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Reflexive Modernization

*Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the
Modern Social Order*

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lives today do not derive from the orthodox sphere of decision-making: the formal political system. Instead, they shape and help redefine the character of the orthodox political order.

Practical political consequences flow from the analysis of these issues. We differ among ourselves in our various diagnoses of what these political ramifications might be. However, we all refuse the paralysis of the political will apparent in the work of so many authors who, following the dissolution of socialism, see no place for active political programmes any longer. Something like the contrary is actually the case. The world of developed reflexivity, where the interrogation of social forms becomes commonplace, is one that in many circumstances stimulates active critique.

The format of the book is as follows. Each of us has independently written a substantial essay upon aspects of reflexive modernization. The three essays have been guided by the common perspectives mentioned above, although we have not sought to conceal our differences with one another. Each of us then subsequently wrote critical responses to the contributions of the other two. These appear towards the end of the book in the same sequence as the original statements.

The contributions by Ulrich Beck were translated from the German by Mark Ritter.

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1 The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization

Ulrich Beck

Introduction: what does reflexive modernization mean?

The year 1989 will go down in history, it seems fair to predict, as the symbolic date of the end of an epoch. As we are very aware today, 1989 was the year in which the communist world, quite unexpectedly, fell apart. But is this what will be remembered in fifty years' time? Or will the collapse of the communist nation-states of Eastern and Central Europe then be interpreted akin to Prinzip's shot at Sarajevo? Despite its apparent stability and its self-indulgent stand, it is already clear that the West was not left unaffected by the collapse of the East. Institutions founder on their own success', Montesquieu argued. An enigmatic yet exceptionally topical contention. The West is confronted by questions that challenge the fundamental premises of its own social and political system. The key question we are now confronting is whether the historical symbiosis between capitalism and democracy that characterized the West can be generalized on a global scale without exhausting its physical, cultural and social foundations. Should we not see the return of nationalism and racism in Europe precisely as a reaction to the processes of global unification? And should we not, after the end of the cold war and the rediscovery of the bitter realities of 'conventional' warfare, come to the conclusion that we have to rethink, indeed reinvent, our industrial civilization, now the old system of industrialized society is breaking down in the course of its own success? Are not new social contracts waiting to be born?

'Reflexive modernization' means the possibility of a creative (self-)destruction for an entire epoch: that of industrial society.¹ The 'subject' of this creative destruction is not the revolution, not the crisis, but the victory of Western modernization.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without continually revolutionizing the instruments of production, that is, the relations of production, hence all social relationships. Unchanged maintenance of the old mode of production, by contrast, was the primary condition for the existence of all previous industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier times. All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and views, are swept away, all new ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into Air, all that is holy is profaned, and the people are at last forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellows.²

If simple (or orthodox) modernization means, at bottom, first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by industrial social forms, then reflexive modernization means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity.

Thus, by virtue of its inherent dynamism, modern society is undercutting its formations of class, stratum, occupation, sex roles, nuclear family, plant, business sectors and of course also the prerequisites and continuing forms of natural techno-economic progress. This new stage, in which progress can turn into self-destruction, in which one kind of modernization undercuts and changes another, is what I call the stage of reflexive modernization.

The idea that the dynamism of industrial society undercuts its own foundations recalls the message of Karl Marx that capitalism is its own gravedigger, but it means something quite different. First, it is not the crises, but, I repeat, the victories of capitalism which produce the new social form. This means, second, that it is not the class struggle but rather normal modernization and further modernization which are dissolving the contours of industrial society. The constellation that is coming into being as a result of this also has nothing in common with the by now failed utopias of a socialistic society. What is asserted instead is that high-speed industrial dynamism is sliding into a new society without the primeval explosion of a revolution, bypassing political debates and decisions in parliaments and governments.

Reflexive modernization, then, is supposed to mean that a change of industrial society which occurs surreptitiously and unplanned in the wake of normal, autonomized modernization and with an unchanged, intact political and economic order implies the following: a *radicalization* of modernity, which breaks up the premises and contours of industrial society and opens paths to another modernity.

What is asserted is exactly what is considered out of the question in unanimous antagonism by the two main authorities of simple modernization, Marxists and functionalists, namely that there will not be a revolution but there will be a new society. The taboo that we are breaking in this way is the tacit equation of latency and immanence in social change. The idea that the transition from one social epoch to another could take place unintended and unpolitically, bypassing all the forums for political decisions, the lines of conflict and the partisan controversies, contradicts the democratic self-understanding of this society just as much as it does the fundamental convictions of its sociology.

In the conventional view, it is above all collapses and bitter experiences which signal social upheavals. That need not be the case, however. The new society is not always born in pain. Not just growing poverty, but growing wealth as well, and the loss of an Eastern rival, produce an axial change in the types of problems, the scope of relevance and the quality of the political. Not only indicators of collapse, but also strong economic growth, rapid technification and high employment security can unleash the storm that will sail or float industrial society into a new epoch.

More participation by women in work outside the home, for instance, is welcomed and encouraged by all political parties, at least on the level of lip service, but it also leads to an upheaval in the snail's pace of the conventional occupational, political and private order of things. Temporal and contractual flexibilization of wage labour is striven for and advanced by many, but in sum it breaks up the old boundary lines drawn between work and non-work. Precisely *because* such small measures with large cumulative effects do not arrive with fanfares, controversial votes in parliament, programmatic political antagonisms or under the flag of revolutionary change, the reflexive modernization of industrial society occurs on cats' paws, as it were, unnoticed by sociologists, who unquestioningly continue gathering data in the old categories. The insignificance, familiarity and often the desirability of the changes

conceal their society-changing scope. More of the same, so people believe, cannot produce anything qualitatively new.

The desired + the familiar = new modernity. This formula sounds and seems paradoxical and suspicious.

Reflexive modernization, as a broad-scale, loose-knit and structure changing modernization, deserves more than philanthropic curiosity as a kind of 'new creature'. Politically as well, this modernization of modernization is a major phenomenon which requires the greatest attentiveness. For one thing, it implies difficult-to-delimit deep insecurities of an entire society, with factional struggles on all levels that are equally difficult to delimit. At the same time, reflexive modernization encompasses only one developmental dynamism, which by itself, although against a different background, can have precisely opposite consequences. In various cultural groups and continents this is joined by nationalism, mass poverty, religious fundamentalism of various factions and faiths, economic crises, ecological crises, possibly wars and revolutions, not forgetting the states of emergency produced by great catastrophic accidents - that is, the conflict dynamism of risk society in the narrower sense.

Reflexive modernization must of course be analytically distinguished from the conventional categories of social change - crisis, social transformation and revolutions - but it can also coincide with these traditional conceptualizations, favouring, overlapping and intensifying them. Thus one would have to ask:

First, under what conditions does reflexive modernization turn into what kind of social crises?

Second, what political challenges are connected to reflexive challenges, and what answers to them are conceivable in principle?

Third, what is the meaning and the implication of superpositions of reflexive modernization with antagonistic developments - prosperity and social security, crisis and mass unemployment, nationalism, world poverty, wars or new migratory movements? How then should reflexive modernizations be decoded in contradictory constellations in an international and intercultural comparison?

Does modernity, when applied to itself, contain a key to its self-control and self-limitation? Or does that approach simply set loose one more whirl in a whirl of events where there is no longer any control?

Self-criticism of risk society

Anyone who conceives of modernization as a process of autonomized innovation must count on even industrial society becoming obsolete. The other side of the obsolescence of the industrial society is the emergence of the risk society. This concept designates a developmental phase of modern society in which the social, political, economic and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection in industrial society.

Two phases can be distinguished here: first, a stage in which the effects and self-threats are systematically produced but do not become public issues or the centre of political conflicts. Here the self-concept of industrial society still predominates, both multiplying and 'legitimizing' the threats produced by decision-making as 'residual risks' (the 'residual risk society').

Second, a completely different situation arises when the dangers of industrial society begin to dominate public, political and private debates and conflicts. Here the institutions of industrial society become the producers and legitimators of threats they cannot control. What happens here is that certain features of industrial society become *socially* and *politically* problematic. On the one hand, society still makes decisions and takes actions according to the pattern of the old industrial society, but, on the other, the interest organizations, the judicial system and politics are clouded over by debates and conflicts that stem from the dynamism of risk society.

Reflection and reflexivity

In light of these two stages, the concept of 'reflexive modernization' can be differentiated against a fundamental misunderstanding. This concept does not imply (as the adjective 'reflexive' might suggest) *reflection*, but (first) *self-confrontation*. The transition from the industrial to the risk period of modernity occurs undesired, unseen and compulsively in the wake of the autonomized dynamism of modernization, following the pattern of latent side effects. One can virtually say that the constellations of risk society are produced because the certitudes of industrial society (the consensus for progress or the abstraction of ecological effects and hazards) dominate the thought and action of people and institutions in industrial society. Risk society is not an option that one can choose or reject in

the course of political disputes. It arises in the continuity of autonomized modernization processes which are blind and deaf to their own effects and threats. Cumulatively and latently, the latter produce threats which call into question and eventually destroy the foundations of industrial society.

This type of confrontation of the bases of modernization with the consequences of modernization should be clearly distinguished from the increase of knowledge and scientization in the sense of self-reflection on modernization. Let us call the autonomous, undesired and unseen, transition from industrial to risk society *reflexivity* (to differentiate it from and contrast it with *reflection*). Then 'reflexive modernization' means self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society – as measured by the latter's institutionalized standards.³ The fact that this very constellation may later, in a second stage, in turn become the object of (public, political and scientific) reflection must not obscure the unreflected, quasi-autonomous mechanism of the transition: it is precisely abstraction which produces and gives reality to risk society.

With the advent of risk society, the distributional conflicts over 'goods' (income, jobs, social security), which constituted the basic conflict of classical industrial society and led to attempted solutions in the relevant institutions, are covered over by the distributional conflicts over 'bads'. These can be decoded as conflicts of distributive responsibility. They erupt over how the risks accompanying goods production (nuclear and chemical mega-technology, genetic research, the threat to the environment, overmilitarization and the increasing emiseration outside of Western industrial society) can be distributed, prevented, controlled and legitimized.

In the sense of a social theory and a diagnosis of culture, the concept of risk society designates a stage of modernity in which the threats produced so far on the path of industrial society begin to predominate. This raises the issue of the self-limitation of that development as well as the task of redetermining the standards (of responsibility, safety, monitoring, damage limitation and distribution of the consequences of damage) attained so far with attention to the potential threats. The problem here is, however, that the latter not only escape sensory perception and exceed our imaginative abilities: they also cannot be determined by science. The definition of danger is always a *cognitive* and *social* construct. Modern societies are thus confronted with the bases and limits of their own model to precisely the degree they do not change, do not reflect on

their effects and continue a policy of more of the same. The concept of risk society brings up the epochal and systemic transformation in three areas of reference.

First, there is the relationship of modern industrial society to the resources of nature and culture, on the existence of which it is constructed but which are being dissipated in the wake of a fully established modernization. This applies to nonhuman nature and general human culture, as well as to specific cultural ways of life (for example the nuclear family and the gender order), and social labour resources (for example housework, which has conventionally not been recognized as labour at all, even though it was what made the husband's wage labour possible in the first place).⁴

Second, there is the relationship of society to the threats and problems produced by it, which for their part exceed the foundations of social ideas of safety. For that reason, they are apt to shake the fundamental assumptions of the conventional social order as soon as people become conscious of them. This applies to components of society, such as business, law or science, but it becomes a particular problem in the area of political action and decision-making.

Third, collective and group-specific sources of meaning (for instance, class consciousness or faith in progress) in industrial society culture are suffering from exhaustion, break-up and disenchantment. These had supported Western democracies and economic societies well into the twentieth century and their loss leads to the imposition of all definition effort upon the individuals; that is what the concept of the 'individualization process' means. Yet individualization now has a rather different meaning. The difference, to Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, who theoretically shaped this process and illuminated it in various stages early in the twentieth century, lies in the fact that today people are not being 'released' from feudal and religious-transcendental certainties into the world of industrial society, but rather from industrial society into the turbulence of the global risk society. They are being expected to live with a broad variety of different, mutually contradictory, global and personal risks.

At the same time, at least in the highly developed industrial states of the West, this liberation is taking place under the general conditions of the welfare state, that is to say, against the background of the expansion of education, strong demands for mobility in the labour market and a far advanced juridification of labour relationships. These make the individual as an individual – or, more ex-

actly, only as an individual – the subject of entitlements (and obligations). Opportunities, threats, ambivalences of the biography, which it was previously possible to overcome in a family group, in the village community or by recourse to a social class or group, must increasingly be perceived, interpreted and handled by individuals themselves. To be sure, families are still to be found, but the nuclear family has become an ever more rare institution. There are increasing inequalities, but class inequalities and class-consciousness have lost their central position in society. And even the self is no longer just the unequivocal self but has become fragmented into contradictory discourses of the self. Individuals are now expected to master these 'risky opportunities',⁵ without being able, owing to the complexity of modern society, to make the necessary decisions on a well-founded and responsible basis, that is to say, considering the possible consequences.

