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STUDIES

HABERMAS'S SELF-CORRECTION

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Abstract: Differences between some sentences in the German original of 1981 and their English translation of 1984 were found in Volume 1 of Habermas's magnum opus. It turned out to be an accurate self-correction by Habermas, which created there a concise summary of the teleological aspects of his speech act theory. This increased the linguistic devotion of his argument, but weakened the practical, societal influence of his theory of communicative action. Some other topics within the voluminous secondary literature on Habermas are also touched: the meaning spectrum of the key term *'Verständigung'* ('Understanding'), problems around the validity claims, and the formal, procedural character of his theory, i.e. the lack of substantive, causal factors. The latter traits and behind them Habermas's close connection with the dominant philosophical trend of the 'linguistic turn' (Rorty 1967) are supposed to have led to the fact that Habermas's theory has failed to redeem possible hopes about social awakening effects in the late 20th century. Yet, Habermas's life-work has epochal significance. Besides complementing the 'paradigm of production' with the one of communicative interaction, deepening the concept of modern democracy, highlighting the significance of interpersonal social connections through the elaboration of the 'lifeworld' concept, Habermas's work in providing theoretical foundations to understand the age of modernity is of key importance. Through analyzing 'the unfinished project of modernity, of the Enlightenment', whose contemporary defects 'can only be made good by further enlightenment', Habermas sums up the very essence of our age of globalization, of capitalism. He provides a program for all social scientific workshops still following the paradigm of historical progress and working for a developed, humane and democratic society, but sometimes being on the defensive today. The extension and supplementation of Habermas's theory of modernity, with a 'social turn' (Roderick 1986) and a 'causal turn' is being proposed.

Keywords: Habermas, communicative action, speech acts, validity claims, the paradigm of production and the paradigm of communication, the unfinished project of modernity and of the Enlightenment, 'linguistic turn', 'social turn' , 'causal turn'

This year (at the time of writing the manuscript) just a quarter of a century has passed since the original, first German edition of Habermas's (1981a) influential

magnum opus was published, and this anniversary renders specific timeliness to what is said below.

In what follows I first tell about some dry details of the tiny but interesting changes of text in this illustrious book, and then I get down to the theoretical significance of the experienced facts. Meanwhile I join the wide camp of those debating and criticizing various parts of Habermas's immense oeuvre, and finally I expose my opinion about the fundamental, epochal significance of his life-work.*

THE STORY

Reading Habermas I found an interesting disparity first perceived between the (1982) second German edition of the first volume of Habermas's above mentioned main work and the (1984) English edition of the same first volume. In the third chapter of the first volume Habermas, following Austin's classification of the speech acts, is working on his own interpretation, and here a brief discrepancy of 2 to 3 sentences can be found between the German text and the English text. On page 394 of the German text the last sentence of the second paragraph, as well as the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 395 differ from the corresponding parts of the text of the English translation. The latter appear on page 293 of the 1984 English translation of the first volume, where they constitute the last two sentences of the second paragraph and the last sentence of the third paragraph. Thus in the places of the two German sentences[1] indicated above, altogether three English sentences[2] can be found on page 293 of the English translation – with their meaning different from the German original.

Since the basis of the English translation had been the first, 1981 German edition, for a short while I believed that perhaps Habermas had carried out some modifications between the first and second German editions. But in various European libraries I had the time to check several copies of both German editions and I saw complete identity of the texts everywhere. I had to readily accept such an item of information from librarian sources that all subsequent German editions of the first volume up to 1988 can be regarded as identical reprints.

Then the change might have originated during the translation – I thought that time. In the 1984 English edition of the first volume, on page vi of the 'Translator's Introduction' I indeed found such a sentence where the translator, the famous Thomas

* My grateful acknowledgements are due to Péter Somlai, to whom a few years ago I mentioned the differences of text described below, and he raised for me the idea of writing an article about this finding. I am also greatly indebted to him for his criticism of an earlier draft of this article. Responsibility for possible weaknesses is mine.

1 'Ein mit Hilfe eines Sprechaktes unternommener Verständigungsversuch gelingt, wenn ein Sprecher im Sinne Austins sein illokutionäres Ziel erreicht.' and 'Dieses Modell verständigungsorientierten Handelns, das ich noch entwickeln werde, wird durch die Art, wie Austin zwischen Illokutionen und Perlokutionen unterscheidet, eher verdunkelt.'

