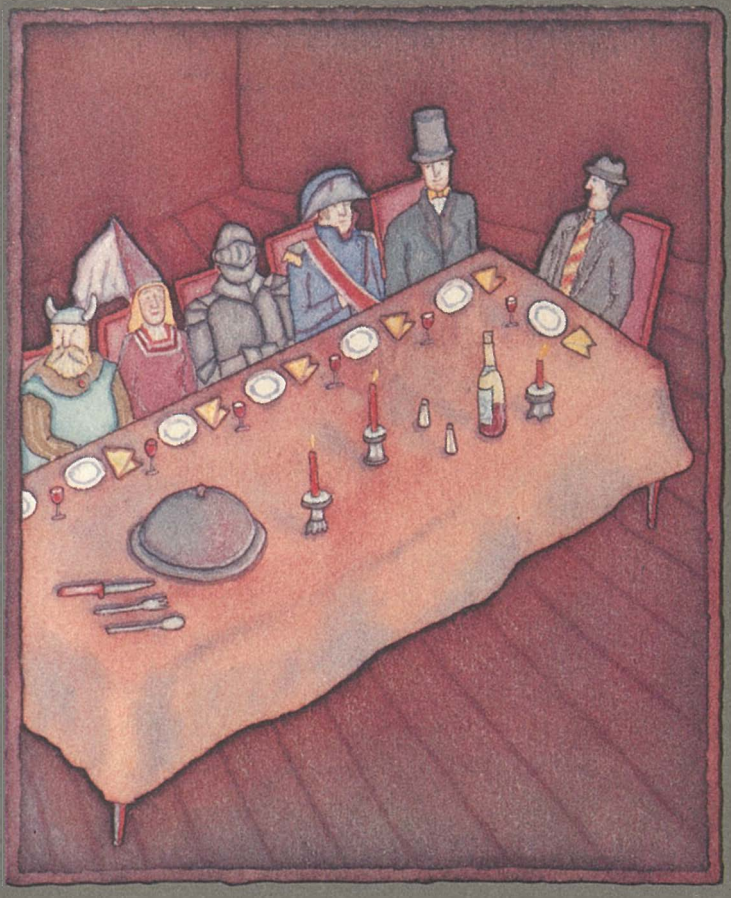
THE CIVILIZING PROCESS VOL 1

THE HISTORY OF MANNERS



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Introduction to the 1968 Edition

I

In thinking and theorizing about the structure and controls of human affects nowadays, we are usually content to use as evidence observations from the more developed societies of today. We thus proceed from the tacit assumption that it is possible to construct theories about the affect structures of man in general on the basis of studies of people in a specific society that can be observed here and now—our own. However, there are numerous relatively accessible observations which point to the conclusion that the standard and pattern of affect controls in societies at different stages of development, and even in different strata of the same society, can differ. Whether we are concerned with the development of European countries, which has lasted for centuries, or with the so-called "developing countries" in other parts of the world, we are constantly confronted by observations which give rise to the following question: how and why, in the course of the overall transformations of society which take place over long time spans and in a particular direction—for which the term "development" has been adopted—is the affectivity of human behavior and experience, the control of individual affects by external and internal constraints, and in this sense the structure of all forms of human expression altered in a particular direction? Such changes are

indicated in everyday speech by such statements as that the people of our own society are more "civilized" than they were earlier, or that those of other societies are more "uncivilized" (or even more "barbaric") than those of our own. The value judgments contained in such statements are obvious; the facts to which they relate are less so. This is partly because empirical investigations of long-term transformations of personality structures, and especially of affect controls, give rise at the present stage of sociological research to very considerable difficulties. At the forefront of sociological interest at present are relatively short-term processes, and usually only problems relating to a given state of society. Long-term transformations of social structures, and therefore of personality structures as well, have by and large been lost to view.

The present study is concerned with these long-term processes. Understanding of it may be aided by a brief indication of the various kinds of such processes. To begin with, two main directions in the structural changes of societies may be distinguished: those tending toward increased differentiation and integration, and those tending toward decreased differentiation and integration. In addition, there is a third type of social process, in the course of which the structure of a society or of its particular aspects is changed, but without a tendency toward either an increase or a decrease in the level of differentiation and integration. Finally, there are countless changes in a society which do not involve a change in its structure. This account does not do justice to the full complexity of such changes, for there are numerous hybrid forms, and often several types of change, even in opposite directions, can be observed simultaneously in the same society. But for the present, this brief outline of the different types of change suffices to indicate the problems with which this study is concerned.

