# Aggression in the Lifeworld:
# Expanding Parsons' Concept of Aggression
# Through the Description of the Relationship
# Between Jargon, Aggression, and Culture.

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# Introduction

This work began with the observation that certain expressions have a drive-releasing effect, and this effect occurs not despite but because of their apparent irrationality. Expressions that blatantly contradict their own content offer actors the opportunity to formally acknowledge the normative order of their cultural environment while simultaneously expressing forbidden desires that violate the rules of this order. This, in turn, does not trigger cultural or social sanctions. On the contrary, such expressions solidify integration processes by making integration and its psychological costs bearable. Drawing from Adorno, I refer to such expressions as "Jargon." Jargon is not just a self-deception; it is a particular form of self-deception. It not only relieves the speaker but also integrates them into the circle of those who belong. Through Jargon, the present is embellished, rendered promising for the future, and thus made acceptable.

However, Adorno's descriptions of aggressive actions expressed in Jargon are conceptually challenging to grasp. They slip away under the scrutiny of a rigorously working scholar. The translation of such impressions into a durable conceptual model encounters the limits of various social scientific traditions and quickly runs into difficulties. As much as the advantages of transferring Adorno's critique into a different conceptual framework are apparent, there is a risk that by relinquishing Adorno's premises, their critical rigor may disappear.

Furthermore, this raises a series of questions that need to be addressed. For example, how can the complexity of modern society be taken into account without ignoring the instinctual elements of social action? What does an aggressive action expressed in Jargon actually look like, and what cultural significance would an action have that is transmitted through Jargon? Adorno's concept of Jargon can ignite a discussion about this. However, it leaves some problems untouched that I must address from my perspective. Adorno refrains from providing answers to such questions. He can afford to do so because he relies on premises that willingly accept a de-differentiation of the social world. Similarly, he does not discuss the specific cultural framework in which the aggressive action expressed in Jargon acquires its meaning. From the perspective of this work, it takes some imagination to understand how Jargon can play a role in integrating aggressive impulses within a coherent culture. The culture-specific transformation of aggression must also be a part of such an exposition. Adorno only partially acknowledges the cultural context in which this aggression expressed in Jargon acquires any meaning, or he does so in its subliminal form. It is evident that

Adorno's approach is built upon precisely such culture-specific elements of the expression of aggression.

I have been searching for a suitable example of modern Jargon for a long time. Initially, I wrote a lengthy essay on Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film "Martha." Using his film as an example seemed logical to me. However, the discussion about my interpretation of the film revealed that it only complicated the presentation of my arguments. Martha, a bourgeois virgin, marries a sadistic man who torments her in the second half of the film. In my opinion, Fassbinder portrays a complex picture of human submission, but the brutality of Martha's husband makes it impossible to focus on the use of language and gestures that bind Martha and her social environment to tacitly approve of this brutality. Although I still believe that such an interpretation of the film is not only entirely possible but also enlightening, I had to admit that an empirical example causing confusion does not serve the clarification of theoretical questions.

Another consideration was to analyze a patient in a clinical context. However, within the framework of such an analysis, cultural actions are primarily relevant in their relation to the patient's personality structure. The cultural significance of such actions is therefore secondary, and central questions of this work become irrelevant.

Then came the so-called "Walser debate." Martin Walser's Paulskirchenrede (Paulskirche speech) alone would not be suitable for examination within this framework. Taken literally, engaging in a serious discussion about Martin Walser's Paulskirchenrede is challenging. Walser's assertion that someone forces him to constantly engage with the horrifying events of mass extermination is simply incorrect. However, in light of Adorno's description of the functional role of Jargon, Walser's speech takes on an entirely different significance. The arguments are no longer solely examined for their truth and therefore validity but also for their impact and how this impact can be related to the truthfulness of the argumentation. Walser's impression of being pursued by the Holocaust and by the proponents of a "cruel memory service" lacks any foundation, but not its cultural significance. It was enormous. Adorno can help us understand why.

From today's perspective, Adorno remains rooted in his time. He overlooks some things that have since become commonplace. Perhaps, however, this is why he was able to see that certain forms of irrationality can have a relieving quality. Integration can thus be achieved at the expense of the marginalized without violating cultural or social norms. At this point, I would like to mention some limitations of this work. For example, I must forgo certain aspects that Adorno describes. However, I cannot adopt Adorno's source of discomfort. The fragmentation of a subject detached from the enjoyment of genuine intersubjective exchange with fellow human beings can only be understood from my perspective through translation. This translation changes the meaning of discomfort and thus its impact. Furthermore, from my standpoint, this discomfort can only be emphasized if it is inextricably linked to the concept of Jargon.

I cannot, in other words, introduce a concept of intersubjectivity that is inherently philosophical without first unfolding a concept of drive. Frictions that prompt actors to act, I believe, cannot be derived from an existential state. They arise from the mutual tension between accepted and internalized cultural demands on the one hand and desires that remain taboo on the other.

To make meaningful statements about this interaction, a relatively elaborate approach is required because the necessary framework is not present in Adorno's work. I turn to Parsons to carry out the necessary sociological expansion. The decision to build on Parsons may seem less obvious to some readers. While Parsons does have a concept of the subject to which he accords a drive-dynamic support, the drives that Parsons believes exist in subjects serve the purpose of societal integration. A potential friction between culture and personality does not even arise in his framework, and its conceptual consideration is therefore unnecessary. Parsons provides me with the opportunity to demonstrate how sociological models can rid themselves of drive-dynamic processes within their explanatory scope and at the same time indicate how such elements play a role in social action. Therefore, I introduce an early work by Parsons, written before he could suspend his own thoughts on aggression due to the consequences of his later writings. Consequently, remnants of a Freudian drive remain in his description of social action in modern society.

Particularly favorable is the fact that Parsons wrote this work with a focus on Germany and the Holocaust.

Only after that do I introduce the reader to Adorno's argumentation, as developed in "The Jargon of Authenticity." I hope to demonstrate where Adorno's work can be built upon, but also not to give the impression that his approach can be readily adopted. First, I must emphasize the cultural specificity that Adorno overlooked. Against the background of my exposition on Parsons' integration model, it becomes clear how Adorno's inadequate treatment of the cultural conditions in which his impressions become meaningful can be attributed to a deficiency in his approach. At this point, the introduction of Plessner's argumentation is particularly beneficial. Plessner's "The Belated Nation" examines the cultural conditions that have favored a descent into barbarism. Plessner's analysis presupposes the consideration of current societal conditions. He merely concludes that it would be oversimplifying to directly derive the Holocaust from the defeat in World War I. Plessner's work underscores the necessity of seriously engaging with the meaning-generating qualities of cultural action.

The last part attempts to apply the theoretical tools that have already been developed to an example. As mentioned above, I consider Martin Walser's text delivered at the awarding of the German Peace Prize. In the following, I have attempted to outline a theoretical model that allows for a better understanding of the nature and function of aggression in everyday life.

The gaps in Parsons' model, which forms one of the foundations of this work, mean that important questions are left unaddressed in his description of social interaction within a specific cultural context. Particularly, Parsons resorts to a scientific stance when describing "drives," and therefore, he is unable to perceive their role in the lifeworld. Finding a way out of this dilemma is much more challenging than it initially appears. To understand the role of aggression in human development and culture, we must first return to the conceptual framework he laid out, as it provides the foundation for understanding the significance and function of culture in both the human developmental process and the lifeworld. Abandoning this conceptual framework, which highlights the growing integrative function of culture in all three spheres of society—namely, personality, culture, and system—would mean reducing highly differentiated societies to roughly drawn clichés in the Hobbesian tradition. Adorno's work is certainly not entirely free from this tendency. His essay "The Jargon of Authenticity" by Adorno, however, contains a more subtle subtext that I attempt to reconstruct.

I selected this essay because it opens the possibility for a more usable definition of aggression. However, to reconstruct Adorno's rather sparse description of the specific cultural context, I must make a second expansion. For this purpose, I refer to Plessner's work, "The Belated Nation." In this work, Plessner examines the cultural conditions that favored the descent into barbarism. He concludes that it would be oversimplifying to solely derive the Holocaust from the defeat in World War I. Plessner's work underscores the necessity of seriously engaging with the meaning-generating qualities of cultural action.

A definition of aggression that aims to successfully navigate the rough waters between Parsons and Adorno must constantly consider both as reference points. In other words, the definition of aggression in the lifeworld does not resolve the inherent contradiction between them; instead, it unfolds on the basis of this contradiction. In this way, it becomes as productive a mirror of societal friction points as the Jargon that perverts it.

The conceptual framework developed below sheds light on the functioning of aggression in a specific cultural situation. Jargon is language. It requires a shared, internalized culture that is embraced by all, a culture that not only shapes individuals but also their interactions. Jargon shares the forbidden by pitting it against the inauthentic, thereby creating space for deviant actions beyond the boundaries of what is normally allowed. This interplay between Jargon and culture, and culture and Jargon, exists in the empirical world of cultural interaction. It can only be observed there, not in the inner world of conceptual categories. The acceptance speech given by Martin Walser in the Frankfurt Paulskirche in October 1998 upon receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade served as the starting point for a public controversy that spanned months and provided rich material for tracing how cultural influence and aggressive content manifest themselves in Jargon. Jargon and our inquiry into the role of aggression in culture result from the interplay between Martin Walser and his broader cultural audience.

# The Concept of Aggression in Talcott Parsons' Sociology

In the following text, I assume that the diversity of social actions in the lifeworld of a culture can only be understood within a social scientific approach that draws on the classics of sociology. I introduce the relevant works of Parsons as represents an exemplary example of this tradition. Parsons' approach is structured to conceptually comprehend all three levels of society (personality, culture, and social system). Furthermore, Parsons' work is characterized by a high degree of rigor. Due to this rigor, the consequences of selecting different premises for the scope of a social scientific approach can be traced. In this context, it can be demonstrated that Parsons' premises, which are intended to represent those of classical sociology, result in a dilution of the concept of drives.

From this dilemma, the following work emerged. The initial question was: Can the advantages of the classical structure of sociological theory be maintained without downplaying the extent and intensity of aggression in the lifeworld from a social scientific perspective? In other words, does a socially grounded approach force me to overlook the conflicts of social action that provide actors with the opportunity to satisfy forbidden desires? And if so, how can I continue to utilize this approach without risking the abandonment of the concept of aggression?

Parsons' approach will help me gain insight into the coexistence of those mutually disagreeable aspects of social life, namely the relationship between culture and personality. It serves as an example of an apodictic construction of sociological premises. The examination of the dilution of Freud's concept of drives that I observe in Parsons should enable me to make general statements about the consequences of certain premises for the reception of aggression in sociology. A consistent model construction is a prerequisite for this. Otherwise, a constant distinction would have to be made between arbitrary expressions and the coherent consequences of a model.

Furthermore, within the treatment of the premises of my approach, I will show that a sociological reconceptualization of the concept of drives is of great advantage for solving certain problems. However, this poses a problem because the paradigms that significantly contribute to capturing the cohesion of differentiated societies also lead to the abandonment of the classical concept of drives. In any case, neither the structures of culture nor those of the social world can be adequately understood as solely constructed from the structures of personality. Precisely because culture and society cannot be reduced to the cumulative consciousness of all individuals, sociological models based on consciousness philosophy fail. Therefore, when examining drive dynamics in culture, I abstain from approaches that draw on the tradition of consciousness philosophy. The fact that drives resist the cultural order must be conceptually considered. In them lies a potential that is hostile to the normative order of society. I believe that a social scientific model must conceptually do justice to this potential. Otherwise, the social world shrinks to the size of individual subjects. In other words, a concept of social action borrowed from the realm of

personality can only be meaningfully applied to certain aspects of social life. The social structure from which the subject ipso facto cannot escape, the structure in which meaning is constructed, would not be adequately considered when deriving societal and cultural structures from an individual's personality structures.

In line with the tradition of classical sociology, I work 'from top to bottom,' meaning from society or in this context, from culture down to personality. Sections 2.1 to 2.4 are dedicated to 1. the sociological background of my approach, 2. Parsons' concept of culture, 3. his re-conceptualization of the Freudian model, and 4. personality in social action. Only then will I be equipped with the tools I need to address the obvious in the lifeworld and Parsons' concept of aggression in sections 2.5 and 2.6. Here, I aim to demonstrate how a bridge can be built from personality to culture in such a way that neither the diversity nor the impulsive nature of social action needs to be neglected.

## 2.1 Sociological Background: Aggression as Deviant Behavior.

Traditional sociology operates with a concept of social action that transforms instincts into culturally comprehensible motivational foundations during the process of socialization. In everyday social action, instincts are excluded. Libidinal needs are treated as culturally determined motivations. Nevertheless, this understanding already assigns an important role to socially bound instincts in social action. However, the category of aggression poses a particularly challenging problem for positive sociology.

I distinguish between the 'positive' tradition of sociology, which, in contrast to Hobbes, attributes the cohesion of modern societies to the internalization of norms and values of a culture, and the 'negative' tradition, which - building on Hobbes' argument - sees the self-interest of individuals as the cornerstone of social order. I include Freud, Durkheim, Simmel, Marx, Mead, Parsons, and Weber in the 'positive' tradition, and Hobbes, Nietzsche, and partially Horkheimer and Adorno in the 'negative' tradition.

The positive tradition of sociology provides the means necessary to conceptually grasp the differentiation of inherently cohesive societies, especially the coordination of social action in the lifeworld of these societies. If one is interested in such characteristics of social life, it is reasonable to refer to the positive tradition of sociology. It can only be dispensed with if one is willing to accept a radical flattening in the conceptualization of the social world.

The analytical separation of three spheres of the social world (personality, culture, and society) is based on structures of validity that cannot be formally enforced. However, the de-differentiation of the social world that follows from the adoption of an approach based on the assumption of coercion carries with it an important advantage for me: forms of aggression find a place in the conceptual framework - albeit again only within the confines of structures that are difficult to explain using such approaches.

Positive sociology tends to translate aggression into forms of deviant behavior. This strips aggressive components of human action of their instinctual qualities. Actions through which actors seek satisfaction are transformed into actions that actors can orient themselves to, meaning actions with goals that are comprehensible and conformable in terms of culture (or subculture). The goals can, of course, change at any time, and their justifiability cannot be derived using criteria external to culture. In this sense, there is no assumption of a concept of rational action in absolute terms, which can only exist when certain behaviors are equated with social action in general.

The issue of normative assessment of social action will accompany us on the fringes of our discussion. It would exceed the scope of this text to illuminate it from all angles. We will therefore address rationality in the lifeworld but not delve into the philosophical concept.

Divergent behaviors that arise from the inability to conform to goals, norms, or values can be separately addressed. On this basis, the ability of actors to distance themselves from the values, norms, or goals of a culture through strategic actions can be clearly understood. The comparison between Victor Hugo's Jean Valjean, who steals bread to alleviate his children's hunger, and Martin Luther King, who opposed racist laws with Christian-Judeo ethics, are paradigmatic examples of strain at the level of goals and strain at the level of values.

It is Parsons' merit to introduce categories that enable us to distinguish these divergent behaviors, which are, according to legislation, similarly assessed, based on their social significance. Against this backdrop, tension between societal norms and values can be demonstrated. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement violated the normative rules of the American society of their time but were successful because they exposed the contradiction between racist laws and the egalitarian values contained in the American Constitution."

## 2.2 Parsons: Culture as a Site of Integration.

"Social action is accessible to the scientist through a theoretical model applied by them. Building on Whitehead, Parsons argued in 'The Structure of Social Action' (1937) that scientists can circumvent the hermeneutic circle, which can never be completely overcome, by establishing access to the empirical world through the justifiability of the research question. Questions applied to the respective empirical data can only be considered as answered and, thus, as knowledge because they have already been incorporated into the model, and it is determined that the answers are consistent with the implications of the existing knowledge. Otherwise, a new research question must be formulated, suitable for resolving the ambiguities. In this way, hermeneutic limitations can be conceptually considered, such that both the danger of a one-sided objectifying science and the risk of remaining trapped in subjective Cartesianism are mitigated.

In his approach, Parsons conceptualizes personality as a category for explaining societal cohesion. The goal is to explain the diversity and binding qualities of those forms of social action that characterize modern societies in a particular way. Parsons gains access to Freud through those writings in which Freud assigns conceptual weight to sociological categories. In Freud's handling of sociological concepts, Parsons sees a convergence with Durkheim's classical studies on society. On the one hand, individuals can adapt to the norms of societal norms."

Society cannot be escaped by individuals; in other words, they cannot unbridledly determine their own actions. On the other hand, decisions made by actors are not (at least not typically) solely enforced by coercion. Actors must instead cope with limitations stemming from a culturally shared orientation:

*'The formulation most dramatically convergent with Freud's theory of the superego was that of the social role of moral norms made by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim – a theory which has constituted one of the cornerstones of the subsequent development of sociological theory. Durkheim's insights into this subject slightly antedated those of Freud. Durkheim started from the insight that the individual, as a member of society, is not wholly free to make his own moral decisions but in some sense 'constrained' to accept the orientations common to the society of which he is a member.' (Parsons, 1970: 18–19)*

According to Parsons, this convergence serves as proof of the scientific justifiability of his reformulation of Freud and Durkheim. Therefore, obvious misconceptions in Freud's and Durkheim's arguments do not detract from their respective projects. Their significant scientific value can only be perceived through convergence because it determines the direction of the reformulation of social theory. Building on Durkheim's approach, a social scientific model can be designed to make progress in our understanding of 'Social Structure and Personality.' Freud's writings are to be reinterpreted in this context, in a way that aligns them with sociological principles.

Concepts of social action can be integrated. The place where Freud and Durkheim are to be connected, in Parsons' terminology, is a system. A system is formed by the interaction of people. In this sense, the interaction of at least two people can be understood as a system. A system is embedded in a culture but also analytically distinct from it, as only certain parts of culture are relevant within the context of a particular encounter. Of course, the topics that become relevant can change at any time, causing the boundaries of the system to shift.

In this context, I turn to the consequences of choosing the location of integration for theory-building. If we consider the interaction of actors as a system, the content that can (and

should) be brought into this system must be defined accordingly. The cultural content of the system has already been mentioned above and will continue to engage us further.

By emphasizing the 'place' of integration, Parsons wants to make two points: firstly, that an approach solely focused on the individual neglects the cultural dimension of social action, and secondly, that understanding the interplay between the system and culture is essential for grasping the complexities of human interaction.

On the one hand, Freud and his followers, by concentrating on the single personality, have failed to consider adequately the implications of the individual's interaction with other personalities to form a system. On the other hand, Durkheim and the other sociologists have failed, in their concentration on the social system as a system, to consider systematically the implications of the fact that it is the interaction of the personalities that constitutes the social constitute system with which they have been dealing, and that, therefore, adequate analysis of the motivational process in such a system must reckon with the problems of personality. (Parsons, 1970: 20)

Within the framework of Parsons' system, actors develop relationships that can be differentiated in their significance as follows:

*(1) Cognitive perception and conceptualization, answering the question of what the object is, and (2) cathexis – attachment or aversion – answering the question of what the object means in an emotional sense. The third way by which a person orients to an object is by evaluation – the integration of cognitive and cathectic meanings of the*

*object to form a system, including the stability of such a system over time. It may be*

*maintained that no stable relation between two or more objects is possible without all*

*three of these modes of orientation being present for both parties to the relationship.*

The other person facing the actor is evaluated based on their cognitive and emotional significance, that is, due to the two questions 'What is the object?' and 'What does it mean to me?' Answering these questions and integrating cognitive and emotional perception allows for an assessment of the object that holds crucial importance for the action system and its stability.

## 2.3 Parsons' Reconceptualization of the Freudian Model.

Starting from the assumptions of Parsons' approach, Freud's structural model must be significantly expanded. The conceptualization of both the cultural environment of actors and their mental apparatus must be modified. Both can be designed as systems of social action and thus differ from Freud's model. In the action system in which actors engage, the structures of a culture that actors within a culture encounter are built upon. These structures provide stability. Therefore, actors can rely on the validity of their statements. Actors understand the significance of shared language and take for granted that their statements will be understood as intended.

All three of the perception or evaluation modes discussed above are carried out against the backdrop of a culture in which meaning is constructed. The ability of actors to participate in social actions presupposes a culture that enables the coordination of actions. A reformulation of the psychological apparatus described by Freud is therefore inevitable. Because if cognitive and emotional perception are based on cultural symbols or if they are components of the common culture within the framework of social action, the ego and superego must be situated within a culture in such a way that their function in the production of meaning can be indicated. Due to shared cultural symbols, actors can, 'for the time being,' assume that their perception of the situation corresponds to that of the other participants.

Internalized cultural symbols form the backdrop against which communication takes place; thus, they are also the backdrop against which the system of communication can be maintained. The modes of evaluation of objects described by Parsons occur in this context. For example, the cognitive significance of a person for an actor also changes their emotional significance. Therefore, according to Parsons, there is a causal relationship between the factual significance of an object (the question of what an object is) and the normative significance of an object (the question of what an object should be).

Naming someone as a father, mother, sister, life partner, lover (or in contemporary terms, a life stage partner) is accompanied by an expectation that arises from both the role being assumed and the relationship itself.

In short, what an object should be and what an object is cannot be so clearly distinguished that one instance can be exclusively attributed to a normative function and the other to a cognitive function.

Simmel is the classic sociologist who has described most clearly the influence of social roles on the significance of actors. Parsons leans on Simmel here, albeit without mentioning him, to establish an approach to personality, or more precisely, to personality in everyday life. Parsons aims to conceptually capture Simmel's epistemological consideration of the coordination of actions through the internalization of various social roles, without adopting Simmel's approach itself. Parsons is concerned with the demarcation between culture and personality, which occurs during socialization and explains the motivation of children's actions during their upbringing as well as that of adults. The objects to which a child

develops a relationship introduce them to the social world. The caregiver assumes the role of the mother in this process.

Unlike in Freud's framework, objects cannot be understood as roles through which cultural significance is conveyed. If objects are carriers of cultural significance, they are understood within the context of specific patterns. Freud's concept of identification must be expanded because it is about describing a process through which objects are appropriated to form instances. Identification involves two processes: first, the adoption of a specific role as modeled, and second, the internalization of cultural patterns of significance, through which a social role gains universally understandable meaning. These roles that determine the goals of action are understood in their broader cultural significance only after the child has successfully passed the initial stages of socialization. "The child may be likened to a pebble 'thrown' by the fact of birth into the social 'pond.' The effect of this event is at first concentrated at the particular point of entrance, but as it grows up, his changing place in the society resembles the successively widening waves which radiate from his initial position in his family of orientation." In other words, with each new stage the child reaches, the horizon of their environment expands. Consequently, the sociological significance of these roles becomes increasingly evident or understandable for the child:

*"... this establishment of an organized ego in the personality through a pattern of sanctions designates essentially what Freud meant by identification. Several of Freud's own formulations of the concept stress the striving to be like the object. This emphasis requires elucidation and some qualification. Only in a very qualified sense can one say that an infant learns to be like his mother. (...) his behavior – hence his motivation – is organized according to a generalized pattern of norms which define shared and internalized meanings of the acts occurring on both sides."*

The satisfaction of instinctual needs constitutes the motivational background of the socialization process and establishes the willingness to actively participate in it. Initially, this involves the transformation of the pleasure principle into the love principle. According to Parsons, the conversion of pleasure into love serves the development of a mature self. The self only emerges after the child begins to orient itself towards love rather than the

satisfaction of instincts. Thus, the child departs from the desire to seek immediate gratification of erotic needs:

*“More generally, a primary – indeed the primary – goal of the developing personality comes to be to secure the favorable attitude of the mother or, as it is often called, her love. Specific gratifications on lower levels, then, have become part of an organization on a wider level, and their primary meaning derives from their relation to the paramount goal of securing or maximizing love. Indeed, I think it a legitimate interpretation of Freud to say that only when the need for love has been established as the paramount goal of the personality can a genuine ego be present. The need, then, in an important sense come to control the ontogenetically older goal-needs of the organism, including, eventually, that for pleasure.”*

Love is a metaphor insofar as it describes the role of cathexis in the internalization process of cultural patterns of meaning. Cathexis is commonly translated as "investment." This translation is inadequate in the context of Parsons, as the term "investment" is used differently in various contexts by Freud to allocate psychic energies to ideas, groups, body zones, etc. Parsons' concept of cathexis should take into account the significant role of instinctual processes in socialization. Roles that children learn first from their mother, then from their father, and subsequently from their environment are not acquired solely through cognitive effort. The motivation to further penetrate into culture, according to Parsons, is attributed to the libidinal attachment in object relations, through which a role and its significance are internalized. Therefore, cathexis also includes object choice.

The internalization of roles laden with positive (or libidinal, binding) energy is cathexis. It develops through the interaction between mother and child. The child is directed by the satisfaction or denial of its needs. The learning processes fostered by the interaction between mother and child prompt children to orient themselves toward the significance of satisfaction. Consequently, children increasingly distance themselves from a "direct" attachment to the pleasure principle. The abandonment of the immediate pleasure principle in favor of the love principle by no means implies the abolition of libido in Parsons' psychic apparatus. Rather, Parsons aims to demonstrate the enormous significance of libido at every stage of socialization by merging libido with meaning patterns passed down (initially from the mother). Of course, with each higher level of socialization, the connection between action and pleasure and pleasure satisfaction diminishes. Therefore, even in a regression, instinctual impulses can no longer be traced back to their biological source but only to the stage where further development failed. According to Parsons, the attainment of pleasure

remains a part of the motivation for socializing actions. The needs that are satisfied are actors, of course, only understandable in terms of their social transformation.

If we are willing to follow the logic of Parsons' argument, when we proceed apodictically, we simultaneously undergo a new conceptualization of the process.

In this context, Freud's description of the role of meaning patterns in the psychic apparatus appears insufficient. The superego cannot be solely understood as an instance that serves to direct unwanted needs in the service of culture. Such a conception of culture and instinct assumes a strict demarcation between them, presupposing that parts of the psychic apparatus primarily form themselves. Following Parsons' argumentation, the psychic apparatus must be located within culture, so that its respective connection to culture takes into account the different functions of the id, ego, and superego but also their dependence on the structures of a culture from which they emerge.

The superego, which mediates between culture and personality, does not emerge from culture in a way that actors act against it with all their might. Rather, the mediation of the superego can be understood as communication between personality and culture. The content it conveys is synergistic due to those meaning structures from which it is constructed. The superego does not establish a boundary to the dark world of personal subjectivity where culture-hostile needs are nurtured:

*"If the approach taken above is correct, the place of the superego as part of the structure of the personality must be understood in terms of the relation between personality and the total common culture, by virtue of which a stable system of social interaction on the human level becomes possible. Freud's insight was profoundly correct when he focused on the element of moral standards. This is, indeed, central and crucial, but it does seem that Freud's view was too narrow. The inescapable conclusion is not only that moral standards, but all components of the common culture are internalized as part of the personality structure. Moral standards cannot, indeed, in this respect be dissociated from the content of the orientation patterns which they regulate; ..."*

Drawing on the cultural level provides insight into those parts of personality whose content can be generally understood. Situations of action are coordinatable because the actions of other actors can be understood "for the time being," as if they conform to the norms of a culture. In this context, the assumption "for the time being" takes on far-reaching significance within the conceptualization of social action. Its consistent application implies an overcoming of the problem of the cognitively always isolated subject derived from philosophy of consciousness. Action is based on cultural meaning patterns, which, precisely because they are internalized, cannot be reduced to an inherent instance within humans that actors could only orient themselves towards as replicas of themselves. Since people are inherently diverse, coordinating action becomes an insoluble problem for sociological

approaches. Consequently, social action is portrayed as fragmented and random, with its success being questioned.

An approach based on the internalization of cultural symbols (in whatever form) elevates communication to the level of intersubjectively valid statements. The motivational basis of the individual actor is understood in this context. Deviant actions can also be included in the actors' horizon of understanding. They stand out even more when they diverge from the expectations of others. Actors recognize prohibited, inappropriate, or illogical actions as such because they can refer to internalized norms and meaning patterns. Synchronous action is built upon them, albeit reduced to those parts of culture relevant to the particular situation. The norm is the success of communicative exchange, not the improbability of its occurrence. Actors can therefore assume that their statements will be understood by other actors as they intended.

## 2.4 Personality in Social Action.

Nevertheless, parts of an actor's personality domain remain closed to other members of the culture. If the other appears to act in accordance with norms, the reconstruction of their action is based on two assumptions: firstly, their membership in the same culture, and secondly, their capacity for accountability. If either of these assumptions proves false, the absence of their confirmation must be problematized in order to restore the coherence of the action system. Because actors cannot actually exit the culture in which they live, this reparative effort is always possible.

I would like to delve further into these two preconditions (membership in the culture and accountability) of the communicative situation that have already been mentioned. My quest for understanding suggests introducing the analytical distinction between lifeworld (culture), personality, and society. Initially, the overlap of personality, culture, and society in the lifeworld can be demonstrated. A case study will illustrate how two accountable members of a shared culture come together to communicate about something mundane.

### 2.4.1 Example

Due to their shared membership in a culture, actors can attribute the actions of others to motives that are familiar to them. The example: X gives Y money, Y gives X a cigar. Participants and observers assume a cigar sale is taking place. Some observers may know more than others; they may infer from the brand that the buyer has no clue or laugh because only people working in advertising want such cigars, and so on. In any case, the situation can be interpreted meaningfully. The interpretation, the purchase of a cigar, is based on shared cultural knowledge and is thus communicatively intelligible.

Having observed the purchase of the cigar, the initial assumption that the actors' motives are related to buying a prestigious, health-damaging product and generating sales or fulfilling work-related obligations is accurate.