2 'From this it also follows that we cannot explain illocutionary success in terms of the conditions for the purposively achieved success of a teleological action. Illocutionary aims are different from those purposes that can be achieved under the description of something to be brought about in the world.' (emphasis omitted) and 'They cannot be intended under the description of causally produced effects.'

McCarthy reveals that the volume at issue is 'a translation with minor revisions'. So, obviously he was the one performing the changes, I thought at this point. Then the logical question seemed to be: what did his good friend, Habermas himself think about this? It is well-known that they have been closely cooperating for decades. I asked McCarthy by e-mail whether he had discussed the modifications at issue with Habermas separately, and whether they had been suggested precisely by Habermas himself, or else Habermas trusted his friend magnanimously to do all the corrections throughout the whole work. In this latter case the changes at issue would have been made by McCarthy.

Professor McCarthy answered the following: 'Dear Dr. Dombos, Thank you for your note. Habermas went through the completed translations and made whatever changes he thought suitable for the English edition (hence the 'minor revisions' clause); that must have been one of them. I made no changes myself. Best wishes, T. McCarthy.' Thus the puzzle for me was solved: McCarthy had not changed anything. Habermas is not only a great thinker but obviously a careful, scrupulous person too. Thus all the experienced changes had come from him and constitute a well-considered self-correction.

The result is now only slightly complicated by the publication of Habermas's (1984: 273–338) very important Chapter III from his main work at issue separately, in a selection within Habermas (1999: 105–182, Chapter 2), edited by M. Cooke. In another work Cooke (1994: 'Author's Notes') reveals that she often translates or newly translates Habermas's texts into English. Despite this, Cooke as editor indicates in the Habermas (1999: vii) volume that the chapter at issue is published not in her own but in McCarthy's translation from 1984. Certainly, but there the above mentioned few sentences of the text are not entirely identical with the text on the page of Habermas (1984: 293). To be sure, the discrepancy here is very little, it mainly involves the continuing presence, in the text of Habermas (1999: 127), edited by Cooke, of a peculiar sentence in which Habermas makes a somewhat ironical remark about Austin. This sentence is already missing in 1984. In the beginning of the subsequent paragraph a few introductory words of little significance are also different in '1999' from the 1984 text.

These signs indicate that the publishers have two versions even of the translated text already controlled and modified by Habermas. In an earlier, so to say, intermediate version three new English sentences are already at their place, but the English translation of the ironical sentence is still also in the text. After about a decade and a half a publisher happened to give to Cooke's disposal this intermediate version, which had come into existence earlier in time. But finalizing the 1984 English edition the scrupulous Habermas obviously looked the text through once more, erased the ironical sentence, replaced a few minor words in the beginning of the subsequent paragraph, and the result became the final text getting into the English first volume in 1984.

For that matter, this magnum opus of Habermas has an excellent Hungarian translation too, made from the German original and published in 1985, which in the case of some chapters constitutes concise, lucid summaries. The sentences under discussion can be found on page 95 of this Hungarian edition, which I denote as Habermas (1985), they constitute the very last sentences of the third and fourth paragraphs, and the latter one contains the remark about Austin.

What the changes made in the text by Habermas himself mean as regards substance will be explicated below, but first I have to say a few words about the question whether it is decent to criticize a scholar of such a great stature as Habermas.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HABERMAS?

A question about the decency of criticizing Habermas would be somewhat odd outside Hungary, since many authors have already written such critiques. The impressive life-work of Habermas, and his main work at issue in particular, have generated a great quantity of secondary sociological literature. A significant part of this is criticism, together with arguments, supplementation, suggestions, thus mostly constructive but sometimes rather emphatic criticism. In Hungary the situation is perhaps slightly different. I may be subjectively mistaken, but to me a vague impression occurred not too long ago that to criticize Habermas may still have meant something wrong in the eyes of some Hungarian sociologists, for unknown reason. This may have been so despite the fact that some protest has been raised against an unconditional idolization of great names, for instance, by Némedi (2000: 8), who put before us precisely the positive examples of Durkheim and Habermas: 'Both were doubtful in face of traditions demanding unconditional reverence.'