This first volume addresses itself above all to the question of whether the supposition, based on scattered observations, that there are long-term changes in the affect and control structures of people in particular societies—changes which follow one and the same direction over a large number of generations—can be confirmed by reliable evidence and proved to be factually correct. This volume therefore contains an account of sociological procedures and findings, the best-known counterpart of which in the physical sciences is the experiment and its results. It is concerned with the discovery and elucidation of

what actually takes place in the as yet unexplored field of inquiry to which our questions relate: the discovery and definition of factual connections.

The demonstration of a change in human affect and control structures taking place over a large number of generations in the same direction—to state it briefly, the increased tightening and differentiation of controls—gives rise to a further question. Is it possible to relate this long-term change in personality structures with long-term structural changes in society as a whole, which likewise tend in a particular direction, toward a higher level of social differentiation and integration? The second volume is concerned with these problems.

For these long-term structural changes of society, empirical evidence is likewise lacking. It has therefore been necessary to devote a part of the second volume to the discovery and elucidation of factual connections in this second area. The question is whether a structural change of society as a whole, tending toward a higher level of differentiation and integration, can be demonstrated with the aid of reliable empirical evidence. This proves possible. The process of the formation of nation states, discussed in the second volume, is an example of this kind of structural change.

Finally, in a provisional sketch of a theory of civilization, a model is evolved to show the possible connections between the long-term change in human personality structures toward a consolidation and differentiation of affect controls, and the long-term change in the social structure toward a higher level of differentiation and integration—for example, toward a differentiation and prolongation of the chains of interdependence and a consolidation of "state controls."

II

It can readily be seen that in adopting an approach directed at factual connections and their explanation (that is, an empirical and theoretical approach concerned with long-term structural changes of a specific kind, or "developments"), we take leave of the metaphysical ideas which connect the concept of development either to the notion of a mechanical necessity or to that of a teleological purpose. The concept of civilization, as the first chapter of this volume shows, has often been used in a semimetaphysical sense and has remained highly nebulous until today. Here, the attempt is made to isolate the factual core to which the current prescientific notion of the civilizing process

refers. This core consists primarily of the structural change in people toward an increased consolidation and differentiation of their affect controls, and therefore both of their experience (e.g., in the form of an advance in the threshold of shame and revulsion) and of their behavior (e.g., in the differentiation of the implements used at table). The next task posed by the demonstration of such a change in a specific direction over many generations is to provide an explanation. A sketch of one is to be found, as already mentioned, at the end of the second volume.

But with the aid of such an investigation we likewise take leave of the theories of social change predominant today, which in the course of time have taken the place in sociological inquiry of an earlier one centered on the old, semimetaphysical notion of development. As far as can be seen, these current theories scarcely ever distinguish in an unambiguous way between the different types of social change briefly mentioned earlier. In particular, there is still a lack of theories based on empirical evidence to explain the type of long-term social changes which take the form of a process and, above all, of a development.

When I was working on this book it seemed quite clear to me that I was laying the foundation of an undogmatic, empirically based sociological theory of social processes in general and of social development in particular. I believed it quite obvious that the investigation, and the concluding model of the long-term process of state formation to be found in the second volume, could serve equally as a model of the long-term dynamic of societies in a particular direction, to which the concept of social development refers. I did not believe at that time that it was necessary to point out explicitly that this study was neither of an "evolution" in the nineteenth-century sense of an automatic progress, nor of an unspecific "social change" in the twentieth-century sense. At that time this seemed so obvious that I omitted to mention these theoretical implications explicitly. The introduction to the second edition gives me the opportunity to make good this omission.

III

The comprehensive social development studied and presented here through one of its central manifestations—a wave of advancing integration over several centuries, a process of state formation with the complementary process of advancing differentiation—is a figuration-

al change which, in the to-and-fro of contrary movements, maintains, when surveyed over an extended time span, a constant direction through many generations. This structural change in a specific direction can be demonstrated as a fact, regardless of how it is evaluated. The factual proof is what matters here. The concept of social change by itself does not suffice, as an instrument of research, to take account of such facts. A mere change can be of the kind observable in clouds or smoke rings: now they look like this, now like that. A concept of social change that does not distinguish clearly between changes that relate to the structure of a society and those that do not—and, further, between structural changes without a specific direction and those which follow a particular direction over many generations, e.g., toward greater or lesser complexity—is a very inadequate tool of sociological inquiry.