The return of uncertainty

In this context we should also reconsider the essence of today's 'ecological crisis'. The metamorphosis of unseen side-effects of industrial production into foci of global ecological crises no longer appears as a problem of the world surrounding us – a so-called 'environmental problem' – but a profound institutional crisis of industrial society itself. As long as these developments are seen against the conceptual horizon of industrial society, then, as negative effects of apparently responsible and calculable action, their system-destroying effects go unrecognized. Their systemic consequences appear only within the concepts and in the perspective of risk society, and only then do they make us aware of the necessity of a new reflexive self-determination. In the risk society, the recognition of the unpredictability of the threats provoked by techno-industrial development necessitates self-reflection on the foundations of social cohesion and the examination of prevailing conventions and foundations of 'rationality'. In the self-concept of risk society, society becomes reflexive (in the narrower sense of the word), which is to say it becomes a theme and a problem for itself.

The core of these irritations is what could be characterized as the 'return of uncertainty to society'. 'Return of uncertainty to society' means here first of all that more and more social conflicts are no longer treated as problems of order but as problems of risk. Such risk

problems are characterized by having no unambiguous solutions; rather, they are distinguished by a fundamental ambivalence, which can usually be grasped by calculations of probability, but not removed that way. Their fundamental ambivalence is what distinguishes risk problems from problems of order, which by definition are oriented towards clarity and decidability. In the face of growing lack of clarity – and this is an intensifying development – the faith in the technical feasibility of society disappears almost by necessity.⁶

The category of risk stands for a type of social thought and action that was not perceived at all by Max Weber. It is post-traditional, and in some sense post-rational, at least in the sense of being no longer instrumentally rational (*post-zweckrational*). And yet risks arise precisely from the triumph of the instrumentally rational order. Only upon normalization, whether of an industrial development beyond the bounds of insurance or of the inquiry and perceptual form of risk, does it become recognizable that and to what extent risk issues cancel and break up issues of order from the inside out by their own means. Risks flaunt and boast with mathematics. These are always just probabilities, and nothing more, however, which rule nothing out. It is possible to chase away critics with a risk approaching zero today, only to bemoan the stupidity of the public tomorrow, after the catastrophe has happened, for misunderstanding probability statements. Risks are infinitely reproducible, for they reproduce themselves along with the decisions and the viewpoints with which one can and must assess decisions in pluralistic society. For example, how are the risks of enterprises, jobs, health and the environment (which in turn break down into global and local, or major and minor risks) to be related to one another, compared and put in hierarchical order?

In risk issues, no one is an expert, or everyone is an expert, because the experts presume what they are supposed to make possible and produce: cultural acceptance. The Germans see the world perishing along with their forests. The Britons are shocked by their toxic breakfast eggs: this is where and how their ecological conversion starts.

The decisive point, however, is that the horizon dims as risks grow. For risks tell us what should not be done but not what should be done. With risks, avoidance imperatives dominate. Someone who depicts the world as risk will ultimately become incapable of action. The salient point here is that the expansion and heightening of the intention of control ultimately ends up producing the opposite.

That means, however, that risks not only presume decisions, they ultimately also free up decisions, individually but also in a fundamental sense. Risk issues cannot be converted into issues of order, because the latter suffocate, so to speak, from the immanent pluralism of risk issues and metamorphose surreptitiously behind the façades of statistics and metaphorose surreptitiously behind the decisionism. Turning it another way, it also means that the risk issues necessitate, or, more cautiously, appeal for, the 'recognition of ambivalence' (Zygmunt Bauman).⁷

In his review of *Risk Society*,⁸ Bauman criticized the 'optimism' – some would say the illusion – which is also a basis of my diagnosis. This critique is based, as can be said from my perspective, on the widespread misunderstanding that risk issues are issues of order, or can at least be treated as such. That is what they are, but that is also precisely what they are not. Instead they are the form in which the instrumentally rational logic of control and order leads itself by virtue of its own dynamism *ad absurdum* (understood in the sense of 'reflexivity', that is, unseen and undesired, not necessarily in the sense of 'reflection'; see above). This implies that a breach is beginning here, a conflict inside modernity over the foundations of rationality and the self-concept of industrial society, and this is occurring in the very centre of industrial modernization itself (and not in its marginal zones or those which overlap with private life-worlds).

Industrial society, the civil social order and, particularly, the welfare state and the insurance state⁹ are subject to the demand to make human living situations controllable by instrumental rationality, manufacturable, available and (individually and legally) accountable. On the other hand, in risk society the unforeseeable side and after-effects of this demand for control, in turn, lead to what had been considered overcome, the realm of the uncertain, of ambivalence, in short, of alienation. Now, however, this is also the basis of a multiple-voiced self-criticism of society.¹⁰

It can be shown that not only organizational forms and measures but also ethical and legal principles and categories, such as responsibility, guilt and the polluter-pays principle (for tracing damage, for instance) as well as political decision procedures (such as the majority principle) are not suited to comprehend or legitimate this return of uncertainty and uncontrollability. Analogously, it is true that social science categories and methods fail in the face of the vastness and ambivalence of the facts that must be presented and comprehended.

Not only decisions have to be taken here; instead, it is vital to re-establish the rules and bases for decisions, validity relations and criticism of unforeseeable and irresponsible consequences (conceptualized from the control claim). The reflexivity and uncontrollability of social development thus encroaches upon the individual subregions, breaking up regional, class-specific, national, political and scientific jurisdictions and boundaries. In the extreme case, facing the consequences of a nuclear catastrophe, there are no longer any non-participants. Conversely, this also implies that everyone under this threat is needed as a participant and affected party, and can appear equally self-responsible.

In other words, risk society is by tendency also a self-critical society. Insurance experts (involuntarily) contradict safety engineers. While the latter diagnose zero risk, the former decide: uninsurable. Experts are undercut or deposed by opposing experts. Politicians encounter the resistance of citizens' groups, and industrial management encounters morally and politically motivated organized consumer boycotts. Administrations are criticized by self-help groups. Ultimately, even polluter sectors (for instance, the chemical industry in the case of sea pollution) must count upon resistance from affected sectors (in this case the fishing industry and the sectors living from seashore tourism). The latter can be called into question by the former, monitored and perhaps even corrected. Indeed, the risk issue splits families, occupational groups from skilled chemical workers all the way up to the management,¹¹ often enough even individuals themselves. What the head wants and the tongue says might not be what the hand (eventually) does.

We are not talking here about those ultimately diffuse multiple antagonisms, ambivalent and grumbling in their overall political tendency and effect, which practised critics of criticism can and will dismiss as 'superficial' and not affecting the 'logic' of social development. Rather, a fundamental conflict reveals itself behind this, one which promises to become characteristic of the risk epoch. This conflict is already undermining and hollowing out the political coordinates of the old industrial society, that is, the ideological, cultural, economic and political antagonisms that group around the dichotomy safe/unsafe and attempt to distinguish themselves against each other. In a political and existential sense, the fundamental question and decision that opens up here is, will the new manufactured incalculability and disorder be opposed according to the pattern of instrumental rational control, that is by recourse to the old offerings of industrial society (more technology, market,

government and so on)? Or is a rethinking and a new way of acting beginning here, which accepts and affirms the ambivalence – but then with far-reaching consequences for all areas of social action? Corresponding to the theoretical axis, one could call the former *linear* and the latter *reflexive*. Alongside the analytical and empirical interpretation of this distinction, the ‘politically empirical’ and ‘normative philosophical’ interpretation of these twin terms is becoming possible and necessary (but that goes beyond the purpose of this essay).

This social, political and theoretical meta-theoretical constellation arises and intensifies with reflexive modernization. Only in the redefinition of the present do the dams of the old order burst and the irreducible ambivalences, the new disorder of risk civilization, openly appear. Thus there are fewer and fewer social forms (role patterns) that produce binding orders and security fictions (role fictions) that produce binding orders and security fictions which are relevant to action. This crisis of industrial society’s security fictions implies that opportunities and compulsions for action open up, between which one must permanently decide, without any claim to definitive solutions – a requirement through which living and acting in uncertainty becomes a kind of basic experience. Who can do this and learn this, how and why, or why not, becomes in turn a key biographical and political question of the current era.

There are many who say that the collapse of real existing socialism has pulled the rug out from under any social criticism. The opposite is true: the context for criticism, even for radical criticism, has never been so favourable. The petrification of criticism, which was one meaning of the predominance of Marxian theory among the critical intelligentsia for more than a century, is gone. The all-powerful father is dead. In fact social critique can now catch new breath, as well as opening and sharpening its eyes.

Many candidates for the position of subject have entered and exited the stage of world and intellectual history: the working class, the critical intelligentsia, the public sphere, social movements of the most varied tendencies and composition, women, subcultures, youth and alternative experts. In the theory of reflexive modernization, the basis for criticism is conceived of as in some sense autonomous. There is no clearly definable subject. By virtue of its independent dynamic and its successes, industrial society is skidding into the no man’s land of uninsured threats. Uncertainty returns and proliferates everywhere. Non-Marxist critique of modernization, small and concrete, but large and fundamental as well, is becoming an everyday phenomenon inside and between the

systems and organizations (not only on the margins and the zones of overlap between private life-worlds). Lines of conflict are coming into being over the what and how of progress, and they are becoming capable of organization and of building coalitions.¹²

Sub-politics – individuals return to society

‘Individualization’¹³ does not mean a lot of the things that many people think it means in order to be able to think it means nothing at all. It does not mean atomization, isolation, loneliness, the end of all kinds of society, or unconnectedness. One also often hears the refutable claim that it means emancipation or the revival of bourgeois individuals after their demise. But if all these are expedient misunderstandings, then what might be a consensus on the meaning of the term?

‘Individualization’ means, first, the disembedding and, second, the re-embedding of industrial society ways of life by new ones, in which the individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves. Thus the name ‘individualization’. Disembedding and re-embedding (in Giddens’s words) do not occur by chance, nor individually, nor voluntarily, nor through diverse types of historical conditions, but rather all at once and under the general conditions of the welfare state in developed industrial labour society, as they have developed since the 1960s in many Western industrial countries.

Individualization as social form

In the image of classical industrial society, collective ways of living are understood to resemble Russian dolls nested inside one another. Class presumes the nuclear family, which presumes sex roles, which presume the division of labour between men and women, which presumes marriage. Classes are also conceived of as the sum of nuclear familial situations, which resemble one another and are differentiated from other class-typical ‘familial situations’ (those of the upper class, for instance).

Even the empirical-operational definition of the class concept makes use of the family income, that is, the income of the ‘head of household’, an inclusive word, but one that clearly bears masculine features in practice. That means that women’s labour participation

either does not 'register' at all in class analysis or is 'averaged away'.¹⁴ Turned the other way around: anyone who takes male income and female income separately as the basis must draw the image of a split social structure, which can never be put back together again into a single image. These are only examples of how the industrial society categories of life situations and life conduct presume one another in a certain way. Just as certainly, they are being systematically disembedded and re-embedded – that is the import of individualization theory.

They are being replaced not by a void (that is precisely the target of most refutations of individualization theory) but rather by a new type of conducting and arranging life – no longer obligatory and 'embedded' (Giddens) in traditional models, but based on welfare state regulations. The latter, however, presume the individual as actor, designer, juggler and stage director of his or her own biography, identity, social networks, commitments and convictions. Put in plain terms, 'individualization' means the disintegration of the certainties of industrial society as well as the compulsion to find and invent new certainties for oneself and others without them. But it also means new interdependences, even global ones. Individualization and globalization are in fact two sides of the same process of reflexive modernization.¹⁵

To put it yet another way, the complaining about individualization which is now in fashion – the invocation of 'we feelings', the disassociation from foreigners, the tendency to pamper family and feelings of solidarity, turned into a modern theory, communitarianism – all this is propagated against a background of established individualization. These are mostly reactions to experienced intolerable aspects of individualization, which is taking on anomalous traits.

Once again, individualization is not based on the free decision of individuals. To use Sartre's term, people are condemned to individualization. Individualization is a compulsion, but a compulsion for the manufacture, self-design and self-staging of not just one's own biography but also its commitments and networks as preferences and life phases change, but, of course, under the overall conditions and models of the welfare state, such as the educational system (acquiring certificates), the labour market, labour and social law, the housing market and so on. Even the traditions of marriage and the family are becoming dependent on decision-making, and with all their contradictions must be experienced as personal risks.

'Individualization' therefore means that the standard biography becomes a chosen biography, a 'do-it-yourself biography' (Ronald Hitzler), or, as Giddens says, a 'reflexive biography'.¹⁶ Whatever a man or woman was and is, whatever he or she thinks or does, constitutes the individuality of the individual. That does not necessarily have anything to do with civil courage or personality, but rather with diverging options and the compulsion to present and produce these 'bastard children' of one's own and others' decisions as a 'unity'.