However, it is also possible that the seller is a connoisseur and views the buyer as a show-off and despises him. In response to the question "Which ones are the best?" he points to the cigars considered poor quality and overpriced. His goal is not to make a sale, as he receives a fixed salary regardless of whether he is honest or not. Instead, he assumes that most people won't notice the difference between a good and a bad cigar. To the buyer, the quality of the cigar doesn't really matter. He doesn't enjoy smoking but wants to prove to his new girlfriend that he is a man of the world. He plans to light the cigar during dinner with friends, look up at the sky, and wax poetic about the pleasure of smoking a cigar. He quickly pays because a football game is starting soon and leaves the store content. On this (cultural) level where actors' motives deviate from expectations, their motives need not be entirely closed to us, but they are also not immediately accessible. The seller will never tell his boss, the buyer, or people he perceives similarly that he loves his job because he can "dupe" show-offs. Similarly, the buyer will not tell his girlfriend, her acquaintances, or his colleagues that he only smokes because it's trendy and because he believes that a man of stature (like him) should have an expensive cigar in his mouth.

The seller's actions can be sensibly inferred if someone observes the scene and asks questions that reveal knowledge about cigars. It would then be obvious that the seller is either incompetent or deliberately trying to deceive his customers. However, it's more likely that the seller's deceit would go unnoticed by a social scientist interpreting the scene with a trained eye, as he faithfully adheres to Luther's doctrine of abstinence and is repelled by any involvement with cigars. But this need not be the case. It's also possible that the scientist finds the buyer equally unsympathetic and, out of this antipathy, sees through the true motives of the seller.

On the surface, these somewhat hidden motives of the actors are not particularly important. The motivation for action is overshadowed by the significance of the action, which is defined by the context of the situation. As long as both actors orient themselves according to the same cultural norms, the system functions, even though their actual motives deviate from those expected in the given situation. These deviating motivations, lying outside the framework of the situation, do not hinder the success of social action. The buyer need not care about the seller's attitude, especially since he genuinely enjoys neither a good nor a bad cigar.

As long as the buyer takes the cigar and doesn't notice that he is being deceived, the seller's attitude towards the supposed show-off remains irrelevant within the context of the purpose of this action, namely the purchase and sale of an item.

On the level of interaction, processes that psychoanalysis deals with in therapy are not immediately visible to us. Furthermore, they are not very relevant for the meaning of social action within the system. The "show-off" actor's ego, as well as the seller's, is oriented

towards the attitudes that result from the comprehensibility of the action. The "show-off" assumes the validity of the seller's statements because he can only interpret him in the role of a seller. He understands the statement "This cigar follows the tradition of Davidoff, is somewhat mild, burns well, and is preferred by connoisseurs" as it is meant, i.e., as a recommendation for purchase. He also understands that the seller would rather "sell" him a more expensive cigar than a cheaper one. This knowledge does not diminish the pleasant feeling of being regarded as an expert at a party. The seller's motives deviating from the norm, namely, to amuse himself at the expense of the buyer, go unnoticed by the person working in advertising. It is and should be indifferent to him that the seller is more oriented towards his own private pleasure than the customer's wishes.

However, attitudes that one may be indifferent to should not be confused with those that are denied us within the framework of a "normal situation." In the described situation, if one misjudges the other, the underlying motives beneath the surface can come to light, for example, if the "show-off" is not actually one. Suddenly, a situation arises in which the previously unexpected attitude towards the other is addressed. The person working in advertising can knowingly smile at the seller and choose a good cigar, or he can leave the store in outrage.

## 2.5 The Implicit in Culture.

In either case, an unspoken theme of action has been brought into the horizon of the situation, so to speak, from "below." Actors always incorporate new information into their conversations as needed. The information they provide is already culturally pre-interpreted. This allows actors to take a stance on newly emerging topics without deviating from the framework of a shared culture. These are usually self-evident matters that do not require a new interpretation. The information brought into the conversation can, however, be problematized within the context of the situation at any time. Because this situation forms a stable action system, actors generally assume that the self-evident aspects of cultural communication are shared by everyone in the speech situation. As long as there are no signs that the system is faltering, there is no reason to address motives or attitudes that deviate from the norms of culture.

It is inevitable that the information brought into a conversation has cultural significance; otherwise, it could not become part of communication. Information from the system and personality domains can readily be brought into the horizon of a conversational situation. However, this information loses the specificity associated with the respective domain of the social world.

Most often, information in the form of pre-interpreted self-evident matters is brought into the conversation on the same level, i.e., from culture into a situation within that culture. At

this point, I would provisionally introduce the term "lifeworld self-evident." It is important to recall that all these distinctions are analytical in nature. In practice, one does not encounter a pure lifeworld or pure lifeworld structures, as the boundaries between lifeworld, personality, and society are fluid.

However, actors can communicate about lifeworld and society. During this process, translation efforts take place, which may change the significance of events for individuals or the system but do not distort it. The changes that occur during the transmission of information from one area of social life to another, in the strictest sense of "true" meaning, need not compromise it. This meaning, if it applies to culture, is determined within culture. Therefore, "true" meaning, which is specific to a domain of the social world, and general cultural meaning do not exclude each other.

Normally, actors do not possess the necessary knowledge to inquire about domain-specific processes of personality or the system, let alone communicate about them. For this reason alone, inputs from both domains must be simplified. The distortion of domain-specific meanings in the lifeworld that occurs when they are transmitted into the horizon of a "normal" conversation is not, in the strictest sense, a distortion of content but rather a form of mutual translation. This translation not only takes the content of the original "text" to transfer it into another, more accessible language for the reader. System and personality processes are also simplified and reformulated to make them understandable within the context of a particular conversation.

Personality also has a meaning within the lifeworld. Inputs from both domains are brought into a situation based on a general knowledge when they become relevant. This knowledge is already interpreted and is part of the "stock of knowledge" of actors within a culture:

*"This stock of knowledge provides members of a culture with unproblematic, collectively assumed background beliefs that are guaranteed, and from these, the context of processes of understanding is formed in which the participants use established situational definitions or negotiate new ones. Communication participants already find the connection between the objective, social, and subjective worlds they each face, already interpreted in content."*

Therefore, the translation metaphor only covers one aspect of the problem. The meaning of inputs from other parts of the social world is negotiated within the culture. If the general meaning of a statement diverges from its domain-specific significance, it is not a distortion of the "true" meaning in the normal sense, but rather a sign that conditions have not yet arisen that require a revision of either domain-specific or universally valid meaning. A statement can be valid in culture and incorrect in the system without being absolutely false. In other words, the premises of an approach based on the concept of culture or lifeworld do not require domain-specific meaning to coincide with the claims of culture and systems. However, systems and individuals must be understandable within the culture, and their actions must be comprehensible.

*Source:*

*Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, Volume II, 1987: 191.*

I would like to summarize the results at this point, which are significant for our further work. In particular, I would like to demonstrate the consequences of these results for the depiction of aggressive actions in the lifeworld. Parsons starts from the innocuous assumption that the socialization of children serves as an introduction to culture. From a sociological perspective, the significance of a child not yet socialized is similar to that of an object. Both derive their meaning from perception, which presupposes a culture in which they can be perceived. However, perception does not create the object. There exist objects that are not perceptible in darkness, i.e., those objects that we cannot see based on our cultural premises but can be perceived at any time through new assumptions. This applies equally to science and the lifeworld, although the conditions under which such a change takes place differ radically from each other.

*"The structure of the conceptual scheme itself inevitably focuses interest on a limited range of (...) empirical facts. These may be thought of as a 'spot' in the vast encircling darkness, brightly illuminated as by a searchlight. The point is, what lies outside the spot is not really 'seen' until the searchlight moves, and then only what lies within the area into which it beams is newly cast. Even though any number of facts may be 'known' outside the center, they are not scientifically important to relation with a theoretical system." (Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, 1937: 16)*

Within scientific work, Parsons refers to this darkness as a residual category. The experience of an infant can be compared to such a residual category, but not its meaning in culture. Socialization transforms the experience that belongs to those inaccessible areas of the pre-social world into meaning-structured contents that make culture understandable. In short, children are born into a cultural role that they come to understand by internalizing the culture. According to Parsons, newborn children are equipped with instincts. These instincts and the ability to learn a culture distinguish newborns from objects. Humans are carriers of meaning. When they are alone in the forest, their thoughts carry meaning. Instincts

contribute to the process of socialization by equipping children with needs that require active participation in their upbringing for satisfaction. Parsons views instincts as part of the biological equipment of humans, as described by Freud. The influence of these innate instincts on the actions of actors is always reduced in favor of an orientation toward internalized goals, norms, and values that are culturally conditioned during education. It is important to emphasize that Parsons starts from a single drive. The drive, according to Parsons, is a bundle of libidinal instincts. Its satisfaction forms the basis of children's motivation. The social shaping of such instincts begins at birth. It transforms instinctual satisfaction into a social relationship with cultural significance, directed towards the primary caregiver, on whom the child orients itself during the oral phase. Further education serves as an introduction to culture. During the exchange between mother and child, in which a mature self emerges, children gain their first impressions of the role of the family in culture.

## 2.6 Parsons' Concept of Aggression: Imperfection as an Epistemological Advantage.

Parsons explicitly addresses aggression in his essay "On Essential Causes and Forms of Aggressiveness in the Social Structure of Western Industrial Societies." This essay, written in 1947, is presumably a theoretical examination of the Nazi movement. Parsons aims to describe how aggression enters culture and its consequences for modern societies. Therefore, Parsons must introduce an analytical separation between personality, culture, and society.

In this essay, Parsons cannot provide a sufficient explanation for the differences between these three parts of the social world. At that time, his approach was not yet developed enough to consistently work out his premises regarding the interpretation of all three areas of the social world. Parsons was, therefore, forced to leave contradictions in the interpretation of the social world, which he later directly confronts and resolves in his subsequent writings. Due to the reasons I mentioned earlier, there is already a certain inherent inconsistency when drawing the boundary between the realm of personality and the realm of culture in the social world. Because Parsons is not yet able to resolve precisely those contradictions that occupied him throughout his life, we find some references to instinctual processes in the lifeworld that later do not reappear for conceptual reasons. In this context, I refrain from interpreting Parsons as would be necessary against the backdrop of his later work. Instead, I would like to emphasize and, to some extent, expand upon the contrast with later insights. This way, I am attempting to show the implications of assuming instinctual processes for sociological theory-building.

However, even at this early stage, Parsons already understands that destructive potential among people (in culture) or within people (in personality) cannot be equated with the social actions from which, for example, societal crises may result. Modern societies have institutions that can channel, mediate, and suppress aggression. Moreover, the

internalization of norms and values of a modern society acts as a restraint on actors, enabling the controlled suppression of immediate aggressive desires.

Parsons aims to avoid from the outset those category errors that lead to confusion between levels of the social world:

*"If it were possible to make a statistically reliable estimate of the average strength of aggressive tendencies in the population of a country, it would, by itself, be worthless as a basis for a probability statement about whether this country would undertake an aggressive war. The particular objectives and objects to which these aggressive dispositions are attached, the way in which they can be suppressed, redirected, projected, or directly expressed by canalizing or counteracting forces, and the structure of the situations in which they occur - all of these are just as important for determining actual concrete behavior as the general aggressive potential per se."*

In other words, the aggressive potential of individual actors in a society and the aggressive "action" of that society cannot be captured with the same concept, especially since they cause different kinds of harm. A society can possess a high destructive potential or generate such potential without this potential being translated into action. Therefore, Parsons uses the term "aggressiveness" instead of "aggression." He intends to capture aggression in culture, as opposed to aggression in personality. The former is aggressiveness, while the latter is aggression.

*"'Aggressiveness' is defined here as the disposition of an individual or a collectivity to direct their actions toward goals in which the conscious or unconscious intention is included to unjustly violate the interests of other individuals or collectivities belonging to the same system. The term 'unjustly' (or illegitimately) implies that the individuals or collectivities in question are integrated into a moral order, however imperfect, which defines their mutual rights and duties. The universality of such a moral order is one of the main theses of modern social science. It by no means implies that world society forms an integrated moral order in this sense; on the contrary, it is the diversity of these orders that constitutes the main problem of integration. However, this diversity as such is not the problem of aggressiveness."*

Let's examine this definition in detail. Aggressiveness is 1. a "disposition," 2. of an "individual," or 3. of a "collectivity."

*"Disposition*" is an ambiguous term that can mean inclination, attitude, or predisposition depending on the context. Therefore, I will assign the terms disposition, attitude, and orientation to different parts of the social world, treating them as representative of the

impulses (or inputs) originating from one of the three parts of the social world and understood in culture: Dispositions are motivations that stem from personality; attitudes are rational or legitimate fundamental beliefs that originate from culture; orientations are rational or legitimate conceptions that originate from a subsystem of society. In culture, dispositions, attitudes, and orientations acquire a universal meaning.

So, the term "disposition" is meant to describe processes in personality that manifest in culture. If there is a disposition of a collectivity, it must mean that actors orient themselves toward goals, the selection of which is determined by considerations that are not readily problematized and, at the same time, not strictly unconscious. In other words, the motivation that Parsons calls disposition is an attitude colored by unconscious elements that, under normal conditions, are only thematized to a certain extent. Therefore, Parsons primarily refers to the level of personality when examining the sources of aggression in modern societies.

Such motivation can influence the actions of both actors and the actions of a collectivity. "*Collectivity"* simply means an action system. This action system can be structured and thus encompass both associations and subsystems of society. As mentioned earlier, Parsons developed this approach before fully elaborating his sociological model. Consequently, it includes conceptual ambiguities that allow for some latitude in interpretation. Following Parsons, I will use the term "aggression" when referring to processes in personality and "aggressiveness" when discussing actions in culture. Collectivities are structured action systems, the degree of structuring of which is indeterminate. The concept of an action system includes conversational situations, families, associations, and institutions (in terms of the action level).

Central to the definition of aggressiveness is the "unjust" violation of the interests of individuals who are members of a culture. "Unjust" here means more illegitimate than illegal. Norms of a culture are violated by actions that by no means need to be codified in the form of legislation. Parsons emphasizes the violation of norms not because he wants to equate aggressiveness with criminal actions but because he sees the possibility of distinguishing aggressiveness from other forms of social action by emphasizing this violation. The concepts of power and aggressiveness (and coercion) describe different modes of action. The outlines of Parsons' classic work "On the Concept of Political Power" are already present in this essay.

According to Parsons, coercion exists when goals are achieved through force or the threat of force. In this context, other forms of persuasion are considered different from coercion. Parsons distinguishes between power, coercion, and aggressiveness. Power, like influence, does not derive from violence but does require the possibility of using negative sanctions. Thus, power is the ability to persuade people without resorting to violence to enter into binding obligations, assuming that negative sanctions will be applied if these obligations are not fulfilled:

*"Power then is the generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organization when the obligations are legitimized with reference to their bearing on collective goals and where, in the case of recalcitrance, there is a presumption of enforcement by negative situational sanctions – whatever the actual agency of that enforcement."*

With this background, the distinctions between power, coercion, and aggressiveness become clearer. The desire to violate the interests of others for one's own satisfaction is aggression. It makes the use of violence imaginable, even if it does not lead to material gains.

Parsons speaks of a norm-violating disposition, implying that all members of a culture can perceive this (norm-violating) action as a transgression. The perception of action occurs within the culture, based on cultural patterns of meaning and content. The norms that actors orient themselves with are also part of the culture. Perception and norm-deviating action differ in many ways. However, they share the perception and evaluation of actions within the culture. As mentioned earlier, actors assume that others assess their actions as culturally "prescribed."

In other words, the assumptions underlying perception and norms are shared by all members of a culture. The evaluation of action is based on patterns of meaning that build on these assumptions. The criteria by which actors judge remain largely latent in the sociological sense, only becoming present if actors encounter statements or actions that surprise them. Such criteria are known. Therefore, they do not undergo repression. Nevertheless, actors rarely reflect on the criteria they employ within a situational context to judge the actions of others. Consequently, such criteria should not be equated with the fundamental structures from which the problematic parts of a lifeworld are constructed.

Now, we can turn to the difference that interests us in this context: the distinction between deviant perception and deviant action. Deviant action is perceived by members of a culture as wrong, illogical, strange, funny, new, etc. Deviant action is treated as deviance and elicits reactions from other participants. People perceived as illogical, funny, or even mentally unstable experience firsthand that the separation between illogical and norm-deviating actions can only be made analytically. In practice, it is not maintainable. Nevertheless, for example, an illogical statement is different from a prohibited action. The former requires other participants in a conversational situation to interpret the inconsistencies of these statements in a way that makes them understandable in terms of culture. It requires, as we mentioned earlier, a "repair effort." The latter triggers reactions, at least if it is to remain prohibited, that restore the normative order of the situation.

Parsons' definition of aggression relies on norm violation as a yardstick against which deviation from the normative rules of culture can be measured. However, he leaves undefined whether the acting individual is aware of the norm violation or to what extent they can repress the meaning of their actions. This ambiguity is somewhat intentional. The motivational source of aggressive behavior (of aggressiveness) according to Parsons is found in the experiences of socialization, while its meaning is rooted in culture. By doing so, Parsons avoids addressing how one talks about aggression in a society where it is elevated to the norm.

In this essay, Parsons assumes several concepts that he does not fully elaborate on. In the course of his theory-building, he arrives at a monological concept of drives. In their original form, according to Parsons, drives consist of libidinal impulses that only take shape and "direction" during the socialization process. Therefore, aggression cannot be called a drive according to Parsons, but rather a consequence of failed object relations. Children are not born with an aggression drive that needs to be reshaped during socialization to enable integration into the social world of adults. If one can speak of an aggression drive in Parsons' terms, it is secondary, meaning it is a drive that emerges during socialization and motivates children to actively participate in their own upbringing by partially satisfying their libidinal drives. Children are not born with an aggression drive; it does not govern them at birth, nor does it contribute to their will to learn the contextual meanings of their environment through action. Aggression is generated by renouncing already socialized drives. Children must accept renunciation from the beginning of their upbringing. Moreover, the functional role of the family in modern society has a favorable effect on the development of aggression.

Although aggression cannot be considered a drive in Parsons' terms, it can be more easily compared to a drive than to irritation or emotions generally associated with (conscious) wish renunciation. Parsons attributes functions to aggression that are reminiscent of the traditional (Freudian) concept of drives. Aggression is repressed, sublimated, transferred, and even projected. Its origin is no longer conscious to people. The object of irritation, which aggression appears to trigger, the object around which aggressiveness crystallizes, can usually be found in the broader environment of the actor. Aggression can therefore be more easily directed towards the broader environment of actors than towards the family, where it is mostly generated, simply because it is not as strongly prohibited outside the family. Aggression thrives in the relationship between children and their most important object relationship, namely the one that takes on the "mother role." If the relationship between the mother (and later the parents) and their children is disturbed, these disturbances result in diffuse destructive feelings that Parsons refers to as aggression.

Interestingly, these disturbances often arise from forms of norm violation, meaning when the child perceives the actions of the parents as inappropriate, especially regarding the expression of love.

Parsons posits that feelings of insecurity and unfairness are the causes of aggression. Aggression is generated through the unequal distribution of love among siblings. We have already examined the role of love in Parsons' later model. The transformation of the satisfaction of impulses into the satisfaction of love needs is characteristic for the formation of the ego. The first constellation that gives rise to aggression builds on those instinctual impulses that have already been socialized through the mother-child relationship. Aggression represents the negative aspect of the socialization processes that transform the pleasure principle into the love principle.

Importantly, Parsons sees a reciprocal relationship between instinct and love, with instinct gradually giving way to love. The emergence of aggression takes place within this process. Therefore, it could be inferred that aggression only develops within the context of an already well-established ego, which would give it a different meaning than if it were thought to be simply present. Unfortunately, Parsons fails to thoroughly clarify these questions. However, his description of the functions of aggression in social action suggests that aggression accompanies the socialization process from the beginning. This is the only way to explain why it can largely be attributed to primary processes.

Feelings of insecurity and "unfairness" during upbringing trigger aggression. Although aggression arises within the family, it cannot be expressed due to the love imperative that applies particularly to members of one's own family. As Parsons puts it: "Therefore, these aggressive impulses are generally dissociated and 'repressed' from the positive, socially recognized basic attitude system. But this repressed attitude system continues to exist as such and seeks an indirect expression, especially in symbolic form. This may occur purely in the imagination, but here we find a phenomenon that is of particular importance in our context, namely, the displacement of aggressive impulses onto a scapegoat. If the father, mother, or siblings are not allowed to be openly hated, an object outside the circle of those one must love is chosen in their place, thus ensuring the satisfaction of aggressive impulses indirectly. And precisely because these impulses are repressed, the individual is not aware of the displacement and, through rationalization, becomes convinced that their attitude is a rational reaction to something the scapegoat has done or would do if given the opportunity" (Parsons, 1968: 228).

While discussing the displacement of aggressive impulses onto scapegoats is beyond the scope of this essay, understanding how aggressive impulses originate and are displaced is crucial. According to Parsons, aggression is a byproduct of the object relationship between mother and child, triggered by feelings of insecurity or unequal distribution of love. However, children also learn that aggressive impulses are frowned upon and are considered a violation of the family's basic principles. Therefore, such impulses are transferred onto other objects.

## 2.7 Summary.

The aim of this section was to examine Parsons' concept of drives in such a way that its conceptual boundaries and its utility become evident. Above all, I wanted to describe the conceptual advantages and disadvantages of Parsons' concept of drives in relation to each other. Both, I believe, stem from the same premises. Parsons' work is ideal for this examination because, due to its consistent structure, his statements can easily be traced back to their theoretical origin. Thus, it was possible to identify the disappearance of a concept of drives in Parsons and at the same time point to a fundamental problem in sociology. I intentionally selected a work by Parsons that he considers unfinished. With this, I wanted to advance the integration of Freud's theory of drives and a positively conceived sociological model. The sketch presented here can serve as a basis for further research. In such a framework, the linguistic nature of aggressive impulses is to be examined. Parsons himself points out that such impulses can take on symbolic forms without explaining their cultural significance in detail. The third part of this work is dedicated to this question. Adorno's criticism of the "Jargon of Authenticity" is intended to help us inquire into verbal expressions designed to meet disapproved needs without violating the normative order of the respective cultural situation.

# Adorno's Concept of Jargon: The Cultural Legitimation of Aggression.

Adorno's text, "The Jargon of Authenticity," opposes a specific, time-bound mixture of apologetic social theory and fascist ideology. Through the use of jargon, needs that arise due to prevailing societal conditions are addressed and satisfied. However, Adorno's concept of jargon, which he attributes to societal causes, can only serve as a starting point for us. He describes a phenomenon related to the specificities of post-war Germany, and therefore, Adorno's concept of jargon cannot be entirely removed from its context. Moreover, jargon is not an analytical concept but a reservoir of Adorno's poetry. Therefore, it cannot be readily used to explain social actions in modern societies.

However, when we inquire about the functional role of jargon in modern societies, we can highlight the analytical and thus generalizable aspects of Adorno's concept. According to Adorno, jargon is communication that takes into account the needs arising from seemingly insurmountable conflicts in culture. Instead of revealing the social origins of cultural misery as something contingent and demanding real change, they are presented as constants of human existence. Societal constraints appear as natural forces that threaten to crush people if they dare to oppose them. The cultural function of jargon lies in its dual role. On the one hand, it enables the consideration of those objectively imposed constraints on individuals and serves as an adaptation strategy at the level of action. On the other hand, it simultaneously expands the scope of action in which actors can move without regard for

universally applicable normative rules. Thus, it allows the satisfaction of needs that cannot be sublimated or acted out.

It could be shown that behind Adorno's "official" approach, another approach remains hidden, one that departs from premises exclusively based on coercion, namely an explanation for the perpetrators' positive attitude toward their own actions. Only in this way can Adorno critique the hypocrisy of post-war German society, which conceals its own guilt in the jargon. In the context of this work, my goal is to extract from Adorno's work a concept of the cultural and psychological significance of jargon that has analytical features and can therefore be used for the analysis of social conditions.

However, Adorno's essays pose inherent difficulties for conventional methods of interpretation. The conventional approach, which follows the lines of argumentation in the essay, reproduces them, and criticizes them, does not work, primarily because Adorno composes his essays poetically. Causal connections can only be traced in a text when they are present. Therefore, Honneth chooses a different method for interpreting Adorno's texts. It involves listing Adorno's premises and then reading the texts with their help. Starting from these premises, a common thread is to be identified, underlying Adorno's writings, in order to compensate for the lack of stringency. The question remains whether this approach also robs them of their spirit.

I also assume that Adorno's argumentation needs to be worked out to evaluate it. However, I do not base this argumentation solely on the statements that Adorno offers in "The Jargon of Authenticity." Instead, I attempt to extract the assumptions that make a concept of jargon meaningful. Regardless of whether I interpret Adorno in an admissible manner, this method has the advantage of developing my own concept of jargon, which is based on Adorno's impressions but has already been transposed into a different conceptual framework.

### 3.1 The Jargon of Authenticity: Its Cultural Content

I claim that Adorno wants to demonstrate the effects of drive dynamics on a "lifeworld" already colonized by authority in Germany. This leads to some questions that must be answered for logical reasons alone. My reconstruction initially focuses on these questions. To avoid confusion, I would like to reiterate at this point that the goal of my interpretation is not to reproduce Adorno's text, but rather to lay the foundation for an analytical concept of jargon.

I begin with the relationship between drive and jargon, leading to the question of which entity can be attributed the role of mediating between drive and the social environment. This is followed by the question of the allegedly socially acquired function of "authenticity" and its utility as an instrument of drive satisfaction. Only against this background can we understand Adorno's handling of the concept of jargon. Because jargon emerges in connection with the exclusion of undesirable people, we must separately address exclusion

as a component of integration within this framework. Therefore, I raise the question of how Adorno's indirect portrayal of the stranger in modern societies differs from that of Simmel. This comparison helps me clarify the motivation of those who pursue foreign individuals. Finally, I inquire about the role of religion in German culture.

Adorno begins his essay "The Jargon of Authenticity" with the following introductory statement: "In Germany, a jargon of authenticity is spoken, even more so, written, a hallmark of chosenness in association, noble and homely as one; sub-language as super-language. It extends from philosophy and theology, not only of Evangelical academies but also through pedagogy, adult education centers, and youth organizations, to the elevated discourse of delegates from business and administration. While overflowing with the pretension of profound human emotion, it is standardized like the world it officially denies; partly due to its mass success, partly because it automatically establishes its message through its sheer nature, thereby barricading it from the experience that should animate it. It has a modest number of succinctly striking words. Authenticity itself is not the foremost; rather, it illuminates the ether in which jargon thrives and the disposition that latently feeds it." (Adorno, 1973, 416–417)

With this, the phenomenon of jargon is outlined. It denotes a specific use of the German language that gives some the feeling of being chosen. This language, and, more importantly, its effect, fosters a world of horror, a world where the fake has become genuine, a world in which the "authentic" separates itself from society to serve destructive tendencies within society. It is this "disposition that latently feeds jargon."

### 3.2 Satisfaction and Sanction.

There is a reciprocal relationship between jargon and the norms and values of German culture that makes prohibited actions compatible with Christian morality. With the help of jargon, action can finally be taken even though this action violates the dignity of others. Because this action is incompatible with the morality that jargon itself repeatedly upholds, it disguises itself as folklore that everyone should naturally follow. The active satisfaction of these aggressive needs, therefore, occurs in a form that is culturally legitimate. As mentioned earlier, Adorno derives his concept of sanctions from the negative tradition of sociology. Therefore, he emphasizes externally threatening punishments. On the cultural level, action is guided by the threat of punishment from the system. On the personal level, people are encouraged to behave according to norms through the internalization of authority. Internalized authority prevents people from unrestrainedly fulfilling their desires unless external sanctions threaten them.

While emphasizing external coercion often accompanies the tendency to simplify the motivational sources of social action, one cannot infer indifference to this matter on

Adorno's part. Adorno is indeed concerned with the motivation of individuals, albeit not in the context of the processes that prepare children to navigate smoothly within culture as adults. As Adorno famously rejects the positive tradition of sociology for epistemological reasons, he cannot align with its motivational theoretical approach either. Nevertheless, he addresses similar questions because he seeks to conceptually grasp the motivational foundations of individuals in modern societies. This is the essence of "The Jargon of Authenticity." Adorno's concept of societal order shapes his portrayal of the motives behind human action. Jargon serves the paramount goal of human action: self-preservation, a daunting task given the hostility of modern societies: "Petty conceptual splitting engages in care for existence. Depending on whether a follower, for whom it matters little which cause he happens to attach himself to, and who also boasts of his capacity for enthusiasm as lowbrow, middlebrow, or highbrow, can imagine under 'salvation' either the salvation of the soul or the right life, or regions not yet dominated by industrialism, or areas where Nietzsche and enlightenment have not yet spread, or virtuous conditions in which girls hold onto their wreaths until marriage. Indeed, the slogan of security should not be countered with the equally worn-out one of the dangerous life; who would not want to live without fear in this world of terror." (Adorno, 1973: 429–430)

Care for existence appeases the hunger for material change, while jargon satisfies by ensuring the inclusion of the initiated and the exclusion of all others. For one person, jargon means living amidst authority, and for another, it signifies social destruction. Aggression is therefore the flip side of the bond that jargon provides. This knowledge about the dark side of security should never be voiced, as articulating what is known violates bourgeois-Christian morality.

The satisfaction of aggression, which arises from these circumstances, enables individuals to cope with the challenges of a lifeworld colonized by authority, albeit by shifting the costs of their survival onto others who then have no way out. This satisfaction temporarily alleviates the legitimate displeasure that people rightly feel.

Adorno faces difficulties in translating his insights into his own terminology. To give linguistic expression to such processes would mean exceeding the scope of his approach. Adorno describes a variety of social roles that his approach accommodates. An explanation of the function of these roles in differentiated societies can be conceptually elaborated based on the terminology he introduced. However, Adorno refrains from consistent application of his approach and builds his argument on the phenomenon he scrutinizes in "The Jargon of Authenticity." Thus, Adorno can write past the burden of his own premises. His text can be described as a reservoir. Impressions collect on its surface, through which the pathologies of the present can be comprehensively understood. Adorno seizes them to present our world to us. However, he does not explain how we can follow his footsteps.

## 3.3 The Mediation between Instinct and Culture.

My reconstruction of Adorno's text proceeds from the assumption that Adorno employs a philosophical-anthropological concept of aggression. The aggressive instinct is initially given in the present. Treating aggression as a part of social relationships causes conceptual difficulties that are not easily resolved. The fundamental problem is that if ontological qualities are attributed to instinctual processes, they cannot be readily translated into the realm of social conditions. For conceptual reasons alone, ontological and sociological premises cannot be seamlessly merged. Therefore, we must attempt to free Adorno's concept of instinct from its burden while retaining its illuminating elements.

One way to resolve this dilemma is to postulate an instance in the human psyche that takes on the mediating role. This instance mediates between the inner world of psychological processes and the outer world, a "world of terror," without being fully defined in terms of either of these worlds. The enormous role of self-preservation in Adorno's world can then be understood. Instinctual satisfaction enables self-preservation but is simultaneously only possible as social action. Therefore, Adorno need not abandon either instinct or the structures of the lifeworld. Self-preservation requires both but strictly speaking is neither. Because self-preservation and instinctual gratification belong to different aspects of the social world.

Adorno entrusts this mediating function to a specific use of language, which he calls jargon: *"However, jargon operates authenticity or its opposite out of every such lucid connection. – Certainly, no company would charge the word 'assignment' when it is given an order. But such possibilities remain narrow and abstract. Anyone who overextends them steers toward a purely nominalist theory of language in which words are exchangeable tokens, untouched by history. However, history permeates each word and deprives each one of the restoration of assumed primal meaning, which jargon chases after. What jargon is and what it is not is determined by whether the word is written in the tone that sets it as transcendent to its own meaning; whether individual words are charged at the expense of sentence, judgment, thought. Accordingly, the character of jargon is extremely formal: it ensures that what it desires can be felt and accepted to a great extent without regard to the content of the words through their presentation. He takes the preconceptual, mimetic element of language into his control in favor of desired relationships of effects." (Adorno, 1973: 418)*

Adorno's concept of jargon goes beyond the ordinary definition. It denotes more than just a distortion of language indicating membership in a social stratum, a club, or a circle. It departs from the dictionary definition and thus exposes the narrow scope of the common definition as entirely inadequate. Furthermore, his concept of jargon allows for a critique of the traditional field of sociology. Its foundation is a rationalist approach that remains blind to the actual societal function of jargon. Consequently, jargon and its role in culture are reduced to milieu-specific features and expressions. Culturally and normatively mediated rationality is addressed, only roughly grasping the logic behind irrational actions. The

significance of the functional roles of jargon in culture is expressed in the dull colors of objectified categories. It is flattened according to the preconceptions of an already adapted science. The necessity from which jargon appropriates its social role, namely the need to constantly catch one's breath to postpone one's own demise, is lightened by translating all things irrational into categories that have shed the burden of internal and external authority.

## 3.4 The Social Function of Ontological Thinking

Superficial explanations serve those philosophers who handle ontology as if it contained a critique of society. Adorno therefore opposes the conflation of ontology with social critique. Ontology concerns him as a social phenomenon with a social function, as authenticity that becomes actual through social action.

Following Adorno, authenticity has already taken a form within culture. In this sense, it has distanced itself from its original roots to the extent that one can grasp it within culture. In terms of the terminology I have introduced, authenticity exists within a reference context of lifeworld commonalities. It is not typically a subject of discussion. These lifeworld commonalities form the shared background of a culture. However, Adorno's concept of authenticity is much more than a culturally understandable content that can be brought into a conversation at any time as needed.

Authenticity is inherently a carrier of political thought. Its political significance is not merely a consequence of its construction, which is rooted in a particular philosophical tradition (especially Heidegger). Authenticity refers to a mode of thought allegedly turned away from society. It is employed because it is associated with political consequences that are simultaneously denied. Authenticity owes its societal function not only to a circle of eccentric philosophers; they have conceptually captured an idea within it. The "realization" of this idea could only take place within society. Therefore, it had to meet needs arising due to social conditions or resulting from the interplay of individual needs and social conditions. These social conditions form the backdrop against which authenticity can ally itself with jargon. The power of authenticity derives from the tension arising from such social conditions. It is based on the assumption that this tension, which it also promotes, cannot be eliminated by changing social conditions. Therefore, its societal origin must be denied. Through this denial, the horrifying aspects of society are legitimatized.

Adorno's description of the social function of authenticity outlines the contours of structures that are simply given. However, authenticity is no less dangerous because it has become "real" due to current conditions. Its illusory nature contributes to its danger. It makes authenticity flexible so that it can be invoked in an altered form. Thus, authenticity can meet the demands placed on it by the realm of personality and society (in culture), that is, by individuals and the system. It changes according to need.

## 3.5 Consequences of Adorno's Epistemological Refusal

Adorno does not provide an explanation for how a deception (authenticity) can become a structure of the lifeworld. A thorough elaboration of the composition of lifeworld structures would have required an introduction of sociological concepts. This would have raised questions that demanded an expansion of his epistemological premises, particularly concerning the cohesion of modern cultures and the creativity of social action. Based on this foundation, Adorno would have had to ask how the conceptualization of the prevailing authenticity he perceived could be accomplished within a sociological model. Adorno assumes that once ontological structures were able to take on real forms, acquiring a meaning. Thus, they can serve as background knowledge for ever-unfolding horizons of the present. This background knowledge serves as a carrier of historical content. Fascist past and contemporary domination intertwine. However, certain aspects remain unclear, particularly how ontological, now realized structures can be linguistically captured. Traditional sociological approaches tend to strip language of its historical significance. Adorno points out this problem:

*"Certainly, no company would want to charge for the word 'order' when one is placed with them. But such possibilities remain narrow and abstract. Those who overstretch them steer towards a purely nominalistic theory of language where words are interchangeable tokens untouched by history."*

This highlights a significant shortcoming of positive sociology; its premises are not designed to attribute a function in meaning-making to history itself. While history is conceptually considered as the backdrop against which statements about the present gain meaning, according to this perspective, historical content plays a relatively insignificant role in the production of meaning. In other words, historical content is given a role in processes of understanding, but treating it as constitutive is considered untenable from this perspective.

In summary, rescuing the concept of history involves conceiving lifeworld structures as simply given (as Habermas criticizes Schütz and Luckmann). In this case, actors find their lifeworld and its history already there. The idea of a simply given world is essentially ontological unless it is explained how it acquires meaning through action. Habermas addresses these inconsistencies by transforming the concept of the lifeworld (from Schütz and Luckmann) into a communication-theoretical approach. Adorno does not take this path. Instead, he uses a concept of language that is very similar to phenomenology. It is intended to demonstrate how the promise of phenomenology can be fulfilled without having to rely on its questionable tradition.

## 3.6 The Social Function of Jargon.

*"Like a ragpicker, jargon seizes the last rebellious impulses of the subject, thrown back upon itself in decline, in order to peddle them." (Adorno, 1973: 460)*

Performatively, Adorno's argument boils down to the notion that meaningful discussion of the identity-forming function of jargon can only occur when considering the constraints originating from all three spheres of social life (personality, culture, society). He ascribes a central role to self-preservation. Self-preservation means ensuring necessary satisfaction in a world where genuine satisfaction no longer exists. The "last rebellious impulses of the subject, thrown back upon itself in decline" (Adorno, 1973: 460) are typically less libidinal than aggressive. They are not expressed through physical actions but through the violence of language and its real implications for those who are no longer addressed. Adorno describes a world where people find satisfaction in the instruments of communication within their life-world. How desire can be bound to distorted language is not easily imaginable. On the other hand, the core problem for those immersed in the web of distorted language is how to create a place in social action for an artificially created, actualized inner life where the unbearable tension of life can be resolved. If jargon can appropriate the impulses of instinct and be exchanged as a commodity, how can the agency that mediates these instincts be conceived? Because mediation between the external and internal must conceal that a life lie underlies an internally unconstructed life. Assuming that this deception itself cannot be shaken, instinct relief provides security.

Being secure is not passive behavior. It is the active, albeit already doomed attempt to shape the social environment in such a way that the difference between oneself and others disappears. The social origin of the structures through which the desired is perceived is denied. Desires are supposed to well up from one's own soul. Because refreshment is only achieved when access to the social is no longer required. The boundaries between inside and outside do not blur because the intersubjectivity of human life finds recognition, but because its misrecognition promises security. The perversion lies in the fact that a fact (namely, the intersubjectivity of social life) becomes a deception (namely, apparent intersubjectivity). Adorno's perpetrators refuse to acknowledge the difference between inside and outside. Real conditions are to be ignored. Instead of questioning power itself, only the hunting ground is expanded, one on which anyone can hunt, and indeed, a claim to power is made for everyone, as long as they can chatter in jargon. Jargon stamps those as foreigners whose claim to belonging can be challenged. It creates a circle of the initiated:

*"Jargon no longer knows primary and secondary communities; nor parties. This development has its real basis. What Kracauer diagnosed in 1930 as the culture of clerks, the institutional and psychological superstructure that pretended to the imminent stand-up proletarians that they were something better, and thereby kept them in line with the bourgeois class, has since become the universal ideology of a society that misunderstands itself as a single people*

*of middle-class individuals and can confirm this through a unified language, which is highly welcome for the purposes of collective narcissism—the jargon of authenticity is welcomed not only by those who speak it but also by the objective spirit. Jargon attests reliability for the general through an elegantly selected sound that seems to be one's own. The most important advantage is that of the certificate of character. No matter what it says, the voice that resonates in this way signs a social contract." (Adorno, 1973: 425f.)*

Membership is gained through jargonisms. Jargon vouches for origin and reputation. Or, more accurately, origin and reputation no longer rely on the recommendations of organizations that once provided people with a character reference but on a language that replaces them. Agitatedly, they surrender themselves to the simple tones of jargon. It is supposed to "reconnect" them with the missing authenticity. In contrast, material changes are portrayed as deception to make room for seemingly deeper solutions.

*"Reverence for that being which is more than it is, strikes down everything unruly. It is conveyed that what is happening is too profound for language to desecrate by saying it. Pure hands disdain altering existing property and power relations; the sound makes it contemptible, just as Heidegger does the merely ontic." (Adorno, 1973: 426)*

Adorno's conception of human action could be understood as a form of drive-based purposive rationality. The purpose of action is relief, and strategic action is the means to an end. This form of action presupposes an understanding of prevailing norms and their gaps, but it should not be equated with instrumental rationality. The latter refers to a logic that is system-internal but generally understandable within its context. Adorno's concept of rationality resists universal comprehensibility. The motives of destructive individuals are not always discussable within the framework of "normal" social action. The goals of their actions involve violating the rules that underlie their success. Usually, the motives of individuals who violate a norm through their actions are generally understandable. In contrast, goals oriented around instinctual processes may not necessarily be culturally understandable, especially when such goals are intended to be norm-conforming through a "jargon of authenticity."

It is evident that actions driven by an individual's needs differ from the actions of other individuals. For this reason alone, such actions cannot be the basis for a societal project. Processes of consensus formation, from which societal projects are supposed to emerge, can only occur against the backdrop of the cultural comprehensibility of consensus. Access to an individual's personality remains largely inaccessible in "normal" interactions among actors. Therefore, it can hardly serve as a basis for achieving societal consensus. In this sense, the demand for a society of security represents the culmination of deception.

According to Adorno, deception is mediated by reality. Adorno's individuals are aware of their situation for two reasons. First, the constraints that limit their actions are real.

Perceiving them is therefore rational. This knowledge can only be endured by surrendering to a deception. Second, instinct-bound processes are largely conscious. People desire relief. Adorno describes the psychological processes of modern individuals as if developmental processes that led them into the unconscious had no effect. The repression of pleasure and aggression, which are dangerous to society, has failed.

Freud, on the other hand, believed that such desires, which were once expressed through horrific actions, were repressed over the course of historical developments. Culture is thus the subjugation of human needs to the principle of moral action. However, culture cannot completely erase the traces of what was once conscious. Through distorted (conscious) perception, expressions from the past enter the cultural world of the present. According to Freud, this is how the transmission of history is constituted. Historical events are preserved in the unconscious. Their expressions shape the realm of consciousness. Adorno simplifies the complexity of the tensions between repression and culture. Insofar as culture requires repression, it has not succeeded. People are more inclined to seize the opportunity to express their desires, knowing that they can only achieve partial satisfaction through this, rushing to obliterate any memory of their actual situation.

## 3.7 Simmel: Jargon from the Perspective of Strangers and Perpetrators

The foreigner is to be excluded because he reminds us of this situation. In Adorno's "Jargon of Authenticity," we only get to know the object of contempt insufficiently. With the help of Simmel's essay "The Stranger," I give it flesh and blood. Furthermore, comparing Simmel and Adorno helps further elaborate the assumptions in "The Jargon of Authenticity."

Simmel attributes special objectivity to the stranger and traces this back to his role in society.

*"Because (the stranger) is not determined from the root for the singular components or the one-sided tendencies of the group, he faces all of them with the special attitude of 'objectivity,' which does not merely mean distance and impartiality, but a special construct of distance and proximity, indifference and engagement." (Simmel, 1908: 766f.)*

Due to the shift in people's relationship to their social environment that the mere presence of the stranger challenges, the stranger has a peculiar relationship with the societal roles that people assume in the context of social interaction. This relationship of "distance and proximity, indifference and engagement" with societal roles, and consequently with oneself and others, characterizes the stranger. Therefore, he possesses the ability to view cultural norms as imposed.

According to Simmel's famous formula, the stranger is the one who comes today and stays tomorrow. What is interesting about this statement is not that the stranger arrives but that he stays. In this context, Simmel can ask the question he wants to investigate: what qualities actually define the stranger? Because if a stranger stays long enough, eventually neither the environment is strange to him nor is he strange to the environment. Then, the stranger is no longer a stranger but is known as a stranger. He is more of a member of the society that designates him as an outsider due to his role than a foreigner in the ordinary sense of the word. The stranger carries this role assigned to him, and this role carries him. He can therefore use it in the service of his interests.