The situation is similar with a number of other problems dealt with here. When, after several preparatory studies which enabled me both to investigate documentary evidence and to explore the gradually unfolding theoretical problems, the way to a possible solution became clearer, I was made aware that this study brings somewhat nearer to resolution the intractable problem of the connection between individual psychological structures (so-called personality structures) and figurations formed by large numbers of interdependent individuals (social structures). It does so because it approaches both types of structure not as fixed, as usually happens, but as changing, and as interdependent aspects of the same long-term development.

IV

If the various academic disciplines whose subject matter is touched on by this study—including, above all, the discipline of sociology—had already reached the stage of scientific maturity at present enjoyed by many of the natural sciences, it might have been expected that a carefully documented study of long-term processes, such as those of civilization or state formation, with the theoretical proposals developed from it, would be assimilated, either in its entirety or in some of its aspects, after thorough testing and discussion, after critical sifting of all unsuitable or disproved content, to that discipline's stock of empirical and theoretical knowledge. Since the advance of scholarship depends in large measure on interchange and cross-fertilization between numerous colleagues and on the continuous development of

the common stock of knowledge, it might have been expected that thirty years later this study would either have become a part of the standard knowledge of the discipline or have been more or less superseded by the work of others and laid to rest.

Instead, I find that a generation later this study still has the character of a pioneering work in a problematic field which today is hardly less in need than it was thirty years ago, of the simultaneous investigation on the empirical and theoretical plane that is to be found here. Understanding of the urgency of the problems discussed here has grown. Everywhere gropings in the direction of these problems are observable. There is no lack of later attempts to solve problems to whose solution the empirical documentation in these two volumes, and the concluding sketch of a theory of civilization, endeavor to contribute. I do not believe these later attempts to have been successful.

To exemplify this, it must suffice to discuss the way in which the man who at present is widely regarded as the leading theoretician of sociology, Talcott Parsons, attempts to pose and solve some of the problems dealt with here. It is characteristic of Parsons's theoretical approach to attempt to dissect analytically into their elementary components, as he once expressed it,[1] the different types of society in his field of observation. He called one particular type of elementary component "pattern variables." These pattern variables include the dichotomy of "affectivity" and "affective neutrality." His conception can best be understood by comparing society to a game of cards: every type of society, in Parsons's view, represents a different "hand." But the cards themselves are always the same; and their number is small, however diverse their faces may be. One of the cards with which the game is played is the polarity between affectivity and affective neutrality. Parsons originally conceived this idea, he tells us, in analysing Tönnies's society types *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). "Community," Parsons appears to believe, is characterized by affectivity and "society" by affective neutrality. But in determining the differences between different types of society, and between different types of relationship within one and the same society, he attributes to this "pattern variable" in the card game, as to the others, a wholly general meaning. In the same context. Parsons addresses himself to the problem of the relation of social structure to personality.[2] He indicates that while he had previously seen them

merely as closely connected and interacting "human action systems," he can now state with certainty that in a theoretical sense they are different phases or aspects of one and the same fundamental action system. He illustrates this by an example, explaining that what may be considered on the sociological plane as an institutionalization of affective neutrality is essentially the same as what may be regarded on the level of personality as "the imposition of renunciation of immediate gratification in the interests of disciplined organization and the longer-run goals of the personality."

It is perhaps useful for an understanding of this study to compare this later attempt to solve such problems with the earlier one reprinted in unchanged form here. The decisive difference in scientific approach, and in the conception of the objectives of sociological theory, is evident from even this short example of Parsons's treatment of similar problems. What in this book is shown with the aid of extensive empirical documentation to be a process, Parsons, by the static nature of his concepts, reduces retrospectively, and it seems to me quite unnecessarily, to states. Instead of a relatively complex process whereby the affective life of people is gradually moved toward an increased and more even control of affects—but certainly not toward a state of total affective neutrality—Parsons presents a simple opposition between two states, affectivity and affective neutrality, which are supposed to be present to different degrees in different types of society, like different quantities of chemical substances. By reducing to two different states what was shown empirically in *The Civilizing Process* to be a process and interpreted theoretically as such, Parsons deprives himself of the possibility of discovering how the distinguishing peculiarities of different societies to which he refers are actually to be explained. So far as is apparent, he does not even raise the question of explanation. The different states denoted by the antitheses of the "pattern variables" are, it seems, simply given. The subtly articulated structural change toward increased and more even affect control that may be observed in reality disappears in this kind of theorizing. Social phenomena in reality can only be observed as evolving and having evolved; their dissection by means of pairs of concepts which restrict the analysis to two antithetical states represents an unnecessary impoverishment of sociological perception on both empirical and theoretical levels.