Now, how should one conceive of the connection between individualization and the welfare state, between individualization and the legally protected labour market more precisely? An example might clarify this, the work biography: for men it is taken for granted, but for women it is controversial. None the less, half the women (at least) work outside the home in all industrial countries, increasingly even those who are mothers. Surveys document that for the coming generation of women a career and motherhood are taken for granted as part of their life plans. If the movement towards two-career families continues, then two individual biographies – education, job, career – will have to be pursued together and held together in the form of the nuclear family.

Previously, status-based marriage rules dominated, as imperatives (the indissolubility of marriage, the duties of motherhood and the like). These constricted the scope of action, to be sure, but they also obligated and forced the individuals into togetherness. By contrast, there are no models today, but rather a number of models, specifically those that are negative: models that require women to build up and maintain educational and professional careers of their own as women, because otherwise they face ruin in case of divorce and remain dependent upon their husbands' money in marriage – with all the other symbolic and real dependencies this brings for them. These models do not weld people together but break apart the togetherness and multiply the questions. Thus they force every man and woman, both inside and outside marriage, to operate and persist as individual agent and designer of his or her own biography.

Social rights are individual rights. Families cannot lay claim to them, only individuals, more exactly working individuals (or those who are unemployed but willing to work). Participation in the material protections and benefits of the welfare state presupposes labour participation in the greatest majority of cases. This is confirmed by the debate over the exceptions, among other things:

wages for housework or a pension for housewives. Participation in work in turn presupposes participation in education and both presuppose mobility and the readiness to be mobile. All these are requirements which do not command anything but call upon the individual kindly to constitute herself or himself as an individual, to plan, understand, design and act – or to suffer the consequences which will have been self-inflicted in case of failure.

Here, too, the same picture: decisions, possibly undecidable decisions, certainly not free ones, but forced by others and wrested out of oneself, under models that lead into dilemmas. These are also decisions which put the individual as an individual into the centre of things and disincantize traditional ways of life and interaction. Perhaps against its will, the welfare state is an experimental arrangement for conditioning ego-centred ways of life. One can inject the common good into the hearts of people as a compulsory vaccination. This litany of lost community remains two-faced and morally ambivalent as long as the mechanics of individualization remain intact, and no one really calls them seriously into question, neither wants to nor is able to.

Politics and sub-politics

This type of individualization does not remain private: it becomes political in a definite, new sense: the individualized individuals, the tinkers with themselves and their world, are no longer the 'role players' of simple, classical industrial society, as assumed by functionalism. Individuals are constructed through a complex discursive interplay which is much more open-ended than the functionalist role model would assume. On the contrary, the fact is that the institutions are becoming unreal in their programmes and foundations, and therefore dependent on individuals. Nuclear power plants that can destroy or contaminate an entire millennium are assessed as *risks* and 'legitimated' by comparison to cigarette smoking, which is statistically riskier. There is beginning to be a search in the institutions for the lost class-consciousness of 'up there' and 'down here', because trade unions, political parties and others have built up their programmes, their membership and their power upon that. The dissolving post-familial pluralism of families is being poured into the old conceptual bottles, corked up and stored away. In short, a double world is coming into existence, one part of which cannot be depicted in the other: a chaotic world of

conflicts, power games, instruments and arenas which belong to two different epochs, that of 'unambiguous' and that of 'ambiguous' modernity. On the one hand, a political vacuity of the institutions is evolving and, on the other hand, a non-institutional renaissance of the political. The individual subject returns to the institutions of society.

At first sight more or less everything seems to argue against this. The issues that are disputed in the political arenas – or, one would be tempted to say, whose antagonisms are simulated there – scarcely still offer any explosives that could yield sparks of the political. Accordingly, it is becoming less and less possible all the time to derive decisions from the party-political and corporatist superstructure. Conversely, the organizations of the parties, the trade unions and similar interest groups make use of the freely available masses of issues to hammer together the programmatic prerequisites for their continued existence. Internally and externally, so it seems, the political is losing both its polarizing and its creative, utopian quality.

This diagnosis rests, in my view, upon a category error, the equation of politics and state, of politics with the political system; the correction of that error does not deprive the diagnosis of its elements of truth, but it does none the less turn it into its opposite.¹⁷ People expect to find politics in the arenas prescribed for it, and performed by the duly authorized agents: parliament, political parties, trade unions and so on. If the clocks of politics stop here, the political as a whole has stopped ticking, in that view. That overlooks two things.

First, the immobility of the governmental apparatus and its subsidiary agencies is perfectly capable of accompanying mobility of the agents on all possible levels of society, that is to say, the petering out of politics with the activation of sub-politics. Anyone who stares at politics from above and waits for results is overlooking the self-organization of the political, which – potentially at least – can set many or even all fields of society into motion 'sub-politically'.

Second, the political monopoly of the political institutions and agents, which the latter demand from the political constellation of classical industrial society, is incorporated into views and judgments. This continues to ignore the fact that the political system and the historically political constellation can have the same relation to one another as the realities of two different epochs. For instance, the increase of welfare and the increase of hazards mutually condition one another. To the extent that this becomes (publicly) conscious,

the defenders of security are no longer sitting in the same boat with the planners and producers of economic wealth. The coalition of technology and economy becomes shaky, because technology can increase productivity, but at the same time it puts legitimacy at risk. The judicial order no longer fosters social peace, because it sanctions and legitimates disadvantages along with the threats, and so on.

In other words, the political breaks open and erupts beyond the formal responsibilities and hierarchies. This is misunderstood particularly by those who unambiguously equate politics to the state, the political system, formal responsibilities and full-time political careers. An ambivalent, multilevel 'expressionistic concept of politics' (Jürgen Habermas), which permits us to posit the social form and the political as mutually variable, is being introduced here for a very simple reason. That is that it opens the possibility in thought which we increasingly confront today: the political constellation of industrial society is becoming unpolitical, while what was unpolitical in industrialism is becoming political. This is a category transformation of the political with unchanged institutions, and with intact power elites that have not been replaced by new ones.¹⁸

We thus look for the political in the wrong place, on the wrong floors and on the wrong pages of the newspapers. Those decision-making areas which had been protected by the political in industrial capitalism – the private sector, business, science, towns, everyday life and so on – are caught in the storms of political conflicts in reflexive modernity. An important point here is that how far this process goes, what it means and where it leads, is in turn dependent upon political decisions, which cannot simply be taken but must be formed, programmatically filled out and transformed into possibilities for action. Politics determines politics, opening it up and empowering it. These possibilities of a *politics of politics*, a *(re)invention* of the political after its demonstrated demise, are what we must open up and illuminate.

The socially most astonishing and surprising – and perhaps the least understood – phenomenon of the 1980s was the unexpected renaissance of a political subjectivity, outside and inside the institutions. In this sense, it is no exaggeration to say that citizen-initiative groups have taken power politically. They were the ones who put the issue of an endangered world on the agenda, against the resistance of the established parties. Nowhere is this so clear as in the spectre of the new 'flip service morality' that is haunting Europe.

The compulsion to engage in the ecological salvation and renewal of the world has by now become universal. It unites the conservatives with the socialists and the chemical industry with its Green arch-critics. One almost has to fear that the chemical concerns will follow up on their full-page advertisements and re-establish themselves as a conservation association.

Admittedly, this is all just packaging, programmatic opportunism, and now and then perhaps really intentional rethinking. The actions and the points of origin of the facts are largely untouched by it. Yet it remains true: the themes of the future, which are now on everyone's lips, have not originated from the farsightedness of the rulers or from the struggle in parliament – and certainly not from the cathedrals of power in business, science and the state. They have been put on the social agenda against the concentrated resistance of this institutionalized ignorance by entangled, moralizing groups and splinter groups fighting each other over the proper way, split and plagued by doubts. Sub-politics has won a quite improbable thematic victory.

This applies not only to the West, but also to the eastern part of Europe. There the citizens' groups – contrary to the entire social science intelligentsia – started from zero with no organization, in a system of surveilled conformity, and yet, with no copying machines or telephones, were able to force the ruling group to retreat and collapse just by assembling in a square. This rebellion of the real existing individuals against a 'system' that allegedly dominated them all the way into the capillaries of day-to-day existence is inexplicable and inconceivable in the prevailing categories and theories. But it is not only the planned economy which is bankrupt. Systems theory, which conceives of society as independent of the subject, has also been thoroughly refuted. In a society without consensus, devoid of a legitimating core, it is evident that even a single gust of wind, caused by the cry for freedom, can bring down the whole house of cards of power.

The differences between exuberant citizens in East and West are obvious and have often been discussed, but that is much less the case for their quite considerable common ground: both are grass-roots-oriented, extra-parliamentary, not tied to classes or parties, organizationally and programmatically diffuse and feuding. The same goes for their rags-to-riches careers on both sides: criminalized, opposed, ridiculed, but later part of party programmes and government declarations or even the overthrow of a government.

Of course one could say, *tempi passati*. The insight might be difficult for many people, but even the extreme right-wing headhunters who have been mobilizing in the streets of Germany since the summer of 1992 against 'foreigners' (and whoever they consider to be such), as well as the covert and unnerving support they find all the way to the top of politics – the modification of the fundamental constitutional right to asylum was supported by a two-thirds majority in Parliament in May 1993 – yes, even this mob is using and acting out the opportunities of sub-politics. This contains a bitter lesson. Sub-politics is always available to the opposite side or the opposing party for their opposing goals.

What appeared to be 'an unpolitical retreat to private life', 'new inwardness' or 'caring for emotional wounds' in the old understanding of politics can, when seen from the other side, represent the struggle for a new dimension of the political.

The still prevailing impression that social awareness and consensus 'evaporates' in the 'heat' of individualization processes, is not entirely false, certainly, but also not completely correct. It ignores the compulsions and possibilities of manufacturing social commitments and obligations, no matter how tentative (the staging of the new general consensus on the ecological issues, for instance). These can take the place of the old categories, but cannot be expressed and comprehended in them.

It makes sense to distinguish between different contexts and forms of individualization. In some states, particularly in Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and western Germany, we are dealing with an 'all-risk individualization'. That is to say, individualization processes arise here from and in a milieu of prosperity and social security (not for everyone, but for most people). On the other hand, conditions in the eastern part of Germany, and especially in the formerly communist countries and the Third World, lead to unrest of a quite different dimension.

The individualized everyday culture of the West is simply a culture of built-up knowledge and self-confidence: more and higher education, as well as better jobs and opportunities to earn money, in which people no longer just obey. Individuals still communicate in and play along with the old forms and institutions, but they also withdraw from them, with at least part of their existence, their identity, their commitment and their courage. Their withdrawal, however, is not just a withdrawal but at the same time an emigration to new niches of activity and identity. The latter seem so unclear and inconsistent not least because this inner immigration

often takes place half-heartedly, with one foot, so to speak, while the foot is still firmly planted in the old order.

People leave the 'nest' of their 'political home' step by step and issue by issue. But that means that in one place people are on the side of the revolution while in another they are supporting reaction, in one place they are dropping out while in another they are getting involved. All of that no longer fits into one design of an order upon which the surveying specialists of the political map can base their analyses. Here too, the 'end of clarity' (Bauman) applies. The forms of political involvement, protest and retreat blur together in an ambivalence that defies the old categories of political clarity.

The individualization of political conflicts and interests thus does not mean disengagement, not the 'opinion poll democracy' and not weariness of politics. But a contradictory multiple engagement arises, which mixes and combines the classical poles of politics so that, if we think things through to their logical conclusion, everyone thinks and acts as a right-winger and left-winger, radically and conservatively, democratically and undemocratically, ecologically and anti-ecologically, politically and unpolitically, all at the same time. Everyone is a pessimist, a passivist, an idealist and an activist in partial aspects of his or her self. That only means, however, that the current clarities of politics – right and left, conservative and socialistic, retreat and participation – are no longer correct or effective.

For this type of practice, which can be more easily comprehended negatively than positively – not instrumental, not dominating, not executing, not role-determined, not instrumentally rational – there are only faded and blurred direct concepts, which boast and mock almost slanderously with words like 'communal' and 'holistic'. All the non-labels can succeed only in denying and missing the state of affairs, not in getting rid of it. Beneath and behind the façades of the old industrial order, which are sometimes still brilliantly polished, radical changes and new departures are taking place, not completely unconsciously, but not fully consciously and in a focused way either. They rather resemble a collective blind person without a cane or a dog but with a nose for what is personally right and important and, if scaled up to the level of generality, cannot be totally false. This centipede-like non-revolution is under way. It is expressed in the background noise of the quarrelling on every level and in all issues and discussion groups, in the fact, for instance, that nothing 'goes without saying' any longer; everything must be inspected, chopped to bits, discussed and debated to death until

finally, with the blessing of general dissatisfaction, it takes this particular 'turn' no one wants, perhaps only because otherwise there is the risk of a general paralysis. Such are the birth pangs of a new action society, a self-creation society, which must 'invent' everything, except that it does not know how, why, with whom and with whom absolutely not.

Political science has opened up and elaborated its concept of politics into three aspects. First, it inquires into the institutional constitution of the political community with which society organizes itself (the *polity*); second, into the substance of political programmes for shaping social circumstances (*policy*); and, third, into the process of political conflict over power-sharing and power positions (*politics*). Here it is not the individual who is considered fit for politics; rather the questions are directed at corporatist, that is, collective, agents.

Sub-politics is distinguished from 'politics' first, in that, agents *outside* the political or corporatist system are allowed to appear on the stage of social design (this group includes professional and occupational groups, the technical intelligentsia in plants, research institutions and management, skilled workers, citizens' initiatives, the public sphere and so on), and second, in that not only social and collective agents but individuals as well compete with the latter and each other for the emerging shaping power of the political.

If one transfers the distinction between polity, policy and politics to sub-politics (this is equivalent to the inquiry into the multivarious structure-changing practices of modernity), then the following questions come up:

First, how is the *sub-polity* constituted and organized institutionally? What are the sources of its power, its resistance possibilities and its potential for strategic action? Where are its switch-points and what are the limits of its influence? How does the scope and power to shape things emerge in the wake of reflexive modernization?

Second, with what goals, content and programmes is *sub-policy* conducted, and in what areas of action (occupations, professions, plants, trade unions, parties and so on)? How is sub-policy objectified, restricted, conducted and implemented into non-policy? Which strategies – for example 'health precautions', 'social security', or 'technical necessities' – are applied for this purpose, how and by whom?

Third, what organizational forms and forums of *sub-politics* are emerging and can be observed? What power positions are opened

up, solidified and shifted here, and how? Are there internal conflicts over the policy of an enterprise or a group (labour, technology or product policy)? Are there informal or formalizing coalitions for or against certain strategic options? Are specialist, ecological and feminist circles or working groups separating out inside occupational groups or plant labour relations? What degree and quality of organization do the latter exhibit (informal contacts, discussion meetings, by-laws, special journals, focused publicity work, congresses or code of ethics)?

Sub-politics, then, means shaping society *from below*. Viewed from above, this results in the loss of implementation power, the shrinkage and minimization of politics. In the wake of sub-politicization, there are growing opportunities to have a voice and a share in the arrangement of society for groups hitherto uninvolved in the substantive technification and industrialization process: citizens, the public sphere, social movements, expert groups, working people on site; there are even opportunities for courageous individuals to 'move mountains' in the nerve centres of development. Politicization thus implies a decrease of the central rule approach; it means that processes which had heretofore always run friction-free fizzle out in the resistance of contradictory objectives.

These are conditions where the various groups and levels of decision-making and participation mobilize the means of the constitutional state against one another. That occurs not just in the confrontation of institutions and citizens' groups but also in the conflicts of national and local politics, between a Green-motivated administration and the old industrial management, and so on. No side gets its way, neither the opponents of power nor power itself, where these concepts become as relative in actuality as they ought to be in thought. A general 'relative paralysis' comes into being (and it goes without saying that citizens' groups are affected too), which is the back side of sub-political activation. But the very fizzling out of the implementation process of industrialization, which used to be so well lubricated by consensus, which now produces losers on all levels, can slow the process, and can be a precursor of an unregulated, anarchic self-limitation and self-control. Perhaps 'anything goes' means 'rien ne va plus', nothing goes any more?

The 'instrument of power' in sub-politics is 'congestion' (in the direct and the figurative sense) as the modernized form of the involuntary strike. The phrase that Munich motorists can read at a typically congested location, 'You're not in a jam, you are the jam', clarifies this parallel between strike and congestion.

Paths to a new modernity

A paradoxical situation has arisen with the end of the cold war. What had been completely unexpected, in fact had been proved to be out of the question – the political renaissance of Europe – has not led to a revival of Europe's ideas, to a purgatory and paradise of questioning, but rather to a general paralysis. Sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, one type of fatalism contradicts and corroborates another. Thus, despite all of Europe's inclination to realism, scepticism and nihilism, people misunderstand and cast aside the very thing that constitutes Europe's vitality: being able to renew itself through radical self-criticism and creative destruction. Enlightenment is the exception where the vanquished wins through defeat. Optimistic and pessimistic fatalism agree in one respect: that there is only one shape of modernity, that of industrial society, whose compulsion produces that beneficial mixture of the consumer society and democracy one time, and the next accelerates the general decline. *Tertium non datur. Tertium datur!* Many modernities are possible; that is the reply of reflexive modernization. According to the old formula of the Enlightenment, the latter counts on modernization to overcome modernization. How can that be conceptualized, methodologically and theoretically?

Sociology – or, let us say more precisely, the ageing sociology of modernization – must become a bit of art, that is, a bit playful, in order to liberate itself from its own intellectual blockades. One could call this the chemistry of premises; oppose pseudo-eternal verities, rub them together, agitate them against one another and fuse them together until the intellectual test tube starts giving off sparks and smoking, smelling and sputtering.

How does the image of 'functionally differentiated' industrial society change when one applies the premises of 'functional differentiation' to it? Why do the varieties of sociological functionalism always paint an image of the differentiated society in the sense of a final differentiation, while further differentiations of industrial society operating right now are possibly opening up paths to new types of modernity?

Why should modernity be exhausted in autonomization and culminate, of all things, in 'self-referentiality' as Luhmann argues? And why should it not find new and fertile grounds in focusing on the opposite, i.e. specialization on interrelationships, on contextual understandings and on cross-boundary communication? Perhaps the autonomy premise of modern systems theory, raised to the level

of virtual autism, is only the basic multiplication table, while decimal arithmetic starts only where one autonomy is cross-linked with another, where negotiating institutions come into being, and so on? Does reflexive modernization perhaps begin where the logic of differentiation and dissection ends and is combined and opposed with a logic of mediation and self-limitation?

Is it not somewhat boring – all right, that is not a scientific category, so let us say, somewhat insufficiently complex – always to trace the disintegration of the old world in 'binary codes'? Is it not time to break this great sociological simplification taboo and, for instance, inquire into code syntheses, to search for where and how these are already being produced today? Is the combination of art and science, of technology and ecology, of economics and politics with the result of something neither–nor, some third entity, as yet unknown and yet to be discovered, really out of the question simply because the basic multiplication table of functionalism considers it out of the question? Why must science itself, which changes everything, be conceived of and conducted as unchangeable? Or is it perhaps possible that the way in which a change in the framework of science is considered and rejected pushes out of sight the very possibility of self-limitation and change which is available to and incumbent upon the sciences? This would be the *self-opening of the monopoly on truth* that is becoming possible and necessary in and along with the methodological doubts to which science itself pays homage.

No doubt the fatalism has its good sides. It prevents, for instance, the activism of a modernization of modernity which would open Pandora's box. But it also acts as brain surgery for sociologists, who, in their awareness of the autonomy of modernity, forbid themselves from even raising and discussing the issue of alternative modernities in any systematic way. Self-application was the magic word which is supposed to loosen and overcome these old cognitive blockades. In spelling out this thinking we intend to proceed methodically and name the respective principle of industrial modernity which is to be applied to industrial society itself (in the thought experiment). Then we shall inquire what face of modernity results if what is unavoidable becomes true, namely that modernization overruns even industrial society.¹⁹

Anyone who inquires into the 'functional differentiation' of 'functionally differentiated' society is raising, first, the issue of the (revolutionary) further differentiation of industrial society. If one uses the key concept of 'functional autonomy' as a basis, then two

questions of reflexive modernity can be obtained: externally, second, the issue of the intersystemic mediation and negotiation institutions and internally, third, the inquiry into the conditions that make 'code syntheses' possible. These very different signposts into alternative modernities will be cognitively approached and pursued only for a few steps.

Further differentiation of industrial society

The door to industrial modernity was blown open by the French Revolution, which disembedded the question of power from its feudal-religious ascriptions and proscriptions. Contrary to all the professions of impossibility and against conservative rhetoric, the 'peoples' became sovereign – at least in terms of demand and process. This sets the standards for the political grounding of power, to which even dictators have had to subject themselves, at least verbally, to this day.

The industrial revolution also leads into industrial modernity. It permanently gave the owners of capital, the business middle class, the right to permanent innovation. Change, unstoppable and uncontrollable, something that appeared completely inconceivable, even blasphemous, to earlier periods, now comes to be taken for granted, a certainty that always deserves to be questioned; it becomes the law of modernity to which everyone must submit at the risk of political demise.

This reminder that 'functional systemic differentiation' is another word for revolution is sorely needed. Only then can it be understood what is meant when people ask what functional systemic differentiations might lead out of industrial society. Two such are becoming clear today, the earthquake of the feminist revolution on the one hand, and the systemic differentiation of nature 'in the age of its technical reproducibility', in Böhme's phrase.²⁰ An additional one can at least be thrown into the arena of possibilities as a hypothesis that makes the unthinkable thinkable: technology that wishes to escape the fate of its 'mediocrity', its yoke of economic and military utility and to become or be nothing but pure technology.

The revolt of women, unlike the explosion of the French Revolution, is a creeping revolution, a sub-revolution proceeding like a cat: on cat's paws but always with claws. Wherever it touches it changes industrial society's sensitive underside, the private sphere, and reaches from there (and back?) into the peaks of male domina-

tion and certainty. The sub-revolution of women, which directly cuts up the nervous system of the everyday order of society, despite setbacks, can certainly give society a different face. One need only venture this thought experiment: a society in which men and women were really equal (whatever that might imply in detail) would without a doubt be a new modernity. The fact that walls to prevent this are built from nature, anthropology and ideas of family and maternal happiness with the deliberate co-operation of women is another matter. It is not the least of all the shocks precipitated by the failure, in the view of many women, of the permanent feminist revolution which serve as a measure of the changes that will face us from its success. As social science studies show, the broad variety of fundamentalisms are patriarchal reactions, attempts to reordain the masculine 'laws of gravity'.

It is already becoming recognizable that nature, the great constant of the industrial epoch, is losing its pre-ordained character, it is becoming a product, the integral, shapable 'inner nature' of (in this sense) post-industrial society. The abstraction of nature leads into industrial society. The integration of nature into society leads beyond industrial society. 'Nature' becomes a social project, a utopia that is to be reconstructed, shaped and transformed. Renaturalization means *denaturalization*. Here the claim of modernity to shape things has been perfected under the banner of nature. Nature becomes politics. In the extreme case which can already be observed today, it becomes the field for genetic engineering solutions to social problems (environment, social and technical security, and so on). That means, however, that society and nature fuse into a 'social nature', either by nature becoming socialized or by society becoming naturalized. That only means, however, that both concepts – nature and society – lose and change their meaning.

What directions are taken here can be determined in advance only by prophecy – and by some application of the principles of production: industrial systems that are converted to natural production are transformed into natural systems which make social changes permanent. Manufactured 'nature' (in the non-symbolic, materialized meaning of this word), 'decided nature', makes the production of matters and bodies of fact possible. Here a policy of creation produces a world of living creatures which can conceal the manufacturing character it creates and represents.

The ecological issue and movement, which appear to be calling for the salvation of nature, accelerate and perfect this consumption process. It is not without penalty that the word 'ecology' is so

ambivalent that everything from back-to-the-land sentiments to hypertechnologism can find a place and a rank in it.

The removal of technology from its contexts of military and economic utility, its functional deintegration and establishment as an autonomous subsystem (see p. 26 above) would be comparable to the abolition of the divinely ordained feudal order inside industrial society. The unconstrained rule of technology and technicians in the grey zone between law and politics would be broken up and crushed and give way to a second separation of powers, now between technology development and technology utilization. Yes and no to technology, on the one hand, and to the utilization of technology on the other, would be functionally separated and thus made possible in the first place: fantastic constructivism, self-doubt and technology pluralism, on one side; on the other, new negotiating and mediating institutions and democratic co-determination, where economic considerations rank below others. This would be possible only, if one wished to bring the project out of the clouds and back down to earth, if technology were declared an official concern – as has happened with education in the twentieth century – and financed from public means. Out of the question? It is conceivable in any case and thus a proof that technology – the quintessence of modernity – is organized in an antiquated way.

On dealing with ambivalence: the 'round table' model

Anyone who no longer wishes to accept the 'fate' of the production of side-effects and hazards, and thus wishes to force the associated loss of legitimation for techno-industrial development, must consider how the 'new ambivalence' can be made acceptable and capable of forming a consensus. The answer is intersystemic mediating institutions. These exist in rudimentary form in the various 'round table' models or in investigative, ethical and risk commissions. The theories of simple modernization conceive of modernization autistically, while the theories of reflexive modernization conceive of it as cross-linked, specifically, according to the model of specialization in the context. While simple modernization conceives of functional differentiation *post hoc* and 'naturally', reflexive modernization conceives of functional differentiation in the sense of a substantive 'dividing process', in which the boundaries between subsystems may be planned differently or collaboratively, that is to say, co-operatively. In other words, the question of

system formations that are multivalent, permitting and making possible ambivalences and transcending borders is now becoming central.²¹

In risk society, new expressways, rubbish incinerator plants, chemical, nuclear or biotechnical factories and research institutes encounter the resistance of the immediately affected population groups. That, and not (as in early industrialization) rejoicing at this progress, is what has come to be predictable. Administrations on all levels find themselves confronted with the fact that what they plan to be a benefit to all is felt to be a curse by some and opposed. Accordingly, they and the experts in industrial plants and research institutes have lost their orientation. They are convinced that they have worked out these plans 'rationally', to the best of their knowledge and abilities, in accordance with 'the public good'. In this, however, they miss the onset of ambivalence.²² They struggle against ambivalence with the old means of non-ambiguity.

First, the benefits and burdens of more or less dangerous and burdensome production or infrastructure plans can never be 'justly' distributed. Second, the conventional instrument of political consultation, the expert opinion, fails accordingly. Even the interplay between opinion and counter-opinion does not resolve the conflicts but only hardens the fronts. There are beginning to be cries for an 'ecological trade union' in many plants that deal with and in hazardous materials or products. It is the same everywhere: the demand is for forms and forums of consensus-building co-operation among industry, politics, science and the populace. For that to happen, however, the model of unambiguous instrumental rationality must be abolished.

First, people must say farewell to the notion that administrations and experts always know exactly, or at least better, what is right and good for everyone: demonopolization of expertise.

Second, the circle of groups to be allowed to participate can no longer be closed according to considerations internal to specialists, but must instead be opened up according to social standards of relevance: informalization of jurisdiction.

Third, all participants must be aware that the decisions have not already been made and now need only be 'sold' or implemented externally: opening the structure of decision-making.

Fourth, negotiating between experts and decision-makers behind closed doors must be transferred to and transformed into a public dialogue between the broadest variety of agents, with the result of additional uncontrollability: creation of a partial publicity.

Fifth, norms for this process – modes of discussion, protocols, debates, evaluations of interviews, forms of voting and approving – must be agreed on and sanctioned: self-legislation and self-obligation.

Negotiation and mediation institutions of this type must experiment with novel procedures, decision-making structures, overlaps of competence and incompetence and multiple jurisdictions. They can no more be had without breaking up monopolies and delegating power than with the old demands and models of efficient non-ambiguity. Everyone, the involved authorities and companies, as well as the trade unions and the political representatives, must be prepared to jump over their own shadows, just as, conversely, radical opponents must be willing and able to make compromises. This is more likely to be attained and amplified the more the old, instrumentally rational order, according to which the task is for specialists to 'enlighten' laypeople, is not even brought up.

Negotiation forums are certainly not consensus production machines with a guarantee of success. They can abolish neither conflict nor the uncontrolled dangers of industrial production. They can, however, urge prevention and precaution and work towards a symmetry of unavoidable sacrifices. And they can practice and integrate ambivalences, as well as revealing winners and losers, making them public and thereby improving the preconditions for political action.

In risk civilization, everyday life is culturally blinded,²³ the senses announce normalcy where – possibly – threats lurk. To put it another way, risks deepen the dependency on experts. A different way of handling ambivalence thus presumes that *experience* is once again made possible and justified in society – also and particularly against science. Science has long ceased to be based on experience; it is much rather a science of data, procedures and manufacturing.

In this context it is useful to distinguish two types of science which are beginning to diverge in the civilization of threat. On the one hand, there is the old, flourishing laboratory science, which penetrates and opens up the world mathematically and technically but devoid of experience and encapsulated in a myth of precision; on the other, there is a public discursivity of experience which brings objectives and means, constraints and methods, controversially into view. Both types have their particular perspective, shortcomings, constraints and methods. Laboratory science is systematically more or less blind to the consequences which accompany and threaten its successes. The public discussion – and

illustration – of threats, on the other hand, is related to everyday life, drenched with experience and plays with cultural symbols. It is also media-dependent, manipulable, sometimes hysterical and in any case devoid of a laboratory, dependent in that sense upon research and argumentation, so that it needs an accompanying science (classical task of the universities). It is thus based more on a kind of science of questions than on one of answers. It can also subject objectives and norms to a public test in the purgatory of oppositional opinion, and in just this way it can stir up repressed doubts, which are chronically excluded in standard science, with its blindness to threats and consequences.

In both cases we are concerned with a completely different type of knowledge: on the one hand, specialized, complex, dependent on methodology, and, on the other, oriented towards fundamentals and fundamental errors (for instance in the setting of maximal acceptable levels, which cannot be corrected in an individual case). The goal ought to be to play the narrow-minded precision of laboratory science off against the narrow-mindedness of everyday consciousness and the mass media and vice versa (in Popper's sense): For that, one requires stages or forums, perhaps a kind of 'Upper House' or 'Technology Court' that would guarantee the division of powers between technology development and technology implementation.

Rationality reform: code syntheses

The 'acrobatic gospel of art as the last European metaphysics' (Benn) or Nietzsche's dictum that 'nihilism is a feeling of happiness' has by now reached and penetrated advertising, business, politics and everyday life, that is to say, it has been understood and is becoming a cliché. After nihilism we do not end up with emptiness, but with aestheticism. In post-traditional society, people walk a tightrope between art and artificiality. That was how boundaries, assignments and commitments formed and determined themselves in tightly woven networks; on the one hand, these make choice, accountability and commitments possible, as well as, on the other hand, mass production, design, sales and fashions. Gerhard Schulze forged the concept of 'sensation society' from and for this (and here he has probably – dare one say? – artfully and artificially overstylized an important and accurate partial aspect). Scott Lash built up this thought into a theory of aesthetic reflexivity.²⁴ He

connects the inquiry into the limits of reflexivity with it, because he assigns aesthetic reflexivity to practical, 'emotional reason' (if such a connection of words is permitted). Here he confuses reflection (knowledge) with reflexivity (self-application). Of course, I have not dealt with the idea of aestheticization as a post-traditional ligature formation that connects mass production, mass consumption and self and social stylization.

I would like to take an essential further step, however. The aesthetic dimension of reflexive modernization, of which Scott Lash speaks, covers and describes only one special case from the large box of, using a somewhat dated phrase, realistic utopias (critics would say: horror visions) at the turn of the twenty-first century. The rigid theory of simple modernity, which conceives of system codes as exclusive and assigns each code to one and only one subsystem, blocks out the horizon of future possibilities, the ability to shape and delimit oneself, in short the art of making yourself at home in the maelstrom, as Marshall Berman put it so nicely.

This reservoir is discovered and opened up only when code combinations, code alloys and code syntheses are imagined, understood, invented and tried out. The 'aesthetics laboratory' that society has long since turned into is only one example for this. The question runs (in classic terms): how can truth be combined with beauty, technology with art, business with politics and so on? What realities and rationalities become possible and actually come into being when the communicative codes are applied to one another and fused together and a neither-nor results, some new third entity, which makes new things possible and permanent?

The problem can be explained with a parallel between the genetic and the communicative codes. The genetic code opens up the generative centre of nature (human nature as well), while the communicative code opens up the centre from which originate the designs of reality and the opportunities for reality of the subsystems. We are concerned here with the autonomized sub-rationalities which delimit and exclude the systemically frozen opportunities for action in modernity. This is where the analogy ends. There is no communicative code engineering (in the sense of genetic engineering), no way of opening and manipulating the codes of the sub-rationalities technically (like genetic codes). What is possible, and has to some extent already been done, is to bring the only apparently 'self-referential' sub-rationalities into relation with one another and apply one to another in a meta-rational thought experiment: in the sense not of 'anything goes', but of a focused

regrounding, a creation or, more cautiously, a correction of system rationalities that have become obsolete and historically irrational. For instance, doesn't the recognition of the ambivalence forced upon us by the civilization of threat require a different 'type', that is, rationality of science (logic of research, rules of procedure, methodology of experiment and theory and a rethinking of the subsystemic procedure of peer review)?²⁵

Doubt, for instance, which not only serves science but now, applied reflexively, disrupts and destroys the latter's false and fragile clarities and pseudo-certainties, could become the standard for a new modernity which starts from the principles of precaution and reversibility. Contrary to a widespread mistake, doubt makes everything – science, knowledge, criticism or morality – possible once again, only different, a couple of sizes smaller, more tentative, personal, colourful and open to social learning. Hence it is also more curious, more open to things that are contrary, unsuspected and incompatible, and all this with the tolerance that is based in the ultimate final certainty of error.

In other words, reflexive modernization also and essentially means a 'rationality reform' which does justice to the historical *a priori* of ambivalence in a modernity which is abolishing its own ordering categories. Of course, this is the sort of theme that cannot be dealt with in a few paragraphs. As it takes its first few steps, this immodest inquiry into a new modesty can certainly move within the horizons of the sub-rationalities which simple modernity developed and mutually insulated.

It is not an excess of rationality, but a shocking lack of rationality, the prevailing irrationality, which explains the ailment of industrial modernity. It can be cured, if at all, not by a retreat but only by a radicalization of rationality, which will absorb the repressed uncertainty. Even those who do not like this medicine of civilization, who find its taste unpleasant, simply because they do not like the medicine men of civilization, will perhaps be able to understand that this playful dealing with the earthly sources of certainty, this types-of-rationality experiment, is only retracing what has long been under way with vigour as a concrete experiment of civilization.

The invention of the political

This view must be made more specific and defended against at least three objections. First, anyone who abolishes the boundary between

politics and nonpolitics deprives herself or himself of the basis of his argument. Where everything is somehow political, then somehow nothing is political any more. Isn't the necessity of political analysis somehow being counterfeited into the virtue of sub-political mobility and emotionality, following the motto that if nothing works any more, then somehow everything works? Incidentally, 'The knowledge that everything is politics', as Klaus von Beyme writes, 'leads us astray if it is not supplemented with the insight that everything is also economics or culture'.²⁶

Second, doesn't sub-politics end precisely where politics begins, namely where the 'real thing', the key question of power, is at stake, in such areas as military strength, foreign policy, economic growth and unemployment? Is the emphasis on sub-politics then just another manifestation of growing obedience?

Third, doesn't sub-politics reach as far and last precisely as long as it can be certain of the support of politics – law and money? Must one not then turn the argument around: doesn't the development of sub-politics presume a reactivation of the political centre and system? It is tempting to suspect that the formulation 'reinvention of politics' is pure wishful thinking. Even worse: isn't this invoking and working for the resurrection of a 'statist absolutism of reform' (Thomas Schmid) after its demise? I should like to block off and refute these objections by means of a conceptual and typological sharpening and differentiation of the political and politicization.

Politics of politics

The East-West antagonism was one gigantic cementing of the political. The antagonism fixed roles in every domain of society. On the small, everyday scale just as much as on the large geopolitical stage, normality and deviation, 'leadership', 'partnership' and neutrality were staked out and determined all the way down to the details of industrial production, municipal politics, family policy, technology policy, foreign aid policy and all the rest. It was the order of the Great Antagonism, and its eternal prolongation, which brought about and reproduced three things: tension, clear possibilities for orienting oneself and a world political order which could give itself the semblance of being non-political.

If it is permitted to compare the unrestrained character of the political to a creature from the animal kingdom, one can say a lion was sitting in the zoo and yawning. The keepers kept up and pro-

tected the cage and threw the lion a few bloody morsels to scare and amuse the zoo visitors looking on from all sides. 'Symbolic politics' was what many clever minds called this telegenic lion-feeding, this political circus. The training was general and omnipresent. Politics was becoming trivial. Everything was stage-management. Things that would have happened anyway and the way of presenting them followed the law of inverse proportionality: the smaller the scope of action and the differences between the parties, the more hot air.

With the collapse of the East-West antagonism, a paradoxical situation has arisen. Politics still takes place in the same old cages, but the lion is free. People pretend to be in the zoo – without the lion. They treat lions running at large like zoo lions, and they consider it narcissistic touchiness if the latter do not dutifully look for peaceful cages to lock themselves up. A bit of political wilderness has arisen in Europe, devoid of institutions, large and small, in all spheres of politics, even in those such as technology, industry and business which, not being politics, had hitherto been able to count on generally smooth implementation of their desires.

We distinguished above between official, labelled politics (of the political system) and sub-politics (in the sense of autonomous subsystemic politics). This return of the political beyond the East-West conflict and beyond the old certainties of the industrial epoch compels and justifies a further distinction, which runs transversely to those above, that is, the distinction between rule-directed and rule-altering politics. The former type can certainly be creative and nonconformist, but it operates within the rule system of industrial and welfare state society in the nation-state (or, in our terms, simple modernity). Rule-altering politics, on the other hand, aims at a 'politics of politics' in the sense of altering the rules of the game themselves. There are two things connected to this type of meta- or super-politics: first, the switching of the rule system and, second, the question of what system of rules one should switch to. Perhaps one should play gin rummy instead of bridge or vice versa.

Even inside simple politics, the bridge game, there are a number of individual variants of a more or less sophisticated type which one can play with various degrees of skill and mixed success. A completely different situation arises, however, if the rules of the game themselves are altered or switched. The height of confusion is attained when one plays both at once, bridge and the game of switching its rules. People play with swapped rule systems in order to change the rule systems themselves. Some continue to play bridge and are outraged as others attempt to invent and implement new

displaced rules for the game during the bridge game. We face precisely this kind of hybrid of normality and absurdity everywhere today.

The game of classical industrial society, the antagonisms of labour and capital, of left and right, the conflicting interests of the groups and the political parties, continues. At the same time, many demand, and actually begin, to turn the rule system itself inside out, while it remains quite unclear, to put it figuratively, whether the future game will be bridge, ludo or football. Rule-directed and rule-altering politics overlap, mingle and interfere with one another. There are periods when one side dominates and then again periods when the other does so. While Europe is experiencing a regression back to rigid, bloody nation-state game variants of simple modernity, some forces in America are trying to set off for the new continent of inventing the political, trying out – and suffering from – the politics of politics.

The distinction between official politics and sub-politics, which is oriented to the systemic structure of society, must therefore be contrasted with the distinction between simple (rule-directed) and reflexive (rule-altering) politics. The latter measures itself by the depth, the quality of the political. The phrase 'politics of politics', or 'invention of the political', which aims at this, need not be meant normatively by any means. It only brings up for discussion what would have to happen if the subject of discussion everywhere (in the sense of opposing it) were to become reality – independent of whether these are dreams, nightmares or ideas on the way to realization. Thinking minimalistically, we are dealing today with the concrete operational idea of the invention of the political. Conceiving of it maximalistically, 'society' or groups in society are setting off on that mission. The distinction between official and reflexive politics can be applied to both politics and sub-politics as well as to the conditions for their politicization. Consequently a table results with six fields (Table 1).

The political, to the extent that it behaves peacefully or can be kept peaceful, takes place within the nation-state concept of democracy exclusively as a rule-directed wrestling match of parties over the feed troughs and levers of power with the goals of economic growth, full employment, social security, changing of governments in the sense of changing personnel or parties. That is democracy and that is how it takes place and manifests itself. Politics however, in the sense of a reconstruction of the governmental system, a transformation of government, a self-dissolution of government

Table 1

Place and type of the political	Quality or period of the political	reflexive (rule-altering)
	simple (rule-directed)	
Politics of the political system	symbolic politics, growth, full employment, technical and social progress	economic reactivation or metamorphosis of the state
Sub(system) politics	simple expert rationality, dominance of technocratic, bureaucratic action, private sphere	reform of rationality, political entrepreneurs, vocation as political action
Conditions of politicization	strike, parliamentary majority, governmental initiative, collective-individualistic solutions (e.g. car, insurance)	congestion, blockade and, as one variant, the struggle for consensus and reforms of the modernizations inside and outside the political system

both upward and downward by delegating decision-making authority to groups on the one hand and global agencies on the other – never! To put it a different way, politics in the nation-state structure and rule system is no departure into a new land of the political, the geopolitical or the global risk society. People quarrel over keeping and protecting the rules of the democratic and economic game in the nation-states. This model of politics is dubious for many reasons, not least because of a doubled inflation of demands. Governmental politics is supposed to be in charge of everything, and everyone is supposed to take part in it and to be aiming at maximizing his or her personal influence.

Even if no one can say from the depth of her or his heart that she or he believes that the transformation from a national economy of self-destruction to a global and democratic world civilization will really succeed, it will still be possible to achieve a consensus that the present obsolete institutions will be unable to achieve these goals under any circumstances. If one no longer wishes to close one's eyes to this, then one must leave the framework of *status quo* politics in one's objectives – economic growth, full employment, and social security – or at least open them up, expand them, rethink them and

recompose them. That is precisely what the invention of the political aims to do. The same applies to Europe, to the world after the end of the Cold War, to the antagonisms between wealthy and starving regions of the earth which are now appearing openly and radically, to the problem of mobile economic and political refugees storming Fortress Europe and so on.

Inventing the political means creative and self-creative politics which does not cultivate and renew old hostilities, nor draw and intensify the means of its power from them; instead it designs and forges new content, forms and coalition. What is meant is a renaissance of the political which 'posits itself', to borrow an image from Fichte. That is to say, it develops its activity from activity, pulling itself up by its own bootstraps out of the swamp of routine. This does not mean the 'politics of convictions' (Max Weber) or a politics of lip service. On the contrary, the invention of politics requires a Machiavellian realism (see below), but does not exhaust itself therein. Instead, it practises and struggles for spaces, forms and forums of style and structure formation inside and outside the political system.

Metamorphosis of the state

One can say contradictory things about the modern state; on the one hand it is withering away, but on the other it is more urgent than ever, and both for good reason. Perhaps that is not so absurd as it appears at first. To reduce it to a formula: withering away plus inventing equals metamorphosis of the state. That is how one can sketch and fill out the image of a state that, like a snake, is shedding the skin of its classical tasks and developing a new global 'skin of tasks'. In a well-known interview, Hans Magnus Enzensberger says:

The politicians are insulted that people are less and less interested in them . . . they would do better to ask what is the basis for that. I suspect that the parties have fallen victim to a self-deception . . . The core of today's politics is the ability of self-organization . . . That begins with the most ordinary things: school issues, tenants' problems or traffic regulations . . . Today the state is confronted by all sorts of groups and minorities of all kinds . . . not just the old organizations such as trade unions, the churches and the media. Even the athletes are highly organized. So are the homosexuals, the arms dealers, the motorists, the disabled, the parents, the tax evaders, the divorced, the

conservationists, the terrorists, and so on. They constitute ten thousand different power agencies in our society.²⁷

In the old Europe, people always described

the polity according to the model of the human body. The government was the supreme ruler, the head. This metaphor is definitively passé. No centre that predicts, controls and decides is available any more. The brain of society can no longer be localized; innovations and decisions on the future have not originated from the political class for some time now. On the contrary, only when an idea has become a banality does the coin drop for parties and governments . . . The [German] Federal Government is relatively stable and relatively successful, despite and not because of the fact that it is ruled by those people grinning down at us from the campaign posters. Although the Minister of Posts does everything in his power to ruin the postal service, letters still arrive. Although the ruling Chancellor behaves like a bull in a china shop, trade with the East flourishes, and so on . . . This paradox permits only one explanation: Germany can afford an incompetent government, because ultimately the people who bore us in the daily news really do not matter.²⁸

The self-organization mentioned above does not, as Hermann Schwengel points out, 'mean the old liberal topos of the free social forces', for they are now turning against the political claim of the state. 'Self-organization means, more precisely, a reunification of these free forces in the deepest strata of society, in economic, community and political activity.' Self-organization means (reflexive) *sub-politicization of society*. The locus and subject of the definition of social well-being, of a specific political power technique, of the guarantee of public peace and of the provocative assertion of a political history of this and only this society [have] moved apart. They [are] just as accessible to economic and cultural institutions as to the political ones.²⁹

The authoritarian decision and action state gives way to the negotiation state, which arranges stages and conversations and directs the show. The ability of the modern state to negotiate is presumably even more important than its one-sided hierarchical ability to act, which is becoming more and more problematic. In late modernity at the tail end of the century, 'the [traditional] state is withering away as a "special creature", as the structure of a sovereignty and as hierarchical co-ordinator'.³⁰ Withering away need not be synonymous with failure, as in the widespread disgruntledness over political parties. On the contrary, success can kill too. The

withering away of the state is often just the other side of the self-organization, the sub-politicization of society; it is a bit of redeemed utopia. Politics condensed down to symbolism characterizes the intermediate stage, in which the classical problems of the state in simple modernity have in part been solved and in part been forgotten in the thicket of active society, but where the governmental challenges of a reflexive modernity are not yet perceived at all. Social scientists have difficulties with the concept of death. The collapse of the Eastern bloc, however, has demonstrated that there can be such a thing as a governmental stroke. Anyone who rules out the concept of an 'institutional death' forgets what we are dealing with everywhere in these days of radical social change: zombie-institutions which have been clinically dead for a long time but are unable to die. As examples one could take class parties without classes, armies without enemies or a governmental apparatus which in many cases claims to start and keep things going which are happening anyway.

If it is true that governmental tasks die and new ones must be defined and constituted, then the question arises of which tasks and how they are defined. Carl Böhret suggests an interesting criterion for this, the 'negotiating capability' of social interests. He considers this to be fulfilled where interests become capable of self-organization, where they are given voice and significance in the arenas of society and politics by organized agents. By contrast, the new government tasks that must be opened up are characterized in that they are not capable of negotiation but can and must be made so. An example would be the wounding of the vital and survival interests of the as yet unborn and the natural world around us, or the construction of a supranational and ideally global order. 'All problem fields that are in principle "negotiable" between groups of people and organizations can be "societalized"'. That means here that they can be worked out in the multilateral negotiating system, with the participation of the state. This increasingly also concerns the legal design where the governmental agent is primarily left with the central control of the context. Put another way: the classical areas of symbolic politics can be moved out and delegated back to the organized sub-politics of society.

All aspects, however, which are 'not negotiable', because there is either the lack of a direct partner or because no interest can be represented effectively by such partners in a reasonable time, should in principle be handled as governmental and functional tasks. That always applies when the 'maxim of survival' is affected and there is a presumption of a 'generational responsibility' of

protecting succeeding generations, but it also applies in the case of 'creeping catastrophes'.

For the foreseeable future, deregulation is only imaginable here at the price of disaster. In these areas, therefore, the state devotes itself to those problems which are without social competition for now, in ecology for instance. It is supposed to be allowed to claim a 'process monopoly' for this. The state must permit and even want the tasks assigned to it in each case not to belong permanently to it but rather to be worked off again and again ('societalized', that is) by the competition that occurs.³¹

It is not just a redefinition of governmental fields of responsibility which is at stake here but rather the radical issue of whether certain seemingly 'eternal' tasks and the institutions with jurisdiction over them have outlived their usefulness. Reflexive politics, then, does not mean just the invention, it means the clearing out of the political. Whether, for instance, the armed forces are part of the essence of the state (as almost all theories of the state from Hegel to Max Weber to Carl Schmitt would have us believe) is definitely dubious and must be made dubious in the age of ambivalence.

So this is not a plea for new governmental tasks within the old forms. Quite to the contrary, the core of the argument is that this new task simultaneously forces the state into a new form of managing tasks. The state must practise self-restraint and self-abnegation, give up some monopolies and conquer others temporarily and so forth.

Neither the 'laissez-faire' of a caretaker state nor the authoritarian overall planning of an interventionist state is appropriate for the operational needs of a highly differentiated modern society... The goal is the construction of realities in which the constructions of realities of other systems have some freedom of action. In the face of externalities that are no longer internally controllable, what is at stake are self-limitations of differentiated-out functional systems by a process of supervision, in which the perspective of mutual intervention – of politics in science perhaps, or of science in politics – is complemented by the perspective of the invention of mutually compatible identities.³²

Beyond left and right?

Could it be that we still have the old landscape of political parties in Europe, but already signs and symptoms that it will be eroded

down to its very deepest layers in the coming years? Is reflexive modernization then equivalent to a long-term earthquake which is radically altering the 'party geology'? Might all the unease that already takes our breath away today be just the calm before the storm? Or is this true and yet the exact opposite is brought about, that is, because people lose the support of the left-right political order, they restore the left-right order? Perhaps this actually has irreplaceable advantages. The spatial metaphor always applies everywhere and its application to the political is historically established and it tailors the (overtaxing) complexity in a bipolar manner which makes it susceptible to action, an asset whose value rises precisely with the disintegration of the world order.

Certainly, empirical political science confirms the relevance and significance of the left-right pattern in the perception of the populace. Things may be going the same way for those surveyed as for the social-scientist surveyors: they have no alternatives. In their helplessness, however, they help themselves to move on with the conceptual crutches of the past, even though they clearly sense the fragility of these antiquated crutches.

Is the transferral of the communist systems into capitalist systems a 'leftist' or a 'rightist' undertaking? Is the resistance to that process, that is to say, the protection of the 'achievements' of what remains of socialism, 'conservative' or 'progressive'? Are those who disturb the graveyard peace on the left by mercilessly exhibiting the perversions of socialism in all their concrete forms still promoting the cause of the 'class enemy', or are they already taking the role of a 'post-socialist left' and laying the basis of their claim on the future Europe?³³

The political left-right metaphor, which was born with bourgeois society,³⁴ is probably unconquerable, unless it be 'dethroned' by alternatives. The co-ordinates of politics and conflict in the future will be cautiously and hypothetically located here and approached conceptually, as if with a dowsing rod, in three dichotomies: safe-unsafe, inside-outside and political-unpolitical. We are concerned here with three key questions: What is your attitude towards, first, uncertainty, second, towards strangers and, third, towards the possibility of shaping society?

Why these three key questions and oppositions and not others? We choose these because, in the perspective of the theory developed here, they have greater opportunities for implementation, or more clearly, opportunities for stylization and stage management than others. That is what is decisive, after all, and not the inherent val-

idity and features of the aforementioned dimensions and categories. On the basis of the theory of reflexive modernization sketched out previously, it is plausible to assume, first, that even in the future it will still be possible to conduct counter-modernizations, second, that the continuation of self-destruction will deepen the battle lines between safe and unsafe, and, third, that the 'conflict of the two modernities' has yet to show its explosiveness politically and sub-politically.

There is little that should be surprising in the significance for the future of the inside-outside, us-them opposition. Considering nationalistic wars and looming refugee migrations, it hardly requires a theory of reflexive modernization to venture this prognosis. There might more likely be a need for that in explaining the how of those phenomena. Where institutions disintegrate, avalanches of possibilities descend upon those who must take action. In equal measure, an unsatisfiable need arises for simplicity and new rigidity. If alternative institutions that make possible and relieve action are not available, then the flight into the masquerade of the old certainties begins. These must be resurrected even while disappearing, as it were. This purpose is served by 'disguises' (in a quite literal sense) which combine two things: ascription (the strongest antidote to disembedding) and - paradoxically enough - constructibility. The hole cannot be filled in any other way.

That is to say, we are experiencing not the renaissance of the people, but the renaissance of the staging of the people (or the staging of the renaissance of the people). The latter gains the upper hand, in broadcasting stations and on title pages, because other types of change are blocked off, and nationalism, as bitter as this may sound to many, exudes the enticing aroma of self-determination. Here the different possibilities of counter-modernization - nationalism, violence, esoterica and so forth - can complement, mix, cancel, amplify and compete with each other.

Of what help is it to point out the staged nature of nationalism? Does it lose any of its danger thereby? No, but it does become more helpless, heterogeneous, and unstable; it acquires, so to speak, postmodern traits and loses the fatalistic and demonic quality that seduces people into dynamic nationalism. This neo-nationalism, which can probably be successfully staged in the long run, is a spectre which, like other spectres these days, needs broadcast space on television and the tacit sub-politics of the (still) democratic majority in the West, in order to be able to haunt effectively.³⁵

Something which is at heart similar can also be said of the other two polarizations. The growth of controversies over manufactured threats causes the antagonisms safe-versus-unsafe to dig themselves in. Politicization obviously occurs issue-specifically. That means, however, that anyone who asserts safety on one side finds herself or himself in the ranks of the threatened on the other. Niklas Luhmann drew the conclusion from this that this opposition can not be handled institutionally, nor does it lead to clear front patterns.³⁶ The result, he claims, is a fluctuating conflict potential that can no more be limited than it can be sharpened into political disputes. It always remains underexposed here that the safety and insurance institutions themselves contain and maintain standards according to which they can be convicted of uninsured insecurity.³⁷

And that is precisely what clears the way into sub-politicization and triggers the opposite impulses towards 'more of the same' and non-politics. The opposition between old and new modernity is a shock which encompasses and electrifies all fields of action in modern society. Uprisings encounter the resistance of the routines and those caught up in them. Reflexive, not simple, sub-politics must organize itself. Two patterns can be explored for this: the blockade and the coalition.

A general paralysis comes about along with sub-politicization; the modernizers as well as their critics run in place or get caught in the thicket of fomented points of view and interests. This petering out of the implementation process of industrialization, formerly so well oiled by consensus, slows the process and is the precursor of an anarchic self-limitation and self-control of previously unchecked industrialization as usual.³⁸

The general confusion and opposition inside and outside the institutions necessitates and favours the formation of support networks crossing the boundaries of systems and institutions, which must be personally connected and preserved. In a certain way, then, the disintegration of institutions makes room for a refeudalization of social relationships. It is the opening for a neo-Machiavellianism in all areas of social action. Orderings must be created, forged and preserved and have their own 'currency', allow the formation of power or opposing power.

Life-and-death politics

The antagonisms of the political world, such as liberalism, socialism, nationalism or conservatism, which rule in heads, parties, par-

liaments and in the institutions of political education, are the products of emerging industrialism. Those political theories talk about the problems of shaping nature and environmental destruction with all the insight of blind people talking about colours, and the same applies to the issues of feminism, to the critique of experts and technology and to alternative versions of science.

The concept of politics in simple modernity is based on a system of axes, one co-ordinate of which runs between the poles of left and right and the other between public and private. Becoming political here means leaving the private sphere in the direction of the public sphere, or conversely, that the demands of parties, party politics or the government proliferate into every niche of private life. If the citizen does not go to politics, then politics comes to the citizen.

Anthony Giddens calls this model 'emancipative politics' and delimits it against 'life politics'. 'Life politics concern political issues which flow from processes of self-actualization in post-traditional contexts, where globalizing tendencies intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realization influence global strategies.'³⁹

The exciting aspect of this view lies in the fact that here, in contrast to Christopher Lasch and his talk of 'Marxist culture', the political is achieved or makes its invasion in the passage through the private sphere, the back way around so to speak. All the things that are considered loss, danger, waste and decay in the left-right framework of bourgeois politics, things like concern with the self, the questions: who am I? what do I want? where am I headed?, in short all the original sins of individualism, lead to a different type of identity of the political: life-and-death politics.

Perhaps this new quality of the political will become comprehensible if one first pays attention to the hysterias that arise here. The pollution of air, water and foodstuffs certainly increases allergies in the medical, but also in the psychological sense of the word. Everyone is caught up in defensive battles of various types, anticipating the surrounding hostile substances in one's manner of living and eating. Those substances lie in ambush everywhere, invisibly. In other words, in ecological culture the most general and the most intimate things are directly and inescapably interconnected in the depths of private life. Private life becomes in essence the plaything of scientific results and theories, or of public controversies and conflicts. The questions of a distant world of chemical formulas burst forth with deadly seriousness in the inmost recesses of personal life conducted as questions of self, identity and existence and cannot be ignored. In global risk society, then, privacy as the small-

est conceivable unity of the political contains world society, to use the image of the Russian dolls once again. The political nestles down in the middle of private life and torments us.

What constitutes the political, the politicizing aspect of life politics? First, inescapability, which, second, stands in contradiction to the principles of private sovereignty and, third, can no longer claim the character of natural constraints (in the original sense of the word). In contrast to the claims of modernity to order and decision-making, a new compulsory experience comes into being, which neither coincides with nor should be confused with the dependence on nature in earlier centuries or the class experience of the industrial epoch.

This is the experience of the 'nature fate' produced by civilization, in which the reflexive ego culture experiences and suffers the relentlessness of its technical constructivity and its global society. Now the microcosm of personal life conduct is interconnected with the macrocosm of terribly insoluble global problems. In order to take a breath without second thoughts, one ultimately has to - or ought to - turn the ordering of the world upside down.

This arouses an existential survival interest in scientific categories, sources of error, and perspectives, of which the earlier humanists could only dream. The philosophical issues of existentialism, for instance, become part of everyday life, almost burning issues. Søren Kierkegaard's concern with anxiety as the other side of freedom, for instance, or the issues of who defines and makes decisions on life and death and in what way, force themselves upon everyone in the distress of having to make a decision and become great issues which electrify everyone.

This new symbiosis of philosophy and everyday life shows up strikingly in the issues which people are forced to decide by advanced medicine and genetic engineering. Those developments are tantamount to a democratization of God. They force people into questions that earlier cultures and religions had projected on to God or the gods. The successes of reproductive medicine and genetic engineering will soon put parents and doctors in a position to select qualities of the coming generation negatively or, eventually, perhaps positively as well. It is already possible to recognize certain 'congenital diseases', as they are called, at an early stage and, in combination with abortion, to prevent the birth of a child with these probability characteristics. It is foreseeable that the choice of male or female offspring could also be 'regulated' in this way - unless there are explicit, difficult-to-monitor prohibitions which also apply

mainly to a certain cultural group. And all of this is just the beginning of a long series of scientific revolutions.

The quality of the political which is emerging here is capable of changing society in an existential sense.⁴⁰ If the developments of human biology and genetics continue to be implemented solely as called for by the market, the constitution, freedom of research and the belief in medical progress, then the cumulative effect will be, in the truest sense of the word, a profound 'genetic' change of society, and not by parliamentary or governmental decision. Instead, this will occur through the unpolitical private sphere, the decision of millions of individuals, parents and mothers, with the advice of doctors and such bureaucratic test-tube creatures as 'genetic counsellors'. The utopias of eugenic progress from previous centuries will probably not be enforced from above with organized cruelty and brutality, as was National Socialist racial insanity (although that cannot be ruled out).

The 'executive branch' of the genetic cultural and social revolution in the future is the individual decision of the 'private individual'. The patient will become a revolutionary in his or her own cause. The genetic engineering revolution is extra-parliamentary. The formula 'the private is the political' thus acquires a secondary biotechnical meaning, which can quickly become its primary one. As was said, the history of humanity, its peril and its tragedy, is only just beginning, for technology, in its intensified application to the genetic realm, is becoming the birthplace of religious wars which, unlike their forebears in the late Middle Ages, can no longer be neutralized by the state. First intimations of the fundamentalist conflicts that face late biotechnical modernity can already be felt in the disputes over legalized abortion. In 'body politics', so emotionally charged with identity issues, religious wars between groups with conflicting lifestyles are waiting at every fork in the road.

Vocation as political action

One of the key questions will be the extent to which these antagonisms impact back on the guardians of rationality, the experts. After all, the question of power is raised in institutions when alternatives are worked out and expert groups rivalling over substantive issues collide.

Vocations and professions - understood as 'brand-name products' on the labour market, as commodity-like, licensed compe-

tence⁴¹ – are the guardians of a certain form of normalized sub-politics. Personal-social identity is connected in these 'labour force patterns' with the right and the duty to arrange the substance of work. Vocational groups possess the productive intelligence and the power to arrange things in society. This can have varying meanings. Some contribute to the public welfare in a policy of small steps, others conduct health policy and still others 'improve the world' with genetic engineering. The professional form provides protection against the injustices of the labour market by protecting opportunities for strategic action even with respect to the plants, the purchasers of labour power.

There is a second factor connected to this: vocations and professions are (possible) foci of bourgeois oppositional politics. In addition to the struggles for social and legal security, the franchise and the right of assembly, this is a centre of obstinacy for self-assured individuality. The heterogeneity of the intelligentsia, the variability of its situations, intentions and views and the constant internal quarrelling, the contempt and lack of consideration its members practise in their dealings with one another – all of these make the intelligentsia anything in the world except a 'class' in any politically practicable sense of that term.

Third, professions are *de facto* agents in a global society of specialists, and this concretely existing supranationality predestines them to be agents of global solutions.

Fourth, the (reflexive) sub-politicization of the experts occurs to precisely the extent to which alternative rationalities and opportunities for action are produced and contrasted inside the professional and expert fields.

Technocracy ends with the alternatives which break open in the techno-economic process and polarize it. These alternatives become fundamental and detailed, professional and profitable, found careers, open markets and perhaps even global markets. They divide up the power bloc of the economy in this way and thereby make possible and enforce new conflicts and constellations between and inside the institutions, parties, interest groups and public spheres of all types, and as far as and as soon as all this occurs, the image of the indifferent self-referentiality of social systems shatters. The systems themselves become subject to arrangement. Like social classes, social systems also fade in the wake of reflexive modernization. Their continued existence becomes dependent upon decisions and legitimation, and therefore changeable. Opportunities for alternative

action will therefore be the death of the individual-dependent systems.

An essential role is played here by the issue of how deeply alternative activity affects and even splits the ranks of expert rationality. Until now, this was unthinkable, or at least not a concrete threat. Three conditions have changed this: the transition from simple to reflexive scientization, the ecological issue and the penetration of feminist orientations into the various professions and fields of occupational activity.

Where the sciences and expert disciplines adopt and illuminate each other's foundations, consequences and errors, the same thing happens to expert rationality which simple scientization accomplished with lay rationality. Its shortcomings become discernible, questionable, capable of arrangement and rearrangement. The ecological issue penetrates into all occupational fields and makes itself felt in substantive controversies over methods, calculation procedures, norms, plans and routines. In any case, the existence of ecological splits in the occupational groups becomes an essential indicator and gauge of the stability of classical industrial society.

The same applies in a different way to feminist critiques of science and the professions, whenever they are not content with merely denouncing the professional exclusion of women but go on to criticize the professional monopoly on rationality and praxis and to redefine and compose specialist competence with inter-professional acumen and methodology. They do so, furthermore, not individually but organized and in a group.

This is how an ideal cracks up. Experts can solve differences of opinion, so the presumption goes, by means of their methodology and their scientific and technical norms. If only one conducts research long enough, then the opposing arguments will fall silent and unity and clarity will prevail. The exact opposite could occur. Research that inquires further and into more difficult questions, taking up all the objections and making them its own, this kind of reflexive research breaks up its own claims to clarity and monopoly; it simultaneously elevates both the dependence on justification and the uncertainty of all arguments.

It is an obvious objection that all of those things are speculations, which are being pushed aside by the hard maxims of free-market success. After all, many will say or hope, we are concerned with fleeting opinions, with agreements that can be revoked once and

then granted again, with their banners largely fluttering in the wind of the economic climate. A juicy depression (no matter how regrettable its details might be), combined with mass unemployment eroding the substance and the self-confidence of the populace, drives away these spectres and resurrects the old guidelines of classical industrialization like the phoenix from the ashes.

This objection may apply under certain early conditions of ecological critique, but this is less and less true when business itself profits from the successes and hazards it has created. If sectors come into existence which build up their existence and their markets upon the recognition and elimination of hazards, then even the centres of economic power are split into orthodox believers and reformists, reformers, environmental Protestants, ecological converts. If it becomes an established view that ecological solutions, as well as ecological competency and intelligence in all fields of society, are conformist not only in terms of values but also with respect to the marketplace, in the long run perhaps even the world market, then trenches between losers and winners in the ecological competition for (economic) survival open up and become deeper. Ecology becomes a hit, a self-seller – at least in the form of ecological cosmetics or packaging. The resistance of the one half of the economy and society encounters a grand coalition of the alarmed public, the eco-profiteers and the eco-careerists in industry, the administration, science and politics. That means, however, that alternatives open up, co-operation becomes uncertain and coalitions must be forged, endured and fought out, which in turn cause further polarization. This precisely accelerates the circle of power disintegration in the institutions.

Along with the threat and the general perception of it, a highly legitimate interest in preventing and eliminating it arises. The ecological crisis produces and cultivates a cultural Red Cross consciousness. It transforms everyday, trivial, unimportant things into tests of courage in which heroism can be exhibited. Far from intensifying and confirming the general pointlessness of modernity, ecological threats create a substantive semantic horizon of avoidance, prevention and helping. This is a moral climate and milieu that intensifies with the size of the threat, in which the dramatic roles of heroes and villains achieve a new everyday meaning. Sisyphus legends spring up. Even negative fatalism – 'nothing works any more, it's all too late' – is ultimately only a variant of that. This is precisely the background against which the role of Cassandra can become a vocation or a career.

The ecological issue, the perception of the world in the co-ordinate system of ecological-industrial self-imperilment, turn morality, religion, fundamentalism, hopelessness, tragedy, suicide and death – always intermingled with the opposite, salvation or help – into a universal drama. In this concrete theatre, this continuing drama, this everyday horror comedy, business is free to take on the role of the villain and poisoner, or to slip into the role of the hero and helper and celebrate this publicly. Whether that solves anything is another matter. The cultural stages of the ecological issue modernize archaism. There are dragons and dragon-slayers here, odysseys, gods and demons, except that these are now played, split up, assigned and refused with shared roles in all spheres of action – in politics, law, the administration, and not least of all in business. In the ecological issue, a postmodern, jaded, saturated, meaningless, and fatalistic *pâté de foie gras* culture creates a Herculean task for itself, which acts as a stimulus everywhere and splits business into *Untergangster* (gangsters of doom) and Robin Hoods.

Drawing on Volker von Prittwitz, one can distinguish two systematic constellations in the ecological conflict.⁴² The first constellation is the *blockade*, where polluter industries and affected groups face one another exclusively and spectacularly. This confrontational constellation begins to move only in a second constellation, in which (a) helper interests awaken and (b) the coalition of concealment between polluters and potential losers becomes brittle. This occurs to the extent that parts of business, but also of the professional intelligentsia (engineers, researchers, lawyers and judges), slip into the role of rescuer and helper, that is to say, they discover the ecological issue as a construction of power and markets, that is as an expansion of power and markets. This, in turn, presupposes that industrial society becomes an industrial society with a bad conscience, that it understands and indicts itself as a risk society. Only in that way can helping and coping industries and careers develop themselves and their heroism, which both motivates and skims off profits. This presumes a turning away from mere criticism and the transition to the siege of the *status quo* by alternatives. The ecological issue must be worked down into other questions: technology, development, production arrangements, product policy, type of nutrition, lifestyles, legal norms, organizational and administrative forms, and so on.

Only a society which awakes from the pessimism of the confrontational constellation and conceives of the ecological issue as a providential gift for the universal self-reformation of a previously

fatalistic industrial modernity can exhaust the potential of the helping and heroic roles and gain the impetus from them, not to conduct cosmetic ecology on a grand scale but to actually assure viability in the future. Ecology cancels out objective apoliticism of the economic sphere. The latter splits up in its sinfulness, it can be split all the way into its management, into the personality and the identity of the people on all levels of action. This splitting and susceptibility to division into the sinful and those absolved of sin permits a 'political trade of indulgences' and restores to politics the power instruments of 'papal jurisdiction and misjurisdiction', the public exhibition and self-castigation of the great industrial sinners, even the public torture implements of an 'ecological inquisition'. Most politicians shy away from this in their kindness in keeping with public expectations. The professional swimmers-upstream in the ecological movement seem to lack the political charisma and realism to pull those instruments out of the political tool chest by themselves.

NOTES

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- 1 The notion of 'reflexive modernization' is used by A. Giddens in his books *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990, and *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991, and by S. Lash in 'Reflexive modernization: the aesthetic dimension', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1993, pp. 1-24. I used it in my book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage, 1992; in the context of ecological crises in my book *Gegengifte: Die organisierte Unverantwortlichkeit*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988, English title *Ecological Politics in the Age of Risk*, Cambridge: Polity, 1994; in the context of sex roles, family and love in U. Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *Das ganz normale Chaos der Liebe*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990, English title *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Cambridge: Polity, 1994. See also W. Zapf (ed.), *Die Modernisierung moderner Gesellschaften*, Frankfurt: Campus, 1991.
- 2 K. Marx and F. Engels, 'Communist Manifesto', *Werke*, vol. V, Berlin: Volktausgabe, 1972, p. 465. Cf. also M. Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, New York: Verso, 1982.
- 3 Cf. *Ecological Politics in the Age of Risk*, chapter IV.

- 4 This theme is developed in Part Two of my *Risk Society*.
- 5 U. Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim (eds), *Risikante Freiheiten: zur Individualisierung von Lebensformen in der Moderne*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1994.
- 6 W. Bonss, 'Ungewissheit als soziologisches Problem', *Mittelweg*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1993, pp. 20f.
- 7 Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991.
- 8 Review by Z. Bauman, 'The solution as problem', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 13 November 1992, p. 25.
- 9 Cf. François Ewald, *L'Etat Providence*, Paris: Grasset, 1986.
- 10 But then the pitch-black pessimism with which Bauman paints becomes antiquated, in the sense of empirically false.
- 11 W. Grant, W. Paterson and C. Whitston, *Government and the Chemical Industry*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988; R. Bogun, M. Osterlund and G. Warsawa, 'Arbeit und Umwelt im Risikobewusstsein von Industriearbeitern', *Soziale Welt*, vol. 2, 1992, pp. 237-45; H. Heine, 'Das Verhältnis der Naturwissenschaftler und Ingenieure in der Grosschemie zur ökologischen Industriekritik', *Soziale Welt*, vol. 2, 1992, pp. 246-55; L. Pries, *Betrieblicher Wandel in der Risikogesellschaft*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991; D. Nelkin (ed.), *Controversy: Politics of Technical Decisions*, London: Sage, 1992.
- 12 In this context W. Zapf wrote: 'Commenting critically, I would like to say that the position of Ulrich Beck is so fascinating because it holds firm both to the programme of modernization as well as to a fundamental critique of current society, including the majority of today's sociology. Beck wants a new modernity and a more insightful, more conscientious and more reflected, in short a reflexive theory. It is capable of winning over the adherents of the Critical Theory of the 1930s and 1960s, for whom Adorno's dictum applies: the totality is the untrue. It can assimilate the disillusioned Marxists, whose dreams of socialism have disintegrated, but who now are shown that free-market democracies must also fail because of their own contradictions. The theory is a modernized variant of the doctrine of late capitalism, where the ecological crisis now takes over the role previously played by the legitimization crisis of late capitalism. It is another theory of the third way beyond socialism and capitalism' ('Entwicklung und Zukunft moderner Gesellschaften', in H. Korte and B. Schäfers (eds), *Einführung in die Hauptbegriffe der Soziologie*, Opladen: Budrich, 1992, pp. 204f.
- 13 'Individualization' has been discussed in Germany in social sciences, public and politics during the 1980s and 1990s. For documentation see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Risikante Freiheiten*.
- 14 A. Heath and N. Britten, 'Women's jobs do make a difference', *Sociology*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1990, and the discussion that follows.
- 15 Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, pp. 63ff; I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, New York: Academic, 1974; T. Roszak, *Person*

- Planet: the Creative Disintegration of Industrial Society*, London: Gollancz, 1979.
- 16 Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*: see also S. Lash and J. Friedman (eds), *Modernity & Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; S. Lash, *Sociology of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1990.
- 17 B. Jessop, *State Theory*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990.
- 18 Cf. my *Risk Society*, Part Three.
- 19 At the same time, this very thing means a 'radicalization' of modernity. This does not mean an acceleration of acceleration but rather the vindication of the principles of modernity against their division by industrialism, their industrial form. To put it politically: self-limitation, self-criticism and self-reform of industrial modernity in the consistent application of modernity to itself.
- 20 G. Böhme, *Natürlich Natur: über Natur im Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992.
- 21 On this see H. Willke, *Die Ironie des Staates*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992.
- 22 On the following see, among others, M. Hoffmann-Riem and J. Schmidt-Assmann (eds), *Konfliktbewältigung durch Verhandlung*, Baden-Baden: Aspekte, 1990.
- 23 This is discussed in my book *Ecological Enlightenment*, New York: Humanity, 1993.
- 24 G. Schulze, *Erlebnisgesellschaft*, Frankfurt: Campus, 1992; S. Lash, 'Reflexive modernization'.
- 25 For the recontextualization of science see W. Bonss, R. Hohlfeld and R. Kollek, 'Risiko und Kontext', discussion paper, Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, May 1990. For the rethinking of subsystemic procedures see M. A. Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: a Study of the Acid Rain Controversy in Great Britain and the Netherlands*, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1993.
- 26 K. von Beyme, *Theorie der Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991, p. 343.
- 27 H. M. Enzensberger, *Mittelmass und Wahn*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991, pp. 230f.
- 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 228f.
- 29 H. Schwengel, 'Die Zukunft des Politischen', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, vol. 65/6, 1987, p. 18.
- 30 C. Böhret, *Die Handlungsfähigkeit des Staates am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, unpublished manuscript, Speyer, 1992, pp. 9f.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Willke, *Die Ironie des Staates*, pp. 296, 303.
- 33 Since throwing 'leftist theory' out of the saddle, the question 'What is left?' (Steven Lukes) is beginning to split the remaining groups and splinter groups. We observe the novel phenomenon of a restorationist left. The old right-wing question is haunting many left-wing minds: was everything wrong just because a couple of Stalins and Honeckers made a mess of things? Even the individual in history is being redi-

covered, if the point is to play socialism off against its (mis)leaders and protect it in that way. Now the left is practising what it always criticized in the right, namely foreshortening history to the history of heroes, by claiming that individuals and not conditions brought about the collapse of communism. Against the triumphal shouting of victorious capitalism, so the question and demand goes, is it not incumbent upon people to stand up for the old principles, to distinguish ideal from concrete socialism, and to justify and proclaim the utopian ideal of socialism now more than ever? Is it not particularly 'Western' [German] opportunists' who are chasing after the Zeitgeist and opportunistically sacrificing the insights and outlooks of Western social critique?

- 34 S. Lukes, 'What's Left?', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, July 1992.
- 35 W. Heitmeyer, *Rechtsextremistische Orientierungen bei Jugendlichen*, Weilheim: Yurenta, 1991.
- 36 N. Luhmann, *Soziologie des Risikos*, Berlin: Springer, 1991.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 The example of genetic engineering speaks against this, however: there are many evidences of resistance; see for example E. Beck-Gernsheim, 'Wider das Paradigma des Kriegsschauplatzes', *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften*, vol. 3, 1992.
- 39 Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 214.
- 40 For this see E. Beck-Gernsheim, *Technik, Markt und Moral*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992 (English translation forthcoming from Humanity Press, New York).
- 41 Cf. U. Beck, M. Brater and H. J. Daheim, *Soziologie der Arbeit und der Berufe*, Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1980.
- 42 V. von Prittwitz, *Das Katastrophen-Paradox*, Opladen: Budrich, 1990.