The irritation that the stranger causes in others cannot be solely attributed to his presence; it must be traced back to the actions and perspectives that enable his role in society. In society, the stranger creates something foreign out of everything he touches. He imports ideas that seemingly did not exist before and need not have existed. The stranger cannot hope for recognition and reward for his contribution to society. According to Baumann, the contempt for the stranger arises for two reasons: first, because the stranger came without an invitation, and second, because he came at all:

*"The stranger enters the lifeworld and settles here, and therefore - in contrast to the merely unfamiliar - it becomes relevant whether he is a friend or an enemy. He has made his way into the lifeworld uninvited, thus placing me on the receiving end of his initiative, making me the object of the action of which he is the subject: all of this - a notorious characteristic of the enemy... But not just for this reason. There are others. For example, the unforgettable and hence unforgivable original sin of later entry: the fact that he entered the realm of the lifeworld at a precisely determinable time. He does not belong 'from the beginning,' 'originally,' 'always,' since time immemorial to this lifeworld, and therefore he questions the extemporality of the lifeworld, brings the mere 'historicity' of existence to light." (Baumann, 1992: 80–81)*

The stranger cannot be a landowner. He comes from afar. The stranger is uninvited, provided that he has not followed an invitation. Baumann takes "uninvited" literally, while Simmel does not. Whether the stranger settles in the lifeworld of a culture with or without an invitation makes little difference to his status; because an invitation does not automatically change the distance between the stranger and the locals. The more accurate argument is that the stranger's presence reminds others of the temporality of the present. However, Simmel's consideration of those "objective" conditions that the stranger faces and that require him to respond to societal demands is somewhat limited. Simmel neglects the realms of society and personality. Simmel's use of the concept of culture is meant to suffice as the basis for social action. This implies the assumption that inputs from the system and unconscious elements of personality do not require separate treatment. This handling of system and personality is acceptable in the lifeworld only when explicit reference is made to

the limitation of the epistemological horizon or to the cultural significance of the system and the unconscious. However, traces of such inputs can only be analytically separated; in practice, we cannot detach them from the lifeworld.

When we can say from there that Simmel turns towards the experiential world of the stranger and interprets this world as a component of social life in a culture, it could also be said that Adorno turns towards his world from the perspective of those who persecute strangers. A threat that is socially constituted is perceived by both Simmel and Adorno. However, irritations attributed to the stranger do not escape from that social context from which they originate. They occur against the backdrop of the social roles that the stranger occupies. These roles are indeed a constitutive part of modern societies. They enable the maintenance of various forms of human interactions and presuppose a normative attitude towards the overall order of society. Diversity and unity are understood in their mutual relationship.

At this point, Simmel's and Adorno's paths diverge. Adorno is, needless to say, more skeptical than Simmel. His critique of society also proceeds through an engagement with Enlightenment. According to Adorno, the Enlightenment project has subjected people to "disposing thought" and locked them into "self-preservation through adaptation." Therefore, it is absurd to associate Enlightenment with progress. Such a view of Enlightenment misunderstands the reality of human history because the "fully enlightened earth radiates the sign of triumphant disaster." Given this background, it is not surprising that Simmel and Adorno view the impact of society on the subject differently. System and personality are treated in their cultural form by Simmel. Adorno's lifeworld (in "The Jargon of Authenticity") is managed from above and driven from below. It arises from irreconcilable conflicts that require a kind of pseudo-understanding. In Adorno's view, people collide with each other. They fear for their survival. They no longer notice irritations of Simmel's kind. Instead, they tend to enter an uncontrollable, life-threatening panic. The stranger operates less in a role that he can shape within certain limits, but a role has been assigned to him that provides him little leeway. The stranger is certainly also a source of unwanted friction in Adorno's perspective. Above all, he is the one who makes many feel the world's instability.

### 3.8 The philosophical background in which Jargon unfolds in the world

The philosophical background in which the role of the stranger in the social world is perceived is built upon different philosophical traditions that leave distinct traces even after their incorporation into a sociological framework. Simmel develops his approach through an engagement with Kant. Society and nature stand in different relationships to those structures that give them meaning. For society, the guiding principle is not that its meaning ipso facto cannot lie within itself. It creates its own meaning, and in that sense, the meaning of society does indeed lie in its "things," without these "things" having to be attributed with ontological qualities:

*"The decisive difference between the unity of a society and natural unity, however, is this: the latter – from the Kantian standpoint assumed here – comes about exclusively in the observing subject, is exclusively generated by it from and out of sense elements that are unconnected in themselves. In contrast, social unity, being conscious and synthetically active, is immediately realized by its elements and requires no observer. Kant's statement that connection can never lie in things, as it is only brought about by the subject, does not apply to social connection, which, being real, occurs directly in the 'things,' which here are individual souls." (Simmel, 1992: 43)*

According to Adorno, the step from nature to society must be taken differently. While Simmel can comprehend the social production of meaning with the help of his reversal of Kant's approach, he neglects the domination of the system.

Adorno uses the approach of young Hegel to turn towards lifeworld. In "The Jargon of Authenticity," he starts from a simply given disturbance of shared subjectivity that people try to abolish for the sake of survival. This requires the connection of jargon and authenticity, society and ontology, meaning and nonsense. Jargon is the link between the world and desire in a culture where a connection to the authentic is no longer considered. Such a world forces people to orient themselves towards forms of surrogate satisfaction. The underlying idea is relatively simple, but its consequences are perplexing: because a false response to a genuine desire must correspond to the authenticity of what is already false. Falsehood must acknowledge the authenticity of this desire in order to occupy the place that the genuine desire has taken. The false becomes effective only when it enters the realm of the authentic. This is how genuine desire can be covered by a surrogate. A sense of security spreads where once a need for intersubjectivity was felt. This occurs not in spite of but because of the contradiction of such a transformation from genuine to false. Therefore, Adorno speaks of the "late bourgeois form of real need," which "is processed by consciousness in the feeling of senselessness." The feeling of senselessness, which relates to real conditions and can therefore be understood, is linked to self-deception:

*"The free time of the subjects preserves the freedom they secretly hope for and binds them to the same thing, the production apparatus, even where it grants them leave. (...) At the same time, in the feeling of senselessness, the late bourgeois form of real need, the permanent threat of destruction, is processed by consciousness. It turns away from what terrifies it as if it were innate to it and thus weakens what can no longer be attributed to humanity in the threat. That meaning, whatever it may be, seems powerless against disaster everywhere; that none can win it and that its assertion possibly even promotes it is registered as a lack of metaphysical content, preferably religious-social binding." (Adorno, 1963-64: 436f.)*

Adorno's lifeworld derives its validity from the internal contradiction of false intersubjectivity. It intensifies the need for interpersonal relationships but prevents the establishment of new bonds that would meet these needs. With the help of a form of partial satisfaction, old relationships are maintained. Adorno's depiction of the qualities that sustain false relationships does not, however, provide a sufficient explanation of the lifeworld."

Certainly, these needs that must be satisfied for the sake of maintaining the current order are not exclusively existential. In Adorno's view, the urge for interpersonal connection combines with the urge for drive relief. From this arises the motivation to use jargon. The way this motivation is understood by Adorno is drawn from the writings of young Hegel. However, Hegel's influence on "The Jargon of Authenticity" is relatively clear, as a quote from Habermas makes evident:

*"The dynamics of fate result more from the disturbance of the symmetry conditions and the reciprocal recognition relations of an intersubjectively constituted life context, from which one part isolates itself and thereby alienates all other parts from itself and from their common life. This act of detachment from an intersubjectively shared lifeworld creates a subject-object relationship. This is introduced as a foreign element, at least subsequently, into relationships that inherently obey the structure of communication between subjects and not the logic of objectification by the subject. Also, the 'positive' takes on a different meaning as a result. The absolutization of a conditional to the unconditional is no longer attributed to an expanded subjectivity that overextends its claims but to alienated subjectivity that has detached itself from common life. And the repression that results from this stems from the disruption of intersubjective equilibrium rather than the subjugation of a subject turned into an object." (Habermas, 1988: 41)*

We can only understand the parts of "The Jargon of Authenticity" where the social functions of jargon are described when we know that a search for lost intersubjectivity forms the background against which jargon exerts its power. It is the disturbance of an "intersubjectively constituted life context" (Habermas) that empowers jargon.

The longing for a once-existing but long-lost "intersubjectively shared lifeworld" is perverted and thereby intensified. The perversion of such longings, however, presupposes an analytical distinction between form and content, even if this distinction has disappeared in reality. The form that such longings take is a result of the perversion of people's desire for shared intersubjectivity. Its content is the desire for genuine intersubjectivity, which is just as real as the constraints imposed by society. The compromise that allows for partial satisfaction is based on the perversion of these desires. The form that these perverted desires take, in turn, is shaped by societal conditions.

Against this backdrop, the desire for security gains psychological and cultural significance. It departs from the realm of personal space and now operates within culture. In it, security can draw on impulses from other areas of the social world or seize control of them. Security is a regressive attitude with cultural significance and political consequences. The system promotes regression, leading people to transform the real stranger within themselves into an illusory stranger outside themselves. Reflexive relationships, where the "foreign" elements are considered, are to be annihilated once and for all. The external object is objectified in the hope that this will eliminate the need to change societal conditions. This step is taken at the expense of the stranger. Consequently, his societal role is carried out without regard to him.

The objectified other enables participation in a shared false intersubjectivity with others who also belong to it. This deception takes place independently of those to whom it grants parole. The provisional nature of a freedom based on deception, which can be revoked at any time due to a change in exclusion policies, does not diminish its effectiveness. The audacious lends an aura of adventurous, revolutionary project to nonsense. Therefore, the effectiveness is not solely related to the negativity of this regression, but it also prevents the recognition of a need that could only be met by a society free from domination.

The emergence of a subject-object relationship through the "detachment from an intersubjectively shared lifeworld" is a consequence of alienated subjectivity that prohibits a restoration of that moment. According to Habermas, "the 'positive' takes on a different meaning" as a result of this (Habermas, 1988, 41). In Adorno's lifeworld, the effects of these moments are like impulses that are already perverted when consciously registered. On the level of personality, Adorno exchanges primary and secondary processes after defining both differently from Freud. The need for security is based on an unconscious, primary desire for intersubjectivity, which Adorno believes he discovers in a de-mixed form, along with such desires, on the action level that Freud assigns to the unconscious. Secondarily, reflections build upon this, reflections that are destined to fail because they orient themselves toward the negative demands of culture and thus close off the possibility of finding satisfaction from the outset. This moment could be somewhat generously labeled as dialectical, although it rather foretells an escalating interplay of negativity. Because at this point, drives come into play, which, according to Adorno's portrayal, must include conscious components. Consciously, people want to find satisfaction in a lifeworld, while their genuine needs have already been repressed into the unconscious by them. The lifeworld itself is the place where this conflict is fought out. The system sets the limits of "freedom" within which people can act without external constraints. The personality provides the energy that enables action. The result is a longing for something intangible, a longing that clings to already existing destructive structures of the lifeworld. (The promise is not only given from top to bottom. People desire "freedom" to harm those who are not chosen.)

Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to envision the political consequences of jargon. The inner experience of security is intended to be transferred to external reality. The interiority that culture should infiltrate generates intensified discomfort due to its content. The needs

driving this process are inherently social. While Freud's drives do encompass objects and can therefore be understood as partially socially structured, they should not be confused with social structures themselves. Therefore, culture necessitates repression. According to Adorno, the content that is repressed according to Freud gains the upper hand over the social because culture absorbs it. This sets a similar process in motion as with Freud, but it causes different damages: damages that are inherently social and can only be rectified with social instruments.

Jargon draws from this described disruption, which requires varying degrees of adaptation from the actors involved depending on their interests. The motivation of the actors to submit to the existing rule in the world in order to be considered "adapted" cannot be reduced to fear of an omnipotent power organ. To borrow a word from Foucault, jargon says "yes." Through jargon, desires can be introduced into the fabric of lifeworld relationships that contradict the norms of this world in such a way that the sanctions tied to the disregard of these norms do not need to be imposed. Jargon is a kind of permission slip that, under certain conditions, allows perversity to be brought into the "normalcy" of lifeworld relationships. At the upper levels, people act in conformity with the instructions proclaimed by the system. In the lifeworld, the reciprocity of interpersonal exchange seems untouched. The validity of statements appears to be confirmed by these changes in the lifeworld that jargon brings about, as long as they are enacted by outsiders of all kinds. The acknowledgment of the successes achieved by one's own actions simultaneously provides psychological relief for the actors, temporarily alleviating their fear. Contradiction is the pivot between these moments. It makes the unattainable seem real in a way that satisfies the demands of all three areas of the social world. Within the lifeworld itself, the significance of religious thinking increases, which is the place where such demands must be negotiated.

It is evident that one form of irrationality can ally with another form. However, Adorno sees more than just a coincidence in the function of religion. He particularly emphasizes the functionality of religion. Religion bestows a sacred aura upon jargon, providing it with motivational "subsidies." It is the power of the contradictory and not a simple alloy of phenomena that are interchangeable from the perspective of the species. Contemporary humans find themselves compelled to draw upon the reservoir of an irrational tradition to avoid being ashamed of the origins of their thinking. They deny the religion they use. Therefore, they employ seemingly secularized language to articulate meaning within a world that has already been demythologized. In the modern era, the use of religious metaphor can only be meaningful if people deny their religious origins. This bit of "rationality" remains all the more in the service of the "irrational." "The angelic voices with which he registers the word 'man,' he borrows from the doctrine of the Godlikeness of man. It sounds all the more irrefutable and compelling, the more carefully it seals itself off from its theological origin" (Adorno, 1973, 455). Even diligent rhetoric should not regress to the level of a world disenchanted by enlightenment.

Here, one can see the glimmer of differentiation processes that take place in modernity against the backdrop of the secularization of the lifeworld. However, not in the sense of recognizing enlightenment values. Adorno sees in the pseudo-sacral metaphor the remnants of a value system that has already been called into question, which people use to give their statements an apparent validity. This is meant to enable the persistence of that magical thinking that still truly moves people. The latter is the language that "with primordial delight forces the hearts of all listeners" (Goethe: Faust). People shield themselves from religious arguments because they strictly speaking recognize their nonsense, yet they still use them because they have an effect. The contradiction of a language constructed with the help of religious metaphors that simultaneously conceals its sacred origin paves the way for the exclusion brought about by jargon. Contradiction does not present a barrier; instead, it allows the contradictory demands of society, lifeworld, and personality to be fulfilled. Due to this contradiction, claims to validity can be made based on their effect rather than their legitimacy, so that no negative sanctions need to be feared.

In this context, Adorno draws upon Marx's and Freud's critiques of religion and is willing to accept their de-differentiation. Adorno wants to epistemologically consider the excesses of religious meaning-making. He refers to developments that can be described as religious, but which only in their specific historical context have the contours that he attributes universal validity to. Adorno introduces us to the lifeworld of Germany, tracing its landscape and acknowledging its uniqueness, even if somewhat underestimated, but never losing sight of it. The historical origin of authenticity is self-evident to the people.

Before we proceed, we must understand some observations hidden in this self-evidence from a social science perspective. Therefore, at this point, I would like to introduce Plessner's book "The Belated Nation" to inquire about the culturally specific components of the "cult of authenticity" described by Adorno.

"The Belated Nation," like "The Jargon of Authenticity," is an attempt to uncover the social background upon which the Nazis relied. Adorno and Plessner start from the assumption that the economic and political conditions of the time prepared the ground for National Socialism but alone do not provide a sufficient explanation for the success of the Nazi movement: "The responsiveness to National Socialist politics and ideology can only be partially understood from the immediate conditions of Versailles, inflation..., the party-political structure, and the discrepancy between the petite bourgeoisie between '18 and '33 and the established parties, as well as from the radicalizing effects of the great unemployment since '29" (Plessner, 1994: 12). Compared to Daniel Goldhagen's argument, which posits that eliminatory antisemitism was the basis for National Socialism, Plessner's approach is more tailored to the underlying preconceptions of such thinking. However, the starting point is surprisingly similar: explaining National Socialism solely in terms of Germany's economic and political situation overlooks the cultural specificity of the response to it. Plessner, however, seeks to redefine the blind spot in German thinking, which, because it senses its emptiness, yearns for a filling. Plessner seeks to understand the origin and nature of those meaning structures that determine a culture-specific attitude towards

society. Antisemitism as a motivating factor is not excluded, but it was not explicitly analyzed by him.

Starting from the conviction "that there are not two Germanys," one of outstanding writers, artists, and scientists, and one of barbarism, Plessner reconstructs the historical background from which these two parts of Germany emerge. The retardation of political developments is his subject: his field is the lifeworld that denied the democratic institutions the validity they needed for their survival.

In his description of the political situation, Plessner is not primarily concerned with describing the political forces that supported the Nazis but with the interaction between political institutions and an embedded interiority within the lifeworld. Therefore, Plessner begins with an analysis of the significance of Germany's defeat in World War I. Defeats alone do not carry a specific cultural or political meaning. They can trigger processes of renewal or, as in the German-speaking world (hereafter referred to as Germany), a societal regression, a movement that interprets defeats in a specific way. Such a movement succeeds only when it manages to relate pre-interpreted attitudes towards society to these defeats, creating a message that can be culturally understood. Therefore, the disappointment over a lost world war alone cannot explain the emergence and institutionalization of the Nazi movement.

*"There are defeats that even a proud nation can accept. Only it must feel that it has been awakened by them and reminded of its true destiny. For Germany, the defeat was unbearable because it was as senseless as the war and because it remained senseless" (Plessner, 1994: 36).*

Plessner argues that Germany's protest against the 1919 Treaty of Versailles is not simply an expression of its defeat, nor a mere response to the ideas of democracy and bourgeois freedom with which its enemies won. It is a protest against the historical fate that, due to its ambiguous tradition more than by simple force, denied a central European state the path to national unity.

Plessner describes the interaction between undemocratic political attitudes and interiority. It turns a defeat into a catastrophe. What's interesting for us are the theoretical assumptions that Plessner uses to describe this interaction. Plessner's systems have become autonomous but not autopoietic. They grow out of the lifeworld of a culture. Therefore, culture and system overlap. Even if the system can refer to itself, it ultimately relies on legitimacy from culture. The authoritarian state does not only govern over the heads of its subjects but is deeply rooted in their thinking. Due to this presupposition, Plessner can emphasize the decay of democratic institutions without either overlooking or overemphasizing structural difficulties (e.g., the defeat).

What's striking is the minimal distance between lifeworld and politics in his description of Germany's political development. Plessner argues that in Germany, the radical, inwardly turned rejection of the Catholic tradition coming from Rome during the Weimar Republic era created an opportunity for a societal regression, a movement that interpreted defeats in a specific way.

For us, the key is the overlap between the lifeworld and politics. Plessner argues that Germany missed the opportunity to participate in those civilizational processes from which the concept of the nation arises because it was in its liberating and reconciling, abstract, and conceptual dignity consciously holding on to the idea of law.

The main problem is cultural because it relates to the structures that enable people to "understand" something. Such structures are created in the lifeworld. Therefore, at Plessner's, we can identify both the place of providing validity and the role of this place in maintaining political institutions. The motivation of acting actors is thus brought to the forefront. As long as political bodies rely on their abilities to make actions understandable in the lifeworld, the maintenance of such institutions is only possible against the backdrop of their communicability in culture. Plessner is aware that this insight does not lead to an equation of lifeworld and system. Therefore, he describes the structural limitation that influenced the actions of decision-makers. He also acknowledges that not every decision made by a political body is problematized in the lifeworld.

Plessner's central concern is to examine the relationship between the fundamental political structures of a society and its culture. He argues that these structures must be constructed from the lifeworld of a society because the lifeworld ultimately imparts inner human significance to those structures, which are taken for granted by the members of a society until further notice. In other words, the characteristic of metaphysical modesty, as described by Plessner, is a lifeworld self-evidence that does not require questioning because it is "readily" accepted as a shared assumption of social action in the lifeworld. It can be questioned, but under normal circumstances, this does not happen. With this interpretation in mind, the exchange between the system and the lifeworld becomes evident. It also has the advantage of granting an appropriate role to the motivation of actors in the context of theory formation. A confusion between the personal and systemic levels is thus ruled out. At the same time, the lifeworld becomes that component of the social world upon which systems are built. In summary, Plessner, by taking the importance of the lifeworld for politics seriously, must explain why the Germans willingly supported a delusional movement.

In the historical development of German Protestantism, Plessner sees the most important source of those patterns of meaning that enable communication (even about oneself) and thus explain the motivation of human action. The reorientation towards the inner self initiated by Luther changed the character of the lifeworld's structures. It therefore influenced even those who either rejected religion or belonged to other denominations:

*"Because ... Protestantism becomes the leading life force, it shapes new people, even where they still adhere to the old faith" (Plessner, 1994: 56).*

And elsewhere:

*"So, the existence of a state church of Lutheran tradition in a confessionally divided environment has not only acted in the direction of secularization in general but has created a specifically Lutheran-religious worldliness and world piety that takes shape in German political and ideological thought" (Plessner, 1994: 66f.).*

Luther's theology of God provided German culture with meanings that became presuppositions and were transformed into everyday communication's self-evidences. As such, under normal circumstances, they do not undergo questioning:

"*On the side of Luther, in the relationship between piety and professional work, that creative intimacy had to arise, which sanctifies the profane through the attitude of the deed and establishes the connection between the temporal and the eternal. In it, the functional shift of the religious from the ecclesiastical to the worldly life is laid. Therefore, its completion in existence and the concept of culture is a Lutheran category and a German fate" (Plessner, 1994: 75).*

These structures call for an attitude towards the world that, following the general Protestant movement, strongly emphasizes the world here and now while, at the same time, diverging from other forms of Protestantism (principally Calvinism) in that the Gospel should be the most important confirmation for human moral action. The phenomenon of an inwardly directed Christian faith that is simultaneously oriented toward the world (secular) and ultimately turns away from it (pious) is termed by Plessner as "world piety."

Luther's teaching states that the moral content of one's actions should not be measured by their success but by the diligence with which one follows God's doctrine. In the realm of action, where faithfulness to God is to be demonstrated, actions are judged by 'inner' criteria. Actions driven solely by worldly considerations are scorned because they profane the domain of sacred activity. Furthermore, the gap between Calvinist and Evangelical theology is widened by their differing attitudes towards society; due to their inclination towards inner reflection, Luther's followers are relatively indifferent, if not skeptical, towards political engagement. They prefer to focus on 'the essentials,' namely family and work.

Due to the existence of a state church and the inner, value-based anchoring of the concept of vocation, a dualism between irreligious state life and religious, non-church-related professional and private life emerges. Calvin's teachings have hindered the privatization of faith. From the beginning, they have created a different relationship between true faith and societal-state life through their strict adherence to the principle of church supremacy over the state, and their claim to God's rule.

For the reasons mentioned above, Plessner can analyze the constitutive role of religion in a quite fruitful way. As the system shifts into the lifeworld, both spheres of the social world come closer together. Therefore, the emergence of a system on the background of specific religious currents of a culture can be conceptualized differently (as compared to Weber, for example). Systems can be seen as autonomous without ignoring the 'metaphysical modesty' of parliamentary democracy to which they must repeatedly refer.

According to Plessner's approach, the negative effect of a positive attitude is preserved. The function of religion in creating meaning in the lifeworld and legitimizing political bodies in Germany stems from Luther's teachings. Worldliness thrives alongside secularization. Worldliness demystifies culture without losing its religious power.

Plessner argues that the structures of the lifeworld were strongly influenced by Luther's theology and that, on this basis, the peculiarity of German inner life can be understood. Starting from the interaction between the lifeworld and the system, and the assumption that the lifeworld supplies the system with validity, Plessner concludes that the German lifeworld could not adequately supply political institutions with the necessary validity because its democratic nature was not understood. In this context, Plessner can consider the factors that hindered the establishment of a democratic social order.

Plessner's work suggests that democracy in Germany failed not only as a result of an economic crisis and a lost war but because the value structure on which democracy is built was not sufficiently internalized. The relationship was 'acted' rather than 'lived.' I suspect that this is no longer the case, but that the abuse of our current normative order must be plausible in terms of our shared democratic values. If this assumption is correct, then the value of rhetoric will increase under the current conditions in which non-democratic efforts will be forced to demonstrate their democratic beliefs in order to achieve their anti-democratic goals.

The initial consideration is that Plessner's arguments about the historical and religious foundation of modern society are still valid today. Although the social structures supporting democracy and its institutions have moved away from their religious and traditional origins, their influence is still palpable. My work assumes that democratic structures have taken root in Germany and that these structures demand that actors articulate their positions in terms that can justify them within these structures and be understood within them. Nevertheless, Plessner reminds us that our beliefs, even when they take the form of rational attachments

to institutions, are still connected to our past. This connection is culturally specific. The historical and cultural traditions of the United States are radically different from those of Europe. Partly because of these differences, a stable democracy emerged in Germany later than in the United States.

Nevertheless, democratic institutions in Germany are stable, and their success has led to both rational attachments to them and a deep understanding of the values underlying them within the German cultural and historical context. Clearly, at both the level of understanding (the cultural level) and at the level of attachments (the individual and cultural levels), these bonds are different from those in other cultural contexts. Nevertheless, they are no less significant.

A change occurs once democratic structures have been institutionalized, and attachments to them are stable and enforceable. When this process is successful, past cultural and historical traditions are perceived in terms of their relevance (and comprehensibility) to these democratic institutions.

Plessner's work helps us understand the German cultural tradition as interpreted from the perspective of democrats and their institutions. This is the positive side of what we can learn from Plessner. The negative side is also related to these traditions. Actors can bring non-democratic traditions and their historical contexts into the lifeworld horizons of any discussion for either positive or negative purposes. Jargon gives actors the ability to refer to historical events in an antithetical manner to democracy without violating a taboo and without being forced to justify these references in terms acceptable today. In the German context, this has profound implications. We can see how such references work when we turn to Martin Walser. It will become clear that religious thought structures and antidemocratic traditions can be made relevant without seriously questioning the democratic context in which they are articulated. Walser, who delivered a speech in front of elected representatives, is a paradigmatic example. The significance of his speech arises from the fact that it was framed in understandable democratic terms while simultaneously excluding a specific group or selected individuals from the rights provided by that tradition. Plessner illuminates the cultural context from which the logic of exclusion draws.

## 4. Walser: The Integrative Power of Aggression

Recalling the cultural background to which Martin Walser referred in his speech for the award of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade helps to understand its impact. To explore this background and its psychological significance, I would like to draw on Adorno and Plessner, whom I introduced because they both, albeit in very different ways, dealt with

the role of German inner life in both everyday life and the political developments in Germany before and after the war. As was evident above, Adorno's criticism of the post-war "Jargon of Authenticity" in Germany was ultimately intended as a reckoning with Heidegger. But his essay reads almost like a manual for interpreting Walser's speech in some places. On its basis, one can trace the mutual relationship between the philosophical tradition that Walser introduces emphatically to explain his position and the satisfaction of tabooed needs. Plessner, on the other hand, explains the religious-sociological background of this philosophical tradition. This results in a picture of social action that is always related to cultural contexts of meaning but has not rid itself of instinctual motives. In other words, the cultural knowledge that Walser uses is produced in a meaningful culture but one in which people love and hate without being allowed to express these feelings.

On the level of the psychological effect of language, according to Adorno, there is a causal relationship between alogical argumentation and relief—provided that the argumentation is carried out at the expense of outsiders. Holding up the contradictions in Walser's speech changes little in its real significance if Adorno's thesis is valid. It retains its factualness because it relieves. That is its purpose; that is its cultural meaning.

Jargon provides a refuge for instinctual needs that cannot be satisfied due to social and cultural sanctions. It allows these needs to find expression. However, according to Adorno, such needs are not directly instinctual but social. In other words, they are culturally transformed and hold meaning in the social world shared by actors within a cultural circle. The aggressive desires that such individuals want to unleash are directed against objects chosen as hate-worthy by a particular cultural circle. This role diminishes the normative obligation to treat others as oneself. Relief from the psychological distress of modern life forms the basis for this justification.

Jargon requires legitimacy. Without it, it would be merely a string of aggressive statements. According to Adorno, there is a reciprocal relationship between a specific philosophical tradition (Heidegger), social conditions, and a culture-specific ethical attitude (German inner life). Walser draws on this philosophical tradition to establish the moral standard by which he condemns the already unpopular intellectuals and their remembrance service. German inner life is the background against which his claims gain a certain logical legitimacy.

## 4.1 Walser

When Martin Walser speaks for "the people," he means that he can no longer bear the constant mention of the Holocaust. He appropriates the voice of "the people" and makes it his own, inseparable from him. Where Walser ends and "the people" begins is not clear. I want to emphasize this ambiguity for now. Therefore, I use terms like "we" or "they," terms that connect a general statement about the entire group with the naming of an individual or part of a group. Such generalizations are meant to reflect the premises of Walser's

argumentation. This includes the claim that the people suffer from the constant presence of intellectuals and their narratives about the omnipotence of mass destruction. Not even a meal in the countryside is sacred! Auschwitz lurks there too. Suffering is a crucial element in the production of modern jargon. In its function, this suffering is interchangeable with Adorno's compulsion. It legitimizes the retaliation that follows.

Martin Walser's speech gives the impression that he is not particularly concerned with influencing the opinions of his audience through persuasion. He foregoes the usual presentation of new perspectives. It would be superfluous anyway. Instead, he preaches to the already convinced. His speech is meant to help the listener stand by their own opinion. It is intended to give new strength to those who are ready to speak "the truth" but are held back by fear, or as Walser puts it, by audacity. The significance of Walser's speech, therefore, is not that it provides new "audacious" arguments—after all, who has never heard a disparaging opinion about the preoccupation with Auschwitz?—but that it reinterprets old ones in a way that makes them current. Walser's project succeeds because his interpretation of reality aligns with the perception of most of his listeners. In this sense, the function of Walser's speech is to encourage his listeners to align their official attitude towards Germany's historical burden with their actual thoughts. Not only are they right, but they are also the truthful ones. The media, intellectuals, and the Sunday orators of politics want to switch sides. They want to make it clear that they are better than us. They even want to hurt us. Hence, retaliation is merely self-defense: "My response is nothing more than a trivial reaction to such painful sentences: Hopefully, what is being said so harshly isn't true... It's beyond my moral-political imagination to believe what is being said is true. I have an unverifiable intuition: those who make such statements want to hurt us because they think we deserve it. Probably, they want to hurt themselves too. But also us. All of us. With one qualification: All Germans. Because that is clear. In no other language, in the last quarter of the 20th century, could one speak in such a way about a people, a population, a society. This can only be said about Germans. At most, as far as I can see, about Austrians. Everyone knows our historical burden, the enduring shame, not a day goes by without it being thrown in our faces. Could it be that the intellectuals who hold it against us, by holding the shame against us, for a moment fall into the illusion that, because they have again worked in the cruel remembrance service, they have somewhat apologized, are for a moment even closer to the victims than to the perpetrators.”

I wonder against what backdrop such a description of reality proves to be meaningful? Does anyone believe that intellectuals and others in the remembrance service want to hurt us Germans—All of us?

Walser, according to Schirrmacher's laudation, is better able than his literary colleagues to linguistically capture reality. Therefore, Walser's tone points the way for those who hunger for "truth" and "authenticity." The significance of the term "reality," as Schirrmacher uses it, is equivalent to "conservative":

Someone who engages with reality deals with reality as it is and not as one might wish it to be. In conclusion: Walser is not a society-critical dreamer. Hence, "we," the listeners, should be particularly interested in what Walser considers in need of change in his Sunday speech. It will certainly be something tangible: "What will Walser's own contributions be, as reality has favored him, as rarely before, with the truth?" Schirrmacher asks, seemingly aware of the answer.

Walser's speech is designed to dissolve the boundaries between him, the presenting writer, and the listeners, especially Germany's political and cultural elite. Walser did not start his speech in the first person. Walser speaks of him, the "chosen one," from whom a Sunday speech is expected. He was unsure, undecided, probably as the listener in his place would be about what to say. His uncertainty should be welcome to the listeners. It lightens the historical burden they seem to have brought with them to the Paulskirche, namely the burden of expectation, to be confronted with history again, to go through the cruelties and eternal accusations once more, for which they no longer want to be held responsible. Instead, Walser seizes the element of surprise. In his place, he continues, the audience might have considered whether they should say something pleasant, something invigorating, something fitting for a peace prize. Perhaps even about trees, "because talking about trees is no longer a crime, as many of them are sick by now." The reference to Brecht probably appeals to some in the audience who notice it. But most have understood the subtext without having to be familiar with Brecht. Only sick, pitiable people or dying forests, things that cause a guilty conscience, are allowed to be the subject of a Sunday speech in the Paulskirche.

In these passages, it becomes evident that Martin Walser's Sunday speech takes on a particular perspective and message. Firstly, there is a shift in perspective from "he" to "I." This change suggests that Walser aligns himself with those who genuinely wish to share their joy in the true value of beautiful things in the world. Both he and "I" are aware of the expectations placed on a Sunday speech. They know that they are expected to torment themselves with a guilty conscience that they do not truly feel. Walser refrains from criticizing this unspoken rule and remains silent. On the other hand, "I" rebels and speaks out what both of them are already thinking.

However, the shift from "he" to "I" is deceptive or a "semblance," to borrow one of Walser's preferred terms. Neither he nor "I" is entirely synonymous with Walser. Both equally capture the feelings of Walser and the audience. In this sense, the boundaries between "he" and "I" become blurred.

The Walser speaking in the first person only emerges after the above-cited statement. It is only then that he can assert his own identity. Nevertheless, the message that Walser conveys has already taken root remarkably quickly. Walser quite literally speaks from the hearts of his listeners. It is their anger that Walser provides an outlet for when he, still in the persona of "he," speaks of the desires of the "chosen one." The fear of the "moral cudgel" of Auschwitz unites them. This is because such expectations are placed on a Sunday speech in

the Paulskirche. However, this fear is gradually dispelled, starting with the pointed remark: "And right away the justification (when talking about trees): Talking about trees is no longer a crime, because so many of them are sick by now."

Walser's goal is less about speaking for himself and more about telling the audience:

*"I am on your side. I understand you. I, the writer who, in my role as an intellectual, enjoys freedom of expression and can say ... I refuse to endure these impositions any longer. Nevertheless, I would like to begin my modest resistance. Like you, I am modest. I start 'best with such confessions: I close my eyes to evils in whose rectification I cannot participate. I have learned to look away.'"*

What is interesting is why Walser considers further engagement with the past morally reprehensible. The "I" he employs finds further discussion of the Holocaust unpleasant. It is not an anti-Semite who thinks this way but rather someone who feels unfairly distracted from their beautiful thoughts. The standard that ultimately decides the moral justification of engaging with Germany's past is one of comfort instead of justice. If the secure inner realm of thought is disturbed, the person responsible for it must be held accountable. However, it need not go that far. Jargon is also used preventively. It "shields it [the inner realm] from the inconvenience of seriously speaking on the matter about which it knows nothing and still allows it to pretend, if possible, to have super-material relationships with it. Jargon is so well-suited for this because it always combines the appearance of an absent concrete with its refinement." (Adorno, 1973: 467) Aggression against the stranger, who disrupts comfort with their presence, is nothing more than the flip side of the person who only values inner attitudes and disdains worldly action, especially if it is successful. Plessner referred to such an attitude as "world piety" and considered it a precondition for German fascism.

In these passages, it's suggested that it was not just the arguments presented in Martin Walser's speech but also the communication of his irritation in the presence of Holocaust survivors that resonated strongly with his audience. The reference to the gaze and its power to hypnotize, gain control, and elicit loyalty, as well as the implied threat of betrayal or disloyalty, struck a chord with his listeners. This passage emphasizes the emotional impact of Walser's speech, which was not just about rational arguments but also about shared feelings and sentiments.

Walser's speech does not involve making threats but rather reacting to perceived threats. The democratization of jargon has made its use more widespread. In other words, people are not making threats; they are responding with words. In this context, even enlightened democrats can assert their rights and push back against troublemakers, such as Ignatz Bubis, to put them in their deserved place. Within this framework, the central issue was not the status of the victims in the present but whether the irritation caused by the shame they represent was too great. Bubis's intervention was part of the message. He only reaffirms

what Walser is trying to convey. His outrage is meant to make it clear to everyone: "*We no longer want to see Bubis.*"

For the good, truly capable person, the "world-pious" individual who cares little about the world and its events but is deeply concerned with the authenticity of their own actions, it is particularly annoying when they realize that their sincere feelings are not appreciated. This mindset is characterized by a desire for inner security that remains unaffected by external factors. When inner security is established within oneself, it can lead to a sense of complacency and the feeling of having found a permanent refuge in one's own values. This mindset tends to devalue or trivialize external events, customs, habits, and institutions, emphasizing their naivety instead of recognizing their significance or addressing their problems.

Walser quotes Hegel's statement about conscience and interprets it to suggest that a good conscience is a solitary matter, and public acts of conscience are in danger of becoming symbolic. He emphasizes that inner solitude and self-reflection cannot be represented or shared symbolically, as they are deeply personal and individual experiences. This perspective underscores the idea that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own consciences and cannot demand from others what they themselves are not willing to give.

Walser's emphasis on inner solitude and the individual's responsibility for their own conscience adds a layer of complexity to his speech. It suggests that his speech is not just about external societal or political pressures but also about inner moral and ethical dilemmas faced by individuals. It implies that individuals must grapple with their own feelings and beliefs when confronting the weight of history and the legacy of the Holocaust.

Overall, these passages shed light on the emotional and psychological aspects of Walser's speech, highlighting how he appeals to his audience's shared sentiments, inner conflicts, and desires for inner security and authenticity in the face of historical trauma and moral responsibility.

The power that the people are supposed to fear may be an illusion. However, it is tailored to modern conditions. Therefore, this power can influence the actions of actors, as all parties accept that a violation of the rules it is based on triggers legitimate sanctions. For this reason, I have distinguished between power, coercion, and influence above, with power including the legitimate use of coercion if agreed-upon conditions of a legitimate agreement are not met. Influence cannot resort to such sanctions. Coercion is applied when an agreement under culturally acceptable conditions is not achievable.

Walser's 'opinion soldiers,' who hold their 'moral guns' to the people's chests, have at most power and mostly only influence. The power of these soldiers supposedly relies on the fact that they remind Germans of a historical burden. A burden that is well-known but should finally stop being constantly brought to attention:

*'Everyone knows our historical burden, the immortal shame, not a day goes by when it is not held against us. Could it be that they, the intellectuals who hold it against us, for a second, fall into the illusion that they have, because they have once again worked in the cruel service of memory, apologized a little, been for a moment closer to the victims than the perpetrators?'*

'The intellectuals' are the tormentors who demand an imposed attitude from 'us' (Germans). They hope to rid themselves of that very burden by glorifying it, focusing solely on it. According to Walser, lecturing the Germans about what they already know serves solely to relieve those intellectuals who seek to assign blame and want to align themselves with the victims.

Many critics of Walser's speech have raised the question of who might be meant by this generalized term 'intellectuals.' Walser quotes two such intellectuals without naming them but appears to want to refer to an entire subculture: those who have dedicated themselves to the cause of addressing history. Walser does not say whom he means. He speaks from his personal impression, knowing that it is shared by most listeners. Critics who reject Walser's claims with the argument that they are simply false misunderstand the message of his speech. Consequently, they fail to interpret the function of his speech, as it does not require the refutation of obviously false statements but rather the exploration of their psychological impact and cultural function."

According to Adorno, deception through jargon is effective, among other reasons, because it provides the best possible "false" answer to a "real" problem. Therefore, as I have formulated it in reference to Foucault above, jargon can say "yes." Jargon is only effective when the distortion of the social "reality" it promotes takes place in areas where real changes can occur. The term "real" refers to the material foundations of society. Instead of talking about unequal economic conditions that lead some to accept a life without shelter, one talks about "existential care." The notion that jargon combats necessity with cunning means is not without basis. Rather, jargon perverts the source of needs.

Therefore, jargon remains a response to a human challenge that was not originally mere deception in its original form. Jargon positions itself in places where human needs could be expressed, in order to take away the effect of these needs in their now distorted form. To take Adorno's concept of jargon seriously, one must therefore ask what "needs" Walser recognizes and distorts in the service of a misleading discussion about Germany's historical burden. In other words, Walser's criticism can only be answered by going a step further than his critics and asking the following question: What did Walser correctly identify and distort from the perspective of almost all listeners? Presumably, it was this distortion of a genuine need that appealed to his audience.

To reach the level where this question can be answered, we must take a step back to first determine the concept of "needs." In Adorno's "The Jargon of Authenticity," the term

acquires a (in the stricter sense) peculiar meaning. A need is initially - as usual - something like a feeling that urges one to choose goals of action that bring relief. What is peculiar is that in Adorno's "The Jargon of Authenticity," these pressing feelings are mostly known and at most preconscious. In other words, Adorno's needs are instinctual but not instincts in the Freudian sense. They are not repressed. In fact, one cannot speak of an unconscious process.

1. *Because their source is "social." It stems from the perversion of the intersubjective moment from which a satisfaction of the anthropological-philosophical needs of humans could have emerged. In Adorno's willingness to capture such needs using anthropological-philosophical categories, there is a danger of insufficient consideration of their cultural specificity. Starting from the perversion of human needs in general replaces the concept of cultural action with an ontological concept of human needs. Therefore, I have translated Adorno's description of such needs into the terminology of my own approach in order to capture the sociological content of his statements in the terms of my own approach.*

## Section 4.2: Walser's Cultural Background

The question remains unanswered whether Walser's speech is designed to provide an outlet for an aggressive attitude and demeanor of the audience. When researching the ever-changing meaning of condemned statements, considering the passion of action is relevant from both psychological and cultural perspectives. The attempt to conceptually address passionate action must be pursued meticulously.

Walser refers to a religious tradition that Plessner summarizes under the name "Weltfrömmigkeit" (world piety). The religious-sociological background of Walser's criticism is evident to the listeners themselves. It is this self-evidence that allows Walser to present his approach as universally valid. Therefore, his premises need neither be justified nor critically examined; they simply need to be mentioned.

Walser's criticism is certainly not anti-Semitic incitement. It is a call of conscience. In line with the pointed remark by [unspecified], the idea arises that Walser's speech is nailed to a door as a call. But a call against what? - Probably against the intellectuals, against the "Holocaust preachers."

Against this background, the origin of Walser's assessment of the role, function, and form of memory can be placed. Walser unwittingly mobilizes various classic criticisms of Judaism and puts them in the service of his reservations against the "memory servants." Walser becomes a protester and aligns himself with Protestantism.

*The Lesson: Rid yourself as much as possible of your cultural environment and its historical background. Be an individual, not merely a member of a community. Conscience cannot be transferred to them anyway. Rituals receive the most contempt. They are merely an expression of the memory service: "Auschwitz is not suitable for becoming a routine, a means of intimidation, or a moral cudgel, or even just a duty exercise at any time. What is achieved through this is of the quality of lip service." The echo of the interpretation of Jewish customs, as can be found, for example, in Hegel, resonates in these sentences. Laws that invoke the past have always been scorned by protesting Christians. The accusation was that such laws deprived the individual of their moral judgment, led to mere submission, and prevented the self-evident inner revelation. Faith can only be practiced internally. Therefore, rituals are the counterpart of the reprehensible idea that a person's morality thrives in a community, i.e., in coexistence with customs carried by a community. The equating of rituals with "lip service" is, in this sense, only consistent.*

However, Walser's determination should not lead one to conclude that he is aware of the significance of his statements in the historical context. On the contrary, I suspect that Walser only feels an aversion, which, within the framework of his general criticism of "the" intellectuals, memory servants, media, and journalists, seems familiar and similar to him. Walser perceives the imposition in the autonomous conscience being appropriated, deprived of its inviolable shell, and handed over to a foreign authority. Every person has the right to protest against this. In other words, against the backdrop of this supposedly self-evident moral-ethical stance, respecting a society's taboos and the ritualization of cultural messages both equally denigrate the inherent vocation of humans to judge right from wrong according to their conscience.

The culturally legitimate background of Walser's statements is of enormous importance, not only because it alone enables Walser to condemn the current Holocaust discourse in such a way but also because assertions that are considered self-evident are tested for their validity in this context. It is the interaction between the culturally legitimate and condemned expressions, which are nevertheless felt by most to be self-evident and therefore correct, that ensures the cultural effectiveness of these claims.

Walser's criticism can be understood and empathized with by everyone based on the primary norms and values of the "Weltfrömmigkeit" described by Plessner. If, in doing so, taboos fall, Martin Walser wants to tell us that they should not have even arisen in the first place.

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