Certainly, it is the task of every sociological theory to clarify the

characteristics that all possible human societies have in common. The concept of the social process, like many others used in this study, has precisely this function. But the basic categories selected by Parsons seem to me arbitrary to a high degree. Underlying them is the tacit, untested, and seemingly self-evident notion that the objective of every scientific theory is to reduce everything variable to something invariable, and to simplify all complex phenomena by dissecting them into their individual components.

The example of Parsons's theory suggests, however, that theorizing in the field of sociology is complicated rather than simplified by a systematic reduction of social processes to social states, and of complex, heterogeneous phenomena to simpler, seemingly homogeneous components. This kind of reduction and abstraction could be justified as a method of theorizing only if it led unambiguously to a clearer and deeper understanding by men of themselves as societies and as individuals. Instead of this we find that the theories formed by such methods, like the epicycle theory of Ptolemy, require needlessly complicated auxiliary constructions to make them agree with the observable facts. They often appear like dark clouds from which here and there a few rays of light touch the earth.

V

One example of this, which will be discussed more fully later, is Parsons's attempt to develop a theoretical model of the relation between personality structures and social structures. In this undertaking two not very compatible ideas are frequently thoroughly confused: the notion that individual and society—"ego" and "social system"—are two entities existing independently of each other, with the individual regarded as the actual reality and society treated as an epiphenomenon; and the notion that the two are different but inseparable planes of the universe formed by men. Furthermore, concepts like "ego" and "social system" and all those related to them, which refer to men as individuals and as societies, are applied by Parsons—except when he is using psychoanalytical categories—as if the normal condition of both could be considered as an unalterable state. This study cannot be properly understood if the view of what is actually observable in human beings is blocked by such notions. It cannot be understood if we forget that concepts such as "individual" and "society" do not relate to two objects existing separately but to

different yet inseparable aspects of the same human beings, and that both aspects (and human beings in general) are normally involved in a structural transformation. Both have the character of processes, and there is not the slightest necessity, in forming theories about human beings, to abstract from this process-character. Indeed, it is indispensable that the concept of process be included in sociological and other theories relating to human beings. As is shown in this study, the relation between individual and social structures can only be clarified if both are investigated as changing, evolving entities. Only then is it possible to develop models of their relationship, as is done here, which are in some agreement with the demonstrable facts. It can be stated with complete certainty that the relation between what is referred to conceptually as the "individual" and as "society" will remain incomprehensible so long as these concepts are used as if they represented two separate bodies, and even bodies normally at rest, which only come into contact with one another afterwards as it were. Without ever saying so clearly and openly, Parsons and all sociologists of the same persuasion undoubtedly envisage those things to which the concepts "individual" and "society" refer as existing separately. Thus—to give only one example—Parsons adopts the notion already developed by Durkheim that the relation between "individual" and "society" is an "interpenetration" of the individual and the social system. However such an "interpenetration" is conceived, what else can this metaphor mean than that we are concerned with two different entities which first exist separately and then subsequently "interpenetrate"?[3]

This makes clear the difference between the two sociological approaches. In this study the possibility of discerning more precisely the connection between individual structures and social structures results from a refusal to abstract from the process of their evolution as from something incidental or "merely historical." For the structures of personality and of society evolve in an indissoluble interrelationship. It can never be said with certainty that the people of a society *are* civilized. But on the basis of systematic investigations referring to demonstrable evidence, it can be said with a high degree of certainty that some groups of people have *become* more civilized, without necessarily implying that it is better or worse, has a positive or negative value, to become more civilized. Such a change in personality structures can, however, be shown without difficulty to be a

specific aspect of the development of social structures. This is attempted in what follows.

It is not particularly surprising to encounter in Parsons, and in many other contemporary sociological theoreticians, a tendency to reduce processes to states even when these writers are explicitly concerned with the problem of social change. In keeping with the predominant trend in sociology, Parsons takes as his starting point the hypothesis that every society normally exists in a state of unchanging equilibrium which is homeostatically preserved. It changes, he supposes, when this normal state of social equilibrium is disturbed by, for example, a violation of the social norms, a breach of conformity.[1] Social change thus appears as a phenomenon resulting from the accidental, externally activated malfunction of a normally well-balanced social system. Moreover, the society thus disturbed strives, in Parsons's view, to regain its state of rest. Sooner or later, as he sees it, a different "system" with a different equilibrium is established, which once again maintains itself more or less automatically, despite oscillations, in the given state. In a word, the concept of social change refers here to a transitional state between two normal states of changelessness, brