systematic deployment of force or terror, for instance, remains unanalyzed.⁸⁵ This stimulating typology nevertheless provokes a series of questions concerning its political-strategic implications. Which forms of political life and tactics, we are prompted to ask, are most appropriate to fostering the awareness that an immanent and genuine consensus are not identical? Which political strategies and organisations are most conducive to the defence of autonomous public life?

In anticipating Habermas' responses to such questions, it is clear that he firmly rejects all justifications of the legitimacy and efficacy of vanguardist strategies.

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This refusal—uncompromisingly directed at Lukács and, implicitly, a long and respected tradition of Western political thought from the time of Plato⁸⁶—directly draws upon Aristotle's theory of moral-practical knowledge and prudent political action. Authentic political action, in Habermas' view, must always be guided by a certain foresight and clarity of its potentials and possible consequences. Such knowledge of "what is to be done" nevertheless cannot be "possessed" or "applied" in the manner of artful, technical knowledge. To be politically competent is not identical with knowing what, at all times and under all circumstances is good for all. Political action cannot totalise history, tie all problems together and happily orient itself to a future which is already written in the present and in which all problems will be neatly solved. Political action cannot flatter itself on its capacity to grasp the whole directly, for it is risky action in the process of self-invention. "Attempts at emancipation," Habermas stresses, can, under certain circumstances be rendered plausible as *practical* [in the Aristotelean sense of practical-political] necessities, taking into consideration the conflicts generated by the system (which have to be explained theoretically) and the avoidable repressions and suffering. But such attempts are also tests; they test the limits within which 'human nature' can be changed and above all, the limits of the historically variable structure of motivation, limits about which we possess no theoretical knowledge and, in my view, cannot in principle possess. If in testing 'practical hypotheses' of this kind, we, the subjects involved, are ourselves included in the design of the experiment, then no barrier between experimenter and subjects can be erected. Instead, all the participants must have the opportunity to know what they are doing—thus, they must form a common will discursively."⁸⁷ According to this compelling view, autonomous public life is conditional upon speaking actors' *self-involvement* in particular political acts. Becoming "political" can only be a developmental process, a discretionary capacity exercised through discussion, risk-taking and action within particular power situations. Accordingly, any movement which seeks to defend public life through reliance upon purposive-rational, bureaucratic means contradicts itself. This self-contradiction, Habermas claims, is evident in Lukács' classic formulation of the Party as the mediator of theory and praxis. Not only does this formulation artificially tailor theoretical discourse to the alleged imperatives of organisational-strategic action ("pure theory" is seen as proof of "opportunism"). The process of enlightenment of the oppressed (viz., the proletariat, whom Lukács insists must not suffer "a terrible internal ideological crisis"⁸⁸) is also to be subordinated to the cunning designs of the Party leadership. Habermas flatly rejects such formulae. The immunity of the political educators from political education by others cannot, without certain authoritarian-bureaucratic consequences, be posited as either given, necessary or desirable. In the struggle against distorted and pseudo-communication, he intimates, all decisions of consequence must be made to depend on the practical discussion of the participants concerned. In his earlier discussions of the theory of communication, at least, this thesis was elaborated with reference to certain methodological insights of psychoanalysis. It is true that Habermas' very first interest in Freud concentrated upon the implica-

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tions of Mitscherlich's theses on the contemporary decline of patriarchal bourgeois authority.⁸⁹ Later, Habermas came to follow Alfred Lorenzer: the psychoanalytic therapy situation was interpreted as a mode of analysis of distorted communication and, by implication, an exemplar of the strategy through which a revitalised, "post-modern" public sphere might be achieved politically.⁹⁰ Psychoanalytic therapy was understood as a critical and emancipatory mode of explanatory understanding, structured by the regulative principle of the ideal speech situation. To invoke Habermas' terms, it is a form of "scenic understanding", a "depth hermeneutic" (*Tiefenhermeneutik*) which aims to break the power of the past over the present through future-oriented memory.⁹¹ Analogous to the theory-mediated political struggle for genuine intersubjectivity, psychoanalytic therapy seeks to criticise (and thereby promote patients' liberation from) distorted communication; psychoanalysis seeks to realise this goal through the systematic reliance upon self-reflection "materialised" or grounded in discussion. Psycho-analysis is a form of language analysis oriented to the restriction of "unconsciously motivated action" and the expansion of domains of intersubjectivity within which subjects' self-interrogation and cross-examination can proceed freely and systematically. The history and controversial substantive details of psychoanalysis are of minor interest in this context. Of crucial importance, according to the earlier Habermas, is that the relationship between analyst and patients is in principle directly analogous to that association between public interlocutors which obtains in the political struggle for public life. The analyst, like the political actor, seeks to understand others' "distorted" reactions as meaningful (and perhaps even as resting on good reasons). At the same time, both the activist and the analyst are concerned to provoke a corresponding reorganisation in others' self-interpreted speech acts. Habermas extended the analogy further. In the enlightenment process, both the critical theory of communication and psychoanalytic theory serve as advocates of the possibility of genuine, non-deceptive communication. Each seeks to critically interrogate its addressees, to induce their self-reflection on the validity of the theory's own claims *and* on their own captivity within relations of domination and power. Both theoretical discourses seek in other words to initiate processes of critical reflection, to catalyze subjects' *self-liberation* through free and systematic communication.