Also Némedi (2000: 209–225) himself reviews a book by Honneth and Joas (1986), which sums up a part of the wide-ranging debate around Habermas's (1981a) main work, with several authors criticizing Habermas. A four-volume composition of similar character is made public by Rasmussen and Swindal (2002) with 79 studies dealing with various parts of Habermas's oeuvre, and most of them contains trains of thought criticizing Habermas's views constructively but often rather severely, while frequently supplementing, developing them at the same time. I am far from having the aim of attempting any systematic review of the criticism concerning Habermas, I only very briefly mention here a few critical reflections that I consider typical.

Dodd (1999: 120–121) asserts that Habermas's system of thought about the foundations of the rationality of human action and human social praxis, at least 'the concept of communicative reason', in order to be normatively effective, 'must be theoretically robust'. But a 'closer analysis' in this respect 'raises severe doubts that it is', Dodd (1999: 121) claims. He asserts that Habermas 'builds a generalized model of modern society on what turn out to be precarious foundations' (Dodd 1999: 124). Zimmermann (1984) reveals his opinion about the Utopian character of Habermas's theory of communicative consensus, and Rasmussen (1990:41–45) also considers such misgivings justified. Sárkány and Somlai (2003: 20–21), speaking about 'the progressivist theory of society conceived in the project of the enlightenment' assert that Habermas tried to recompose the evolutionist approach in accord with the 'original intentions of the enlightenment – the 'project' of the enlightenment'. Here these authors express the view that '(i)t is doubtful, whether this has succeeded.'

As regards me, drawn from the 'volumes of critical commentary' (Dodd 1999: 120) concerning Habermas I see four topics to be the most interesting, and these are the following:

1) Some degree of wavering between 'comprehension' and 'consensus' within the interpretation of Habermas's absolute key word: 'Verständigung', that is, 'Understanding'. Habermas (1979: 3) himself readily reveals that the word 'understanding' is ambiguous. In its minimal meaning it expresses linguistic comprehension, and in its maximal meaning it expresses an accord, the scholar says already at the outset. Nevertheless, his next sentence, the one at the end of the paragraph, immediately contains a certain degree of fluctuation between its own two parts. Cooke (1994: 9) characterizes this problem with refined euphemism by saying that 'Verständigung' is a 'notoriously difficult word to translate'. It 'refers both to linguistic understanding and to the process of reaching agreement, thus extending across a spectrum of meaning ranging from comprehension to consensus' – she adds (ibid.).

2) Those questions connected with the teleological aspects of the 'speech acts' and hence of the whole theory of communicative action. Habermas's careful self-correction mentioned above has modified some important sentences dealing precisely with this topic in his main work, and I wish to dwell on this a little more in detail below.

3) The topic of the elementary 'validity claims' connected with the speech acts. Some critics consider the merely three validity claims defined by Habermas – (normative) rightness, truth, truthfulness – to be unsatisfactory for the representation, characterization of the very complex, multi-coloured world of reality. For instance, Cooke (1994: 51–94) criticizes the mentioned triad of validity claims on several points, and finally she finds that everyday language contains not merely three but many variegated validity claims, any of which can be raised separately.

It is interesting that Cooke (ibid.) as well as, for example, Dorschel (1988) see precisely the validity claim of normative, societal rightness as specifically problematic. For that matter, among the three 'claims' this one seems to play the most significant role within the complicated system of Habermas's theory, perhaps because it could supposedly contribute the best to the formation of a contingent social accord based on communication. But both the above scholars suggest that some forms of Habermas's normative rightness validity claim are often not internal, creative parts but only external, regulative factors of one speech act or another. On a higher level the trains of thoughts of the moral, ethical parts of Habermas's theory ('communicative morality', 'discourse ethics') are indeed built on the – imagined – social process of attaining multipersonal communicative accord based on the normative rightness validity claim. According to Habermas's (1976: 89) idea, the validity of all norms be it law or ethics, could be and indeed should be tied to and based on 'discursive will-formation' in discussions, debates. A similar train of thought prevails in that part of Habermas's theory analyzing communicative rationality. All these parts of his ideas are criticized on the basis of raising the problems of the multicultural cases by several authors, for instance, Rehg (1999), Dodd (1999: 126–127).

4) I consider those critical reflections concerning Habermas's voluminous life-work, or any part of it, the most significant which, in contrast with the formal, procedural theory-building by Habermas, emphasize the necessity of dealing with substantive elements, causal factors, just missing from Habermas's analysis. For instance, Benhabib (1986: 320–321), examining Habermas's ethical theory with communicative foundations ('discourse ethics'), points out that this can only go through if the

participants are willing to suspend the motivating force and contents of the real conflict situations. In connection with the same topic Rehg (1999) states that social conflicts have first and foremost an objective character, thus a basic precondition of any accord desired to be accomplished in a communicative way may be the taking into consideration of the practical factors of reality. The formal, procedural character of Habermas's theory, the lack of dealing with substantive, causal factors is criticized, among others, by Heller (1982: 25–32), Whitebook (1984: 24–29), Roderick (1986: 160). Taylor (1991) also considers Habermas's formalism excessive and holds that, for instance, in case of moral questions – besides discursive procedures – the knowledge of substantive, causal factors is necessary. Giddens (1982: 159) views the essence of the matter correctly when he speaks of the 'absent core' of Habermas's theory.

From these four topics mentioned above now I intend to deal in more detail only with the second one, because this is directly connected with the topic of Habermas's self-correction described above.

THE RESULT OF THE SELF-CORRECTION

Habermas performed the self-correction mentioned, we can say, at an important place within the English text of his main work. As it has turned out from Habermas (1999: 127), edited by Cooke, the scholar carried out this manoeuvre in two steps, and the elimination by the polite Habermas of the ironical remark still left in the English text was only the second step in time. (This remark can be read in the accurate Hungarian translation [Habermas 1985: 95] as the last sentence of the fourth paragraph on the page indicated.) After analyzing carefully and in some respects critically Austin's classification of speech acts, Habermas [1981a Band 1: 395]) makes the remark at issue, which in English (Habermas 1999: 127) sounds as follows: 'This model of action oriented towards reaching understanding, which I develop below, is obscured rather than illuminated by Austin's distinction between illocutions and perlocutions.' I take the liberty to note that in my humble opinion Habermas's remark was entirely justified, he could have really left it even in the finalized English text of the 1984 edition.

Of course, this is only a nice anecdotal episode, a tiny workshop secret of the great social scientist; however, the first step in time of the mentioned self-correction has a much more serious significance. Namely, those altogether three English sentences which finally got into the place of the two omitted German sentences – one not too significant and one ironical – contain a reasonably digested, concise summary of Habermas's standpoint here.

Although Habermas (1984: 279–288), starting from Weber's theory of action, in a nutshell outlines a brief synopsis of a general theory of action, he obviously did not strive after a detailed elaboration of such a general action theory. Even in the light of this, it is surprising that through the self-correction at issue here, Habermas, following Austin's speech act classification, simply locks out the vast majority of real actions from the notion of communicative action.

(According to Austin, a simple utterance is a 'locutionary' speech act; if a performative verb calling attention to it, for instance, 'I tell you that...', is added, then

the whole complex together becomes an 'illocutionary' speech act; and if it has any /perhaps hidden/ purpose, then the speech act is 'perlocutionary'.) Scilicet, in the three new English sentences Habermas explains here that those speech acts having purposes 'that can be achieved under the description of something to be brought about in the world' are not illocutionary but perlocutionary (after Austin). Thereby they have to belong to the sphere of strategic action and not to communicative action. To the latter only 'illocutionary success' can belong, which cannot be 'purposively achieved success of a teleological action' and 'cannot be intended under the description of causally produced effects' (Habermas 1984: 293).

Thus in this version, made known throughout the world by the English translation, the self-correction made by Habermas strengthens the realization that, according to the detailed analysis by means of the speech acts, the sphere of communicative action is in fact a narrow reserve. Tugendhat (1985: 185) explicates a similar thought when he characterizes that group of communicative acts containing validity claims as a subclass of a subclass.

Some analyses by famous Hungarian experts of Habermas' s topics also contain such a realization, though without the critical edge perhaps overemphasized by me, only as objective perception of facts. To be sure, I believe to find a similar realization (even perhaps against its author's intention) in Balogh's (2000: 113–137, especially 125) analysis when it turns out that 'through the switching off' of the 'problem of discourse community' Habermas's 'theoretical construct', so to say, 'cuts out from the lifeworld' the 'communicative situation' (composed and translated from the Hungarian original). And the excellent Felkai (1993: 203) writes as follows: 'We know that the notion of communicative action with Habermas ... is based on idealizations, and that Habermas himself too considers action aimed at mutual understanding to be tiny islands on the sea of disagreements.' (Translated from the Hungarian original).

Culler (1985) also criticizes the teleological aspects of Habermas's speech act theory, namely, the differences and the relationship between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary speech acts, which form the basis of the differences and the relationship between the communicative and the strategic actions. He criticizes these aspects in a way similar to the result of the self-correction examined here.

The self-correction performed by Habermas in the midst of the details of the speech act theory with masterly digestion thus improved the text itself, made the argument more unambiguous, but in a paradoxical way it decreased the practical strength of Habermas's theory of communicative action, weakened its efficiency, if you like, narrowed its possible societal influence.

It is also noteworthy that Habermas is not entirely consequent, here and there contradicts himself too. Differently from his above cited standpoint, backed by the self-correction within the detailed explication of his speech act theory, in an earlier chapter of the same (1984) volume, where he only sums up his theory in a preliminary way, Habermas says something else. There he still says that 'the teleological structure is fundamental to all concepts of action' (emphasis omitted). He also reveals that 'communicative action is not exhausted by the act of reaching understanding in an interpretive manner' (emphasis omitted), because 'the interpretive accomplishments … represent the mechanism for coordinating action' (emphasis omitted) (Habermas

1984: 101). This is a more reasonable version. It is also interesting to observe that from time to time Habermas hesitates, and even within the detailed explication of the topic he sometimes returns to the more reasonable, earlier version. Such a case is, for example, the analysis of a sentence aimed at stopping smoking (Habermas 1984: 298–301). Together with some possible causal factors in its background this sentence may have 'causally produced effects' with 'something to be brought about in the world' (cf. ibid. 293).

In order to shed light on the essence of the topic of communicative action with Habermas, it is worth contemplating on the example of certain actions belonging to the biological reproduction of the human species. If we follow the strict version of the theory seen at the detailed description of the speech act problems (Habermas 1984: 293), then, for instance, any communication preparing the feeding of children cannot be communicative action, but only strategic action, because it has a purpose, a goal, it leads to a causally produced effect, and it definitely brings about something: satisfaction, survival. However, if we follow the preliminary, shorter summary of the theory (ibid. 101), then preparatory communication serving the real action of feeding can well belong to a notion of communicative action. But as we have seen, Habermas defined this notion – created himself – not unambiguously in this way everywhere in his main work. This can be seen immediately when one stays at the detailed analysis of the speech act theory. For this reason it is easy to grasp the message of the statement of Tugendhat (1985: 185) referring to this topic, when at the end of his analysis of Habermas's argument he admits: it is not sure that Habermas could recognize his own standpoint in his (Tugendhat's) interpretation.

At any rate, there is no doubt that in reality communication can very much help both the preparation and the implementation of all kinds of human activities, but in most cases the main role is not played by mere communication. The most significant elements are those causal, motivational factors that make actual interactive action and co-operation possible at all. This is what has not or to a very little extent been examined by Habermas.

Habermas's ambitious, great theory of communicative action is very well-intentioned, but, unfortunately, using Dodd's (1999: 121) terminology, it is not 'robust' enough. In its more concise, more effective version (Habermas 1984: 101) it could well serve the analysis of the preparatory processes of cooperative actions, but for this it is lacking in taking causal factors into consideration to a proper extent. As regards its (Habermas 1984: 293, 295) version explicated in detail on the basis of the speech acts, and containing the described self-correction, in particular, there the theory is rather weak, since it formally demarcates itself from any kind of action 'bringing about something' in the world. Communicative action defined there may only be suitable for creating some kind of vague and friendly interpersonal atmosphere, for instance, with the case of 'illocutionary' conversation about the weather, that is, with nothing 'to be brought about in the world'. No doubt, the investigation of such actions is an also very benevolent and attractive aim, but for the effective analysis of the real world of human society, of 'praxis', let alone influencing it, such a theory is only suitable to a rather limited extent.

THE EPOCHAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HABERMAS

(After all that has been said so far, I have to make clear with a clumsy persiflage of Antonius that 'I came to praise Habermas's oeuvre, not to bury it'.)

Habermas cannot be criticized for not having succeeded in accomplishing such a theory that could have had serious mobilizing force of its own and could have generated significant practical societal effects. His implicit prediction by which if in the course of the sheer use of language the political and other conversations satisfy some formal conditions carefully worked out by him, then 'comprehension' in the linguistic sense within our modernizing human society will sooner or later automatically and inevitably lead to some kind of a 'consensus' as regards societal goals, unfortunately, can only be considered to be Utopian hope based on the dual meaning of his key word: 'Verständigung', that is, 'Understanding'.

Habermas cannot be blamed for all this; he accomplished a great, impressive oeuvre, a life-work of excelling stature. The source of the weaknesses of his theory cannot be sought in the standard of the scholar's own activity, but in the limitations of the philosophical trend which he had joined at an early stage in his career. Since the first part and the middle of the 20th century the rapid spread of the linguistic topics and reasoning within the philosophical works of the developed, democratic world and within that mainly the Anglo-Saxon language territory can be experienced. Using Rorty's (1967) apposite denotation: this is the trend of the 'linguistic turn', and it is still by and large dominant today. In the footsteps of philosophy the investigation of linguistic connections and the emphasis on their role has also become fashionable in various fields within the social sciences.

Habermas was faithful to this trend since an early stage of his professional work, and he has really accomplished much within the linguistic paradigm. His work is of very high standard, but the task which he put before himself to solve stretches far beyond the possibilities of the 'linguistic turn'. The essence, the implied final conclusion of the theory of basically 'linguistic' roots, which he worked out, is that through the characteristics of language – by keeping certain formal, procedural rules – the universal process of human communication itself should automatically lead to some hoped for, favorable social changes. This is what obviously does not seem to come true, to materialize even in the developed, democratic countries of our age. Sheer communication, featuring highly in the implicit hopes hidden within Habermas's communicative theory, is far from being enough for such a result, and this outcome is not at all surprising to the skeptical observer.

At a quarter of a century after the publication of Habermas's (1981a) main work it is high time to realize and acknowledge that the significant societal mobilizing effects of this work and this theory, hoped for by many, have not come true. If we see and honestly admit even the weaknesses of Habermas's theory, then from the state of expecting miracles we can get to the state of real appreciation when we view the grandiose life-work of Habermas.

Before analyzing the comprehensive social scientific significance of Habermas, it is worth mentioning with a word or two his less extensive but in themselves very important theoretical achievements, which he worked out as partial components to his grand theory.

An important but in part sometimes debated theoretical merit of Habermas (1979) was, as Roderick (1986: 136–137) aptly describes, the supplementation of the 'paradigm of production' with the 'paradigm of communication'. Habermas deals with this topic in the course of the 'reconstruction' of the Marxian 'historical materialism'. But as the justified critique by Roderick (1986: 156–157, 171) points out, later Habermas puts the emphasis so much on communication that the supplementation turned in fact into replacement. By this Habermas in effect performed an unjustified reduction; and this is also imputable to his deep devotion to the 'linguistic turn'. Nevertheless, an imperishable merit of Habermas in this field is his calling attention to the significance of not only labor but of interpersonal interaction in the process of the hominids' developing into full-fledged human beings (Habermas 1979: 131–177). Of course, he was interested first and foremost in the linguistic form of any interaction, and as he succinctly expressed: 'labor and language are older than man and society' (ibid. 137).

Another theoretical merit of Habermas (1979: 121–177) is his calling attention to the significance of learning processes on the level of the whole society, undoubtedly playing a role in the development of various societies (even if when he compared these societal learning processes with the individuals' course of learning he used cognitive psychology by means of analogies here and there controversially in detail).

An also serious merit of Habermas (1984: 1, 42; 1989: 76ff) is the composition of the theoretical notion of the 'ideal speech situation', by which he contributed to the deepening of the democracy concept of modern society, particularly through his own theory of communicative morality, or in other words, 'discourse ethics'. It is an interesting point though, that, according to Cooke (1994: 31, 172n–173n), Habermas later regretted the introduction of the notion of 'ideal speech situation' in the given form and to some extent demarcated himself from it. Nevertheless, these aspects of his theory make it certain that Habermas is a profound supporter of societal democracy. According to Tugendhat (1984) the essence of Habermas's communicative ethics lies hidden not in the linguistic connections, but in the idea of democracy. As Rasmussen (1990: 44) cites the opinion of Zimmermann (1984: 161), Habermas's radically democratic program of social emancipation and his politically important communicative ethics are connected with the sociological interpretation of the essential components of modern society. Rasmussen (1990: 80) similarly points at Habermas's (1987a: 279) standpoint of the connection between law and morality, namely, about the assertion that autonomous law, in other words, a just legal system cannot exist without the implementation of democracy.

An additional merit of Habermas is connected with the notion of 'lifeworld' ('Lebenswelt'), borrowed from Husserl. Habermas developed, elaborated it, and counter-posed it with the notion of the 'system' ('System') created by himself with a unifying view within the bosom of contemporary industrial society. According to Habermas's interpretation, the bureaucratic – both economic and administrative – 'system' subjugates, so to say, 'colonizes' the 'lifeworld'. By means of his 'lifeworld' notion Habermas called attention to the everyday sphere of contemporary industrial society, comprising interpersonal relationships, to the aggregate of local, neighborhood-, family-, friendship-, small group communities, and to the importance of making this sphere free and humane.

But Habermas became an outstanding character of late 20th century European social science not only and not primarily thanks to these partial theoretical achievements, but for giving a comprehensive world view, a positive framework to our age with his modernity concept. For understanding the very essence of our age in a social philosophical sense the conceptual theoretical foundation laid down by Habermas is determinative, is of key importance.

According to Habermas's (1987b: xix) own account, a speech he delivered in September 1980 at his acceptance of the Adorno-prize had as its title the statement that expressed: 'Modernity' is'– an Unfinished Project' (the speech was first published in English in Habermas 1981b). As a synonym of the expression of 'the project of modernity', following Habermas's concept, the denotation 'the project of /the/ Enlightenment' has also become widespread. Rasmussen (1990: 7n) indicates the origin of the expression 'the project of modernity' within Habermas's (1987b) work somewhat inaccurately, but he (Rasmussen 1990: 2–12) vividly analyses the great-arched sequence of ideas by which Habermas averted and transcended various sorts of critiques and dilemmas of modernity. These critiques had some versions able to be regarded as constructive: from Hegel through Marx and Weber down to the 'Frankfurt School', namely, the criticism by Horkheimer and Adorno (1944), which in essence revealed the disadvantages, the exploitative character and the alienating traits of capitalism. However, according to Rasmussen (1990: 9), the critiques also had some versions completely turning away from the present, with 'a kind of nihilistic leap into a primordial past', where in fact 'Nietzsche ... led Heidegger, Bataille, Foucault and Derrida out of modernity'.

As Honneth et al. (1992: ix) assert, in our age 'the work of Jürgen Habermas stands out for its unflinching defense of the enlightenment rationality'. In the late 20th century Habermas upholds with great solidity the standpoint of the progress of the whole human society, according to which the above mentioned critiques of modernity, of the project of the Enlightenment are in many respects biased and erroneous. Scilicet, this historical project is in addition also the great project of the liberation of human being, 'the project of human emancipation' (Rasmussen 1990: 7), with 'egalitarianism, universal rights, radical democracy, support of new social movements' (ibid. 4). Zimmermann (1984: 153) finds in Habermas's work 'the political concepts of freedom and equality', and Dodd (1999: 117) finds in 'Habermas's conception of critical theory as a normative project', linked with arguments about linguistic communication, 'the political ideals of inclusivity, freedom and justice...' as well as '...the potential for what he calls the good and true life'. Habermas strives to prove with his whole life-work that modernity, the great but unfinished project of the Enlightenment can indeed be corrected and brought to fruition.

According to McCarthy (1987: xvii), Habermas sees modernization as comprising not only 'distortions of reason' but as representing first and foremost development, and 'he holds that the defects of the Enlightenment can only be made good by further enlightenment'. The latter key principle of Habermas briefly sums up the essence of our age.

Behind the ostensibly abstract, social philosophical notion of modernity, built up by Habermas, there lies hidden the whole historical reality of our epoch, the advanced industrial society, if you like, the market economy, or put it more bluntly: capitalism, with complicated questions about the present and the future of the whole globalized world. Today the countries of Eastern Central Europe, in other words, most

Hungarians, also belong to this modern, global system. Habermas's social philosophy is emphatically committed to the paradigm of social evolution, of historical progress, within the wide-ranging theoretical discussion process raising basic questions during the latest decades, critically analyzed by Sárkány and Somlai (2003). To Habermas's key role in this debate, also emphasized by these authors, we can perhaps bind a hope that his standpoint may possibly become the starting point of a new renaissance of social evolutionism. Through a proper supplementation of the theoretical views of Habermas the paradigm of historical progress may perhaps get a new momentum and practical elaboration of successful societal solutions may become possible.

Habermas's life-work has in fact opened a huge, several-decade-long program for some of those social scientific workshops in the developed countries that continue trusting progress but have often got on the defensive by today. We should find out how the present system of the advanced industrial society can be developed in such directions that the goals once marked out by the progressive ideas of the Enlightenment could be realized to a higher degree. Unfortunately, Habermas's communicative theory in itself has not proved to be enough, but the general theoretical framework of modernity outlined by Habermas continues to be correct. We have no reason to give this up; working on the realization of this 'project' continues being worthwhile. Habermas's communicative theory should be used for the completion, for the universalization of democracy, and besides that, his theory should be properly supplemented and developed further. The concept of the project of modernity, established by Habermas, means – in the language of praxis, of everyday social reality – that contemporary capitalism, in which we in the advanced countries all live today, can still be reformed, and this is the great task for us in the advanced parts of the world in the course of the 21st century.

(Naturally, there is no possibility here and now to discuss the actual directions of possible further development of contemporary modern capitalism. My own, separate opinion about this, belonging to the paradigm of historical progress, is in a nutshell as follows. Neither neo-liberal, monetarist economic policy coupled with reactionary, neo-conservative societal policy, on one side, nor subjectivism, cultural relativism, possibly irrational textualism under 'post-modern' labels providing spiritual background, or any other baseless, anarchically rebellious kind of anti-capitalism, on the other side, can bring progressive solutions. The real development prospects of modernity can probably be found towards the golden middle way: in the direction of ecologically minded, consumption rationalizing, in a humanitarian way carefully reformed 'welfare capitalism'.)

The tasks of the elaboration in social praxis of the details of reforms necessary for the still possible, intelligible development, lead into the density of actual branches of social sciences, economics, sociology, psychology, political science. At that stage it becomes obvious that the linguistic wrapping does not strengthen 'the project of modernity', as it seemed in the eyes of many even in the 1980s, but weakens it. Instead of formal, procedural methods the essential, substantive processes have to come into prominence, for instance, the compromising reconciliation of opposing interests, etc. Social analyses are becoming necessary which are able to fill formal communication placed into the focus of attention up to now, with real substance from today. The

'linguistic turn', as Roderick (1986: 6–7) aptly writes, logically leads to the necessity of an additional 'social turn', and the work of Habermas may already sign the beginning of this additional 'turn'.

For the better understanding of such an additional 'turn' I could suggest to take into consideration some additional adjectives too: this new turn should be a substantive, objectivist, causal, motivational turn, both in social philosophy and within all the today fairly interdisciplinary social scientific branches. In reality, in social praxis the most essential preconditions of any possible consensus: the causes, the interests, the intentions, the motivations, that is, the causal factors should be revealed. Our task can be the causal type of supplementation of Habermas's theoretical construction. The work which Habermas has started and marked out is worth being continued by us: advancing the unfinished project of the Enlightenment further, and bringing it to (a higher degree of) fruition.

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