Two immediate objections can be raised against this invocation of psychoanalysis as an exemplar of the critique of distorted communication. Both objections, which Habermas now acknowledges, but to whose implications he has not satisfactorily responded, derive from the strong suspicion that his analogy between the psycho-analytic therapy situation and radical political activity was from the outset highly misleading. In the first place, Habermas' own critique of Freud's scientism already pointed out that the Freudian therapy situation is premised upon the professional "authority" and "expertise" of the analyst.⁹² Granted, the Freudian schema insists that patients' initial deference to this authority is "voluntarily" willed. Moreover, the process of validation of the claims of psychoanalysis seems consistent with Habermas' proposed consensus

theory of truth: in the final analysis, the "objects" of analysis are the authorities and, accordingly, must themselves confirm (or deny) the hypotheses of the analyst, perhaps even supplementing them with their self-understandings.⁹³ Finally, the psychoanalyst must refrain from making proposals for patients' prospective actions. These must be decided by patients themselves.⁹⁴ Despite these caveats, the enacted therapeutic dialogue is in another respect singularly monologic. At the outset, as Habermas has subsequently admitted,⁹⁵ the relationship of the partners in therapeutic discourse is by no means egalitarian. Nor are their positions interchangeable. Psychoanalytic discourse inserts the patient in a position of fundamental disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the analyst. The patient is presumed to be as yet incapable of entering a genuinely communicative relationship. Such capability is at best only *achieved* through a successful therapeutic process. The analyst accordingly *confers* enlightenment; patients can only seek enlightenment about themselves. The validity claims of the psychoanalyst must not be disputed by the analysands. These claims form, at the outset at least, the irrevocable and unquestionable terms of argumentation within which interactions proceed. The analyst is therefore the privileged bearer of true insight, of genuine natural-scientific hypotheses which can be validated as knowledge of acknowledged "laws". At most, this knowledge can be denied by patients—but only through a change of analysts or the severance of consultations altogether. This point has severe implications for Habermas' prudent, non-vanguardist proposal for political enlightenment. Their insistence that the political process which exposes and undoes systematic distortions of communication can be likened to the psychoanalytic dialogue unwittingly harbours a dogmatic "elitism". Habermas' version of psychotherapy as an exemplar of prudent public-political action concealed another difficulty. This problem was long ago raised by Geigel, Gadamer and others. In their not unwarranted view, Habermas' psychoanalytically-informed political proposals seriously underestimated the measures typically pursued by the wealthy, powerful and prestigious in late capitalist societies to stifle, co-opt or violently repress political dialogue.⁹⁶ The adaptation of the therapy model to the political task of communicatively dissolving false consensus thereby clung to the reformist illusion that the demonstrative force of argument alone would engage and convince commanders of existing bureaucratic institutions. This presumption, it was argued, stemmed directly from the misleading comparison of therapy and politics. This comparison was deceiving precisely because, under therapeutic conditions, patients' sense of malaise and desire for cure serve as the *raison d'être* of their engagement with the analyst. In political struggle, by contrast, no such prior orientation to reaching an understanding can be presumed. At best, communicative action *within* and *between* oppressed groups is possible. The relationship of those who rule and those who struggle for emancipation from professional-bureaucratic domination is one of *confrontation*. Resistance, compromise, and dissembling on the part of the ruling groups (as Machiavelli expressed so clearly at the onset of bourgeois modernity) is the norm. Again, Habermas was forced to imperil his own argument in acknowledging this crucial insight.⁹⁷ The singular objection

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remained: the problem of distorted communication and its dissolution through theory-guided, democratic, political struggle cannot adequately be analysed through the model of psychoanalysis.

VIII.

The Problem of Ideology

It can be argued that this internal limit upon Habermas' early attempts to secure psychoanalysis as a model for political struggle was compounded by an additional difficulty. This second limitation derived from Habermas' rather brief and later abandoned attempt to explicate a theory of the mechanisms of "pseudo-communication". Drawing heavily upon the Marxian theory of ideology, this theory of pseudo-communication aimed to expose and criticise—without authoritarian consequences—those processes which veil or conceal the possibility of communicative competence and, conversely, the servile dependency of some speaking actors upon others. Ideologically-distorted communication, Habermas proposed, functions to conceal institutionalised relations of domination and violence. Under the hegemony of pseudo-compromises and "mutually accepted" beliefs (say, in the benevolence of patriarchy or the efficacy of professional expertise), this domination tends to become insulated against interrogation by both the individual subject and the community at large. Meta-communication about the routinised or normalised communication of daily life is thereby blocked. The formation of authentic agreements and mutual agreements and mutual obligations—whose possibility is hypothetically posited within all unbroken communicative action—is adjourned, even deemed unnecessary. This is the sense in which the ideological distortion of communication is highly paradoxical.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the ideologies which prevent free and systematic communication "make a fiction of the reciprocal imputation of accountability." Speaking actors' presumption that their communication is in accord with its validity claims (of intelligibility, truth, rightness and veracity) is violated. On the other hand, it is precisely these ideological impediments to genuine communication which serve to repress questions about the non-fulfilment of the presupposed validity claims. Actually existing communication appears to its authors and participants as unproblematic or legitimate. Ideologies thereby "reinforce the belief in legitimacy which sustains the fiction [of the fulfilment of validity claims] and prevents its being exposed."⁹⁹ This paradox is highly evident, Habermas argued, in the classical bourgeois ideologies of formal law, the commodified exchange of equivalents, and the public sphere.¹⁰⁰ These ideologies represented the emerging modern world system as an achievement of "free and equal" subjects, and as therefore emancipated from relations of domination in personalised form. Typically criticising the past in the name of their own

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scientific and universally valid claims,¹⁰¹ bourgeois ideologies radically weakened the "objective" authoritative power of systems of myth, metaphysics and customary ritual. The subjectivism of these ideologies in turn greatly strengthened the capacity of the bourgeoisie to induce voluntary servitude among the exploited. Representing their own particular interests as universal or *pro bono publico*, the bourgeoisie sought to rule without appearing to rule.¹⁰²

By presenting the problem of pseudo-communication in this way, Habermas' synthesis of the theories of communication and ideology seemed at first sight to be highly credible. The novelty and suggestiveness of this attempted synthesis also provided support for the view (of Adorno and others) that the theory and phenomenon of ideology belong to the movement of history.¹⁰³ Whether this synthesis was plausible, however, remained much less certain. This uncertainty was generated by a pressing question which remains largely unanswered in Habermas' more recent work, namely: Can the critical theory of universal pragmatics and the Marxian concept of ideology be effectively synthesised? This question is provoked by the presence of a number of ambiguities and confusions within Habermas' account of ideological communication.

Suggestive of deeper difficulties within his attempt to sketch a theory of pseudo-communication, these weaknesses included: first, the often timid and highly oblique references to the category of ideology (as in the theses on the "glassy background ideology which idolises and fetishises science"¹⁰⁴); secondly, the occasional "overburdening" of the concept with anachronistic meanings (as in the discussion of the "ideologies" of traditional social formations, or in the more general claim that the evolution of "the dialectic of forces and relations of production takes place through ideologies"¹⁰⁵); and, thirdly, the virtual abandonment of the concept of ideology within more recent formulations of the theory of universal pragmatics. These ambiguities and weaknesses, it can be argued, are neither fortuitous nor uninteresting, nor without political implications. They are in fact suggestive of two crucial, and hitherto unresolved antinomies between the theories of universal pragmatics and the classical Marxian project of ideology-criticism. From the outset, it can be argued, these two antinomies strongly hindered Habermas' further elaboration of the problem of pseudo-communication and its subversion—a problem which nevertheless remains of great importance to a critical theory of public life. For, and more obviously, there exists an unambiguous contradiction between the epistemological status of the Marxian critique of communication and Habermas' above-mentioned rejection of vanguardism. This antinomy was spotted by Habermas himself in an early essay, where it was warned that, on account of its scientific premises, the Marxian critique of ideology would require reconstruction if its utility for critical social analysis was to be preserved.¹⁰⁶ This point was again repeated in his criticism of Marx's identification of his critique of liberal capitalism as a natural-scientific project: "Marx never explicitly discussed the precise meaning of a science of humanity elaborated as a critique of ideology and distinct from the instrumentalist meaning of natural science."¹⁰⁷ Habermas' later discussion of the problem of pseudo-communication repressed this conclusion. It

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overlooked the point that the Marxian advocacy of a revolution of the existing material conditions of production, which it knows to be the "real foundation" upon which rises corresponding ideological forms, is logically tied to its self-misunderstanding as a form of natural science. Against its own resolve, thereby, the project of criticising pseudo-communication formed something like a tacit alliance with scientism—a scientism, it should be added, which has constantly bedevilled Marxian critiques of ideology from the time of their first formulation through to more recent amendments, such as those of Althusser.¹⁰⁸

This self-contradiction within the theory of pseudo-communication was reinforced by a second difficulty. This difficulty derived from the fact that the classical Marxian dénouement of the riddles of ideology presupposed the existence of a domain of "material" activity purged of symbolic representation. Notwithstanding its own scientism, the Althusserian project correctly called attention to this metaphysical presupposition within the early Marxian critique of ideology.¹⁰⁹ The scope of Althusser's insight can indeed be extended. For it is clear that the tradition of ideology-criticism from the time of Bacon has constantly suffered under the weight of its own illusory belief in the existence of a positive reality freed from the symbolic. Within this tradition, ideology has been understood as a form of misrepresentation of a subterranean reality of material life processes. These processes are explained as the pre-communicative point of origin of ideology, a point of origin which is also the point of truth that contradicts the false "nothingness" of ideology. Marx himself never satisfactorily broke with this reasoning, which is also evident in Bacon's conviction that "words" and "discourse" obstruct understanding and throw the species into confusion, through the *Idéologues'* concern to lay bare the origins of all consciousness, to Geiger's more recent positivistic denunciation of the ideological as pure mysticism which is readily refuted by techniques of empirical verification.¹¹⁰

Consistently, Marx's search for the origin of representations ends by embracing the myth of an origin external to symbolic communication. His appropriation of the Roman myth of Cacus is illustrative of this unflagging enthusiasm for identifying the "material foundations" of ideology through the model of the *camera obscura*.¹¹¹ According to this model, the bourgeoisie's false, inverted representation of itself as the source of all wealth can be likened to the trickery of Cacus, who seeks to conceal his cattle-rustling efforts by herding his prey into his den backwards, so that it appears they have already departed. In the early works, Marx and Engels similarly propose a rebellion against the rule of the symbolic. The "actual existing world" is contrasted with that which "humanity" says, imagines or conceives, with "the phrases of this world." Building upon this distinction, the materialist conception of history "scientifically" accounts for the latter through recourse to the logic of the former. The formation and pseudo-independence of the symbolic is unveiled and explained with reference to the beyond, behind and beneath: material practice itself. The illusions of the epoch are said to be sublimations of the "material life-process", in accordance with whose divisions of labour and class struggles the species produces its own means of need satisfaction and social and political relations.¹¹² Ideologies therefore have

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no history—in the precise sense that the logic of their birth, rise to dominance and decay is always and everywhere “burdened” by the primordial determinations of the division of labour. Inverted representations of reality can therefore be traced to the inversions and self-contradictoriness of the actual life-process of “real, active humanity.” Conversely, the dissolution of the hold of the ruling phrases over the lips and minds of the dominated can only be achieved through revolution. Liberation is a “practical”, and not a mental-discursive act.

Through its dependence upon this Marxian theory of ideology, Habermas’ theory of pseudo-communication unwittingly burdened itself with the metaphysical presumption that ideology is the “mask” of a subterranean reality, a reality which can be purged of all treacherous symbolic density. On at least one occasion (viz., in his early comments on Gadamer), Habermas in fact explicitly embraced this presumption.¹¹³ Granted, this critique of Gadamer’s “idealism of linguisticity” correctly conceived of linguistic communication as a kind of “metainstitution”. Communication was seen as an infrastructure upon which *all* economic, political and cultural institutions are dependent. “Social action,” Habermas insisted, “is constituted only in ordinary language communication.” Curiously, this formulation was at once undermined by a fairly conventional Marxian account of language as a limited circle of the movement of ideas, a “superstructure” divorced from the everyday realities of production. According to Habermas, particular modes of linguistic communication not only harbour deceptions (*Täuschungen*). Language itself oftentimes deceives. “(L)anguage is *also* ideological”, by virtue of its capacity to mask or veil certain constraints of reality (*Realitätszwängen*) which operate from “behind the back” of language. These constraints (such as a change in the mode of production) also effect “from below” revolutions in the symbolically transmitted and intersubjectively shared patterns of meaning within any social formation.¹¹⁵

Habermas’ embrace of this revamped base-superstructure formulation prompts a singular objection: the Marxian account of the “concealment” function of ideology does not sufficiently acknowledge that cultures—including the forces of production in both their objective and subjective aspects—are historically variable, more or less meaningful orders of subjects and objects structured through definite symbolic schema. The “material life-process” is by no means coterminous with the pragmatics of production, for neither escapes symbolic mediation. Conventional Marxian accounts of ideology are in this respect unacceptable, for actors’ symbolically-mediated experience of themselves in relation to other subjects and objects cannot be understood (to invoke the words of Schmidt) as a mere translation of the “objective logic of the human-work situation.”¹¹⁶ It must be denied that signs are necessarily cognate to the terms of the deed, that both have a common origin in material utility. A reconstructed critique of ideology—which Habermas’ work promised, but has so far never achieved—must not only fully reject the scientific premises of Marxism. It must also note that situated or “formed” subjects’ production and transformation of symbolically-mediated communicative relations cannot be conceived as either a level or dimension of any social formation. This communication is co-extensive

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with symbolically-mediated activity as such. Every experience of the world of nature or society is articulated through the production, reproduction and transformation of signs. There is no specifically communicative relationship—not even the labour process itself—which is constituted from an Archimedean point “outside” or “below” this symbolic-discursive realm.

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Notes

1. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1961 [1918]), esp. chs. 4-6. Other important defences of democratic public life during this period include: Antonio Gramsci's analysis of council communism and, later, the modern Prince as proclaimer and organiser of a “national popular collective will” cf. *Selections from Political Writings: 1910-20* [New York, 1977], pp 34-35; *Prison Notebooks* [New York, 1971], pp. 132-33, 158; Karl Korsch, *Was ist Sozialisierung?* (Hanover, 1919); John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (London, 1927); C. Wright Mills' discussion of the formation of “primary publics” in opposition to the mass communications industry (see especially *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. I.L. Horowitz [London, 1963], part 4, ch. 10); and, more recently, Franz Neumann, *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State* (London, 1957); Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958); S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1960) and Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation* (Chichester, 1979).
2. Rudolph Hilferding, *Finance Capital*, Ed. Tom Bottomore (London, Boston and Henley, 1981), part 5. More recently, see Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Princeton, 1975). Cf. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967) and *Businessmen and Reform, A Study of the Progressive Movement* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York, 1963). For the case of Britain, see Keith Middlemas, *The Politics of Industrial Society* (London, 1979), part one.
3. E.L. Bernay's *Public Relations* (New York, 1952), p. 79; cf. his earliest study, *Crystallising Public Opinion* (Chicago, 1923).
4. This intellectual assault of course began much earlier. Amidst the political and social struggles of the mid-nineteenth century, for example, the question of “public opinion” became a favoured subject of political leaders, newspaper writers and intellectuals. In retrospect, this concern with “the public” served as the precedent to its bureaucratic re-ordering. Some early treatises which point in this direction include: William A. Mackinnon, *On the Rise, Progress and Present State of Public Opinion in Great Britain and Other Parts of the World* (London, 1828); Joseph Mosely, *Political Elements, or, The Progress of Modern Legislation* (London, 1852); David Urquhart, *Public Opinion and its Organs* (London, 1855); Franz von Holtzendorff, *Wesen und Wert Öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin, 1880).
5. Michael Freedon, *The New Liberalism* (Oxford, 1978).
6. This concept was invoked by Walter Lippmann in his *Public Opinion* (New York, 1922 [1965]), p. 173. Compare also the more recent interpretations of the emergence and limitations of the theory of “equilibrium democracy” in C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal*

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Democracy (Oxford, 1977), ch. 4, and Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique* (London, 1969), ch. 2. As Carole Pateman has convincingly indicated (*Participation and Democratic Theory* [Cambridge, 1970], chs. 1 and 6), this theoretical critique of the "omnicompetent citizen" sustained itself on fictions about a homogeneous "classical" tradition of democratic thinking.

7. Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (New York, 1965).
8. Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 3rd edition 1921), pp. 118ff; on the analysis of the unconscious dimensions of public opinion during this period, cf. Francis G. Wilson, *A Theory of Public Opinion* (Chicago, 1962), part 2.
9. Cf. Harold Lasswell, "The Measurement of Public Opinion", *The American Political Science Review*, XXV (1931), pp. 311-326. See also his *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York, 1927) and Friedrich Schönmann, *Die Kunst der Massenbeeinflussung in den Vereinigten Staaten* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1924).
10. See, for example, the somewhat later, and classic study of Stuart A. Rice (*Quantitative Methods in Politics* [New York, 1928], p. 57), which insists that the concept of "attitudes" must be preferred to that of "public opinion", since the latter concept connotes too much of a "rational and conscious element in the actual motivation."
11. See the pioneering works of C.F. Higham, *Looking Forward: Mass Education Through Publicity* (1920) and *Advertising: Its Use and Abuse* (1925). On the theoretical links between market research and public opinion measurement, see Friedrich Pollock, "Empirical Research into Public Opinion", in Paul Connerton (ed.), *Critical Sociology* (Harmondsworth, 1976), pp. 225-236.
12. Published in the same year as Walter Lippmann's famous *Public Opinion* (*op.cit.*), Tönnies' *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin, 1922) was for many years, at least prior to the rise of Nazism, considered the classic European treatise on public opinion. Unfortunately, it remains relatively unknown in the English-speaking world. Tönnies had also planned a companion volume to the *Kritik* wherein he would deal with the genealogy of the concept of public opinion. Regrettably, only fragments were published. See, for example, "Macht und Wert der öffentlichen Meinung", *Die Dioskuren, Jahrbuch für Geisteswissenschaften*, 2, (1923), pp. 72-99 (partly translated as "The Power and Value of Public Opinion", in Ferdinand Tönnies, *On Sociology: Pure, Applied and Empirical* ed. W.J. Cahman and Rudolf Heberle [Chicago and London, 1971], pp. 251-265); the early discussion of public opinion and the role of the press in *Community and Society* (London, 1972) and his early critique of Wilhelm Bauer's *Die Öffentliche Meinung und Ihre Geschichtlichen Grundalges* «1914] in "Zur Theorie der Öffentlichen Meinung", *Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich*, 40 (1916), pp. 2001-2030.
13. *Kritik, op. cit.*, p. 219; cf. *Community and Society, op. cit.*, p. 231-2.
14. *Kritik, op. cit.*, p. 80.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 570; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 228-257 and *Community and Society, op. cit.*, pp. 220-222.

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17. *Kritik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207, 71.
18. Cf., *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78: "Public opinion is the common way of thought, the corporate spirit of any group or association, insofar as these opinions are built upon thought and knowledge rather than on unproven imaginings, beliefs or authority."
19. "The Power and Value of Public Opinion", *op. cit.*, pp. 253-4.
20. Walter Lippmann's definition of public opinion is an early expression of this tendency opposed by Tönnies: "Those features of the world outside which have to do with the behaviour of other human beings, in so far as that behaviour crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us, we call roughly public affairs. The pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationships, are their public opinions" (*Public Opinion*, *op. cit.*, p. 18). Such formulations were marked by a deeply ironic, self-fulfilling prophecy. For their assumption that all must hold an opinion, reinforced by the structurally-secured incapacity of individuals to form an opinion through genuine public argumentation, resulted in the widespread acceptance of stereotypic analyses and instant, on-the-spot, opinion formation—a development, it can be argued, which only accelerated the growing suspicion of "the public" as the arbiter of legitimate social and political authority!
21. "The Divisions of Sociology", in *On Sociology*, *op. cit.* p. 137; cf. *Kritik*, *op. cit.*, pp. vi-viii. Relying upon this more precise meaning, one heavily indebted to the phase of Enlightenment, Tönnies was highly critical of Lippmann's all-encompassing, positivistic concept of public opinion as mere popular sentiment and feeling; cf. Tönnies' review of *Public Opinion* in "Amerikanische Soziologie", *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, 26, 2 (1927), pp. 1-10.
22. "The Power and Value of Public Opinion", *op. cit.*, p. 251.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 252; cf. *ibid.*, p. 257: "'Public opinion' is considered to be like a strong fortress which must at all times be guarded and defended."
24. *Ibid.*, p. 262. Others agreed with Tönnies' assessment. See, for example, the passing remark in R.M. MacIver's classic, *The Modern State* (London, 1926), p. 19: "So many agencies are enlisted in the task of persuasion, and so few are concerned with the mere business of exploring the truth. The great endeavour is not to elicit public opinion but to make it, to control it, to use it."
25. "The Power and Value of Public Opinion", *op. cit.*, p. 254.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 255-256.
27. *Community and Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
28. *Kritik*, *op. cit.*, p. 572; cf. "The Power and Value of Public Opinion," *op. cit.*, p. 264: "the more the masses move upward and the more they participate in the advance of education and political consciousness, the more will they make their voices count in the formation of public opinion."
29. *Kritik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 572-3; cf. "Historicism, Rationalism, and the Industrial System," in *On Sociology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-287.
30. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 251. This highly influential kind of argument was repeated in Lippmann's subsequent works. *The Phantom Public* (New York, 1925) insisted that the democratic public had no political functions save that of mandating those capable of

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- deciding. According to *The Public Philosophy* (New York, 1955), the slow decay of free western democratic governments is a consequence of uninformed publics overriding the judgments of informed, responsible officials.
31. The latter point is emphasised in Weber's discussion with Ludendorff, as recalled by Marianne Weber in *Max Weber: A Biography*, ed. Harry Zohn (New York 1975), p. 653; the first point appears in *FMW*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
 32. John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117, 138.
 33. *Ibid.*, ch 4.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 126.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
 36. *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 129.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
 39. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3; cf. p. 152: "Combined activity happens among human beings; but when nothing else happens it passes as inevitably into some other mode of interconnected activity as does the interplay of iron and the oxygen of water. . . . Only when there exists *signs* or *symbols* of activities and of their outcome can the flux be viewed as from without, be arrested for consideration and esteem, and be regulated.
 40. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 163, 167, 218.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
 42. *TRS*, p. 118.
 43. Cf. the striking absence of discussion of Habermas' *political* concepts in Thomas McCarthy's otherwise excellent exegetical study of his writings (*The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*, *op. cit.*) and Garbis Kortian's account of their "meta-theoretical" dimensions (*Metacritique: The Philosophical Argument of Jürgen Habermas*, [Cambridge, 1980.])
 44. Habermas acknowledges the importance of Jasper's "philosophy of communication" in "Die Gestalten der Wahrheit", in *PPP*, pp. 99-109 and in "Über das Verhältnis von Politik und Moral" in H. Kuhn and F. Wiedmann (eds.), *Das Problem der Ordnung* (Munich, 1960), p. 111; his dependence upon Hannah Arendt (and especially her major work, *The Human Condition*, *op. cit.*) is made explicit in "On the German-Jewish Heritage", *Telos*, 44 (Summer, 1980), pp. 127-131.
 45. The concern with a general theory of language and communication was suggested in his 1965 Frankfurt inaugural lecture (*KHI*, p. 314), pursued systematically in "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence" (first delivered as lectures during a visit to England in the late 1960's) and greatly extended in many works during the past decade. See especially: "Vorbereitende Bemerkungen" in *TGOS*, pp. 101-141; "Summation and Response", *Continuum*, 8, 1 (Spring-Summer 1970); the unpublished Gauss lectures delivered at Princeton University in the

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- spring of 1971, *Towards a Communication Theory of Society*; "Wahrheitstheorien" in Helmut Fahrenbach (ed.) *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion: Festschrift für Walter Schulz* (Pfullingen, 1973), pp. 211-265; *LC*, part 3; "Some Distinctions in Universal Pragmatics: A Working Paper", *Theory and Society*, 3 (1976), pp. 155-167, which is developed more fully in "Was heisst Universal-pragmatik?", in K.O. Apel (ed.), *Sprachpragmatik und Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1976), pp. 174-273, and translated as "What is Universal Pragmatics?", in *CES*, pp. 1-68. For further commentary on the theory of pragmatic universals, see my earlier "Communication, ideology and the problem of 'voluntary servitude'", *Media, Culture and Society*, 4 (1982), pp. 123-32; Thomas A. McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), ch. 4; Anthony Giddens, "Habermas's Critique of Hermeneutics" in *Studies in Social and Political Theory* (London, 1977), pp. 135-164; John B. Thompson, "Universal Pragmatics", in John B. Thompson and David Held (eds.), *Habermas: Critical Debates* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), pp. 116-133.
46. "Discussion", in Theodore F. Geraets, *Rationality Today* (Ottawa, 1979), p. 346.
 47. *CES*, p. 5.
 48. "Some Distinctions in Universal Pragmatics", *op. cit.*, pp. 155-6; *CES*, p. 26.
 49. Cf. *CES*, pp. 7-8 and p. 208, note 1: "Hitherto the term 'pragmatics' has been employed to refer to the analysis of particular contexts of language use and not to the reconstruction of universal features of using language (or of employing sentences in utterances)."
 50. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (London, 1978), pp. 33ff. Habermas acknowledges the fundamental importance of Austin and Searle's theories of speech acts to the arguments of his universal pragmatics (*CES*, pp. 25 ff). The most important of this post-Wittgenstein literature includes: J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962); "Performance-Constatative", in C.E. Caton (ed.), *Philosophy and Ordinary Language* (Urbana, Illinois, 1963), pp. 22-33; cf. John R. Searle, *op. cit.*, and "What is a Speech Act?" in M. Black (ed.), *Philosophy in America* (Ithaca, 1965), pp. 221-239; "Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts", *Philosophical Review*, 77 (1968), pp. 405-424, and *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge, 1979).
 51. Cf. Karl Otto Apel, "Sprechakttheorie und transzendente Sprachpragmatik - zur Frage ethischer Normen", in K.O. Apel (ed.), *Sprachpragmatik und Philosophie* (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 10-173.
 52. *CES*, p. 14 This thesis has old roots: the proposition that speech is that medium of communication which already presupposes a tacit agreement concerning what it means to communicate already appears in Socrates; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus and The Seventh and Eighth Letters* (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 19-103.
 53. *CES*, pp. 1-5; "Wahrheitstheorien", pp. 220-1; "Some Distinctions in Universal Pragmatics", pp. 157-9; and "Zwei Bemerkungen zum praktischen Diskurs" in *ZHRM* p. 339.
 54. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 141.
 55. G. Frege, "On Sense and Reference", in P. Geach and Max Black (eds.), *Translations From the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 56-78.
 56. J.L. Austin, "Performative Utterances", *op. cit.*, p. 251.

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57. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts*, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
58. *CES*, p. 4; cf. *TGOS*, p. 120, *LC*, p. 110, and "Einige Bemerkungen Zum Problem der Begründung von Werturteilen", in *Verhandlungen des 9. Deutschen Kongress für Philosophie* (Meisenheim, 1972), pp. 89ff.
59. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem" in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley, 1977), pp. 7-8: "We all know that to say 'thou' to someone presupposes a deep common accord. Something enduring is already present when this word is spoken. When we try to reach agreement on a matter on which we have different opinions, this deeper factor always comes into play, even if we are seldom aware of it."
60. "Summation and Response", p. 131.
61. *KHI*, p. 284; cf. *CES*, pp. 63-65, 88, "Wahrheitstheorien", p. 265, note 46, and "Summation and Response", p. 131: "We name a speaking situation ideal where the communication is not only not hindered by external, contingent influences, but also not hindered by forces which result from the structure of the communication itself. Only then does the peculiarly unforced compulsion of a better argument dominate . . ."
62. A.W. Gouldner, "The Norm of Reciprocity", *American Sociological Review*, (1960), pp. 161-178.
63. *KHI*, p. 314; cf. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 115.
64. "Wahrheitstheorien", p. 258; cf. *CES*, p. 88.
65. Emil Lask, "Zum System der Logik", *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol.3 (Tübingen, 1924), p. 92; *CES*, pp. 4-5.
66. For example, in "Summation and Response", p. 126, Habermas explicitly invokes the claim of G.H. Mead (*Mind, Self, Society* [Chicago, 1934], p. 327): "Universal discourse is the formal idea of communication. If communication can be carried through and made perfect, then there would exist the kind of democracy . . . in which each individual could carry just the response in himself [sic] that he knows he calls out in the community." See also *CES* pp. 78ff.
67. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 143; cf. "Summation and Response", p. 131.
68. This insistence reinforces one of Habermas' objections to the Parsonian conception of cultural "values" as somehow *given* universalistic norms which outline the desirable orientations for a social system considered as a totality. In Habermas' view (*ZL*, pp. 176-77), this formulation *a priori* excludes the possibility of the *political* formation of value orientations through "a universal and public discussion by the members of the society based on available information about the given conditions of reproduction of the system. Thereupon, a relative agreement could be effected on a value system which included the objective value orientations previously hidden from the knowledge and will of the citizenry. Through such communication, formerly acknowledged cultural values could not function only as standards; cultural values would themselves be drawn into the discussion."
69. N. Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).
70. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 131.

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71. This argument underpins Habermas' criticism of the model of linguistic behaviourism (developed out of the semiotics of Charles Morris), whose account of communication as symbolically-mediated, stimulus-response behaviour equally misses the importance of the intersubjective negotiations of meaning as a *developed* competence of speaking and acting subjects. See *ZL*, pp. 150ff; *CES*, pp. 6-7, 20, 27-9; cf. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", pp. 140 and 138, where Habermas stresses that any structure of intersubjectivity "is generated by neither the monologically mastered system of linguistic rules nor by the language-external conditions of its performance. On the contrary, in order to participate in normal discourse, the speaker must have—in addition to his linguistic competence—basic qualifications of speech and of symbolic interaction (role-behaviour) at his disposal, which we may call communicative competence."
72. Cf. *KHI*, pp. 138, 157; *CES*, p. 90 and "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", pp. 122-123, 143 and 141: "Every being, who says I to himself [sic], asserts himself toward the Other as absolutely different. And yet at the same time he recognizes himself in the latter as another I and is conscious of the reciprocity of this relationship; every being is potentially his own Other."
73. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 122.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
75. *LC*, pp. 107-108; *TP*, pp. 18-19.
76. *CES*, pp. 41-3, 53. This ability to distinguish and "uncouple" the so-called propositional and illocutionary dimensions of speech acts is said to be unique to the species (*Ibid.*, p. 41, where Habermas draws upon the analysis of I. Dornbach, *Primatenkommunikation* [Frankfurt, 1975]). Presumably, this capacity could only be realised fully under conditions of authentic public life. Then, and only then, could speaking actors openly and freely communicate about both "the facts" and the dynamics of their relations with each other.
77. *CES*, p. 86; *LC*, pp. 111-117.
- 77a. Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics", in Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman (eds.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, third series (Oxford, 1967), pp. 104-133.
78. Cf. "Wahrheitstheorien", p. 259; "Summation and Response", p. 132; "A Reply to My Critics" in John B. Thompson and David Held (eds.) *Habermas: Critical Debates* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), p. 221; *TGOS*, pp. 140-1.
79. Cf. the appraisal of the work of Gershom Scholem, ("Die verkleidete Tora: Rede zum 80. Geburtstag von Gershom Scholem", *Merkur*, 32, 1 [January, 1978], pp. 100-101), where Habermas insists that criticism's power to "intervene in tradition and explode the continuity of that which is passed down" warrants a distinction between (a) authoritarian tradition, i.e., the seemingly unchallengeable renewal of "truths" of fathers by their sons; and (b) the creative appropriation of tradition, according to which the "authority" of the past can be critically scrutinized and transcended. See also *LC*, p. 70; "Consciousness-Raising", *passim*, and "Summation and Response", p. 128.
80. "Summation and Response", p. 127; cf. "Wahrheitstheorien", p. 258. Habermas' distinction between these two forms of consensus might be favourably compared with Steven Lukes' concern to generate a radical conception of power and interest (*Power: A Radical View* [London and Basingstoke, 1977] pp. 24-25, 32-35, 46-50). Lukes speaks of the problem of latent

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conflicts of interest which arise from contradictions between the interests of those exercising power, and the "real interests" of those excluded or shaped by this power. It is suggested (through rather empiricist and insufficiently developed arguments) that the category of real interests must be connected with an empirically-grounded theory (based on adduced "evidence") of the preconditions for autonomous political action. Habermas' theory of validity claims deepens this thesis, but through less positivistic arguments.

81. *CES*, p. 14; *TP*, p. 17. The positivistic claim that an actually existing agreement must always be final is defended in the well-known work of Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz on "non-decisionmaking" (*Power and Poverty, Theory and Practice* [New York, 1970], p. 49). In the absence of observable (overt or covert) political conflict, it is claimed, "the presumption must be that there is a consensus on the prevailing allocation of values, in which case non-decisionmaking is impossible."
82. "Consciousness-Raising", p. 59 (the quotation is from Walter Benjamin's 1929 essay *Der Surrealismus*, translated in *Reflections* [New York and London, 1978] p. 191). Compare also the explicitly political, and uncharacteristically metaphoric rendition of this same point in "Summation and Response", p. 127: "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."
83. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", pp. 117ff.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 117; cf. "Summation and Response", pp. 125-6 and *CES*, p. 210, note 2.
85. Cf. H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1973), chs. 11-13.
86. *TP*, pp. 32-37. Habermas' rejection parallels Maurice Merleau-Ponty's dismissal of a "politics of reason" in favour of a "politics of understanding", (*Adventures of the Dialectic* [Evanston, 1973], pp. 3-7).
87. *TP*, pp. 36-37 (translation altered). Somewhat uncharacteristically, Habermas here adds that under certain political conditions (the opposition to war? the subjection of a woman to a wife-beating husband?) such strictures on the need for cautious prudence are simply scurrilous or ridiculous. This point will be pursued further in section XIII.
88. G. Lukács, "Toward a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation", in *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 304 (original emphasis).
89. *KK*, pp. 112-117.
90. This conception of the analysis of processes of drive dynamics as linguistic analysis draws explicitly upon Alfred Lorenzer, *Kritik des psychoanalytischen Symbolbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970) and *Sprachzerstörung und Rekonstruktion* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970). Compare also K.-O. Apel's interpretation of psychoanalysis as a critical emancipatory inquiry which dialectically mediates communicative understanding with the quasi-naturalistic objectification and explanation of action, in "Analytic Philosophy and the 'Geisteswissenschaften', *Foundations of Language*, suppl. series, vol. 5 (Dordrecht, 1967), pp. 25ff, 55ff, and in "The A Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities" in Fred Dallmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy (eds.) *Understanding and Social Inquiry* (Notre Dame, 1977), pp. 310-312. Habermas' appropriation of psychoanalysis (and his corresponding attempt to differentiate two forms of interpretation and communication) is evident in "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", pp. 116-130; *KHI*, chs. 10-12; *KK*, pp. 264ff; *TP*, pp. 22ff.

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91. *KHI*, p. 218; *CES*, 68, 70; *KK*, 264-30.
92. *KHI*, ch. 11. Habermas' criticism of Freud's "self-misunderstanding" of the epistemological status of the psychoanalytic project parallels that of Michael Foucault (*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* [New York, 1973]). According to Foucault, Freudian psychoanalysis counters contemporary positivistic accounts of madness by engaging "unreason" at the level of its language. Freud established the possibility of a *dialogue* with unreason (p. 198). On the other hand, this dialogue is premised upon the interrogating authority of the analyst. Freud "did deliver the patient from the existence of the asylum within which his 'liberators' had alienated him; but he did not deliver him from what was essential in this existence; he regrouped its powers, extended them to the maximum by uniting them in the doctor's hands" (278).
93. *TP*, pp. 24, 29.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
96. H.J. Geigel, "Reflexion und Emanzipation", in *Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 278ff; cf. the reply to Habermas by H.G. Gadamer in *ibid.*, pp. 307ff, and A. Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York, 1971).
97. *TP*, pp. 16, 29ff.
98. *TGOS*, p. 120. Compare the attempt by Claus Mueller (*The Politics of Communication* [New York, 1973]) to deploy the theory of ideologically distorted communication.
99. *TGOS*, p. 120; cf. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 117, and "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power", *Social Research*, 44 1 (Spring, 1977), p. 21-22.
100. See *TRS*, esp. pp. 98-100, 111-112; *LC*, pp. 22-3; *SO*, 65-6, 110-111. Habermas' concern with these ideologies is unfortunately ignored in Paul Ricoeur's discussion of Gadamer and Habermas in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, 1981), essay two.
101. *LC*, p. 22; *TRS*, p. 99.
102. *LC*, p. 22; *TRS*, pp. 98-99. Of course, Habermas acknowledges that bourgeois-ideological forms of communication also displayed an "evident contradiction between idea and reality" (*LC*, p. 23). They were thus plagued by internal contradictions, and therefore condemned to successive internal erosions and immanent criticisms. Bourgeois ideologies typically repressed, invited and provoked their opposite: criticisms of ideology addressed to the exploited victims of the new bourgeois order. "Ideologies are coeval with the critique of ideology. In this sense, there can be no prebourgeois 'ideologies'" (*TRS*, p. 99). In respect of the "utopian" or "illusory" qualities (which also functioned as a substitute gratification among the dominated, as Marx stressed with reference to Christianity in his polemic against Feuerbach), bourgeois ideologies were indeed false, even though they were not simply "false consciousness" (Engels). As the young Habermas noted with reference to the growth of public argumentation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ideologies "are not exclusively defined by their being the pure and simple falseness of a necessary social consciousness. . . . (They) also display a moment whose truth consists in a utopian impulse which points beyond the present by bringing its justification into question" (*SO*, p. 111); cf. *ibid.*, p. 278. In this earlier formulation, Habermas is closer to

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Theodor Adorno, according to whom ideology is an objective and necessarily illusory form of consciousness, marked by the "coalescence of the true and false" ("Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 6 (1953-4), p. 366.

103. Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology* (London, 1974), p. 183.
104. *KK*, p. 79; cf., *TRS*, p. 111 and Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, *op. cit.*: The "absorption of ideology by reality does not, however, mean the end of ideology."
105. *CES*, p. 169; cf. *LC*, p. 19.
106. *TP*, pp. 237, 242. Habermas here pointed to a few subsequent (and, in his view, less than satisfactory) attempts to reconstruct historical materialism as a critique of ideology: Ernst Bloch's concern with the critical utopian moments of ideological consciousness; Benjamin's theory of the allegorical; and Adorno's defence of the critical potential of modern art through the categories of negative-dialectical thought. Habermas' own project can be placed within this failed tradition.
107. *KHI*, p. 45.
108. Scientistic Marxism enjoyed a powerful reputation throughout the whole of the Second and Third Internationals, as has been shown by Russell Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy from Lukács to the Frankfurt School", *Telos*, 10 (Winter, 1971), pp. 119-146. This scientism culminates in contemporary Soviet Marxism. Against those "ideologists" who dare to speak and act rebelliously, this Marxism confidently asserts the unquestionable dualism between science and ideology; it therefore also insists upon its role as the privileged bearer of scientific insight into both the laws of nature and history. Another recent instance of this scientism is to be found in the Althusserian account of those universal and indispensable processes through which ideology functions "to shape men, to transform them and enable them to respond to the exigencies of existence" (Louis Althusser, *For Marx* [London, 1969], p. 235, [translation altered]). It is claimed that scientific knowledge of social formations consists in an autonomous discourse which both speaks "in ideology" and tries to break with ideology (*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* [London, 1971], p. 162). This kind of formulation, as critics of Althusser have pointed out, obscures the logic of the mediations between scientific discourse and its ideologial "referent". Scientific inquiry, it is said, must proceed from the most abstract concepts (which are seen to be related to "formal abstract objects") to the most concrete concepts (which are supposedly related to "real-concrete singular objects"). It is as if these categories are detached, spontaneous thoughts, independent of actual social and political relations of power, and attributable only to some ill-conceived movement of pure scientific reason. According to this potentially bureaucratic formulation, the dualism between science and ideology cannot be questioned. The "object" of thought is represented as virtually internal to thought. In addition, knowledge itself is dehistoricised. It is to be preserved (for eternity?) as valid against a ubiquitous ideology which tends—by virtue of the allegedly indisputable claims of science itself—to become synonymous with "false consciousness" (as has been pointed out by Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 181). The maxim that "there is no practice except by and in an ideology" (*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, *op. cit.*, p. 159) is not extended to "science" itself.
109. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, *op. cit.*, p. 151: "Ideology . . . is for Marx an imaginary assemblage (*bricolage*), a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the 'day's residues' from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals producing their existence. It is on this basis that ideology has no history in *The German Ideology*, since its history is outside it, where the only existing history is, the history of concrete individuals, etc."

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110. Cf. Francis Bacon, "Novum Organum", in *Works*, James Spedding et. al. eds. (London, 1883), pp. 54ff; Theodore Geiger, *Ideologie und Wahrheit* (Stuttgart and Wien, 1953), and, concerning Bacon and de Tracy, Hans Barth, *Truth and Ideology* (Berkeley, 1976), chs. 1 and 2.
111. *Theories of Surplus Value*, III, (Moscow, 1971), p. 536. Commenting on this myth (appropriated from Luther's own rendition), Marx notes; "an excellent picture, it fits the capitalist in general, who pretends that what he has taken from others and brought into his den emanates from him, and by causing it to go backwards he gives it the semblance of having come from his den." Compare Marx's note attached to *The German Ideology*, *op. cit.*, p. 472: "ideologists turn everything upside down".
112. Cf., *The German Ideology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-414.
113. "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*", in Fred A. Dallmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy (eds.) *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-363; cf. Gadamer's pointed response in *Truth and Method*, *op. cit.*, p. 360; cf., *TP*, p. 158, where work as purposive-rational action is seen as always endowed with meaning or significance by virtue of its embeddedness within a framework of communicatively-generated rules.
114. "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, *op. cit.*, p. 360; cf., *TP*, p. 158, where work as purposive-rational action is seen as always endowed with meaning or significance by virtue of its embeddedness within a framework of communicatively-generated rules.
115. "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*", *op. cit.*, pp. 360-1.
116. Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx* (London, 1973), p. 30. See also: Adam Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual* (New York, 1970), p. 75; Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason*, *op. cit.*, esp. ch. 3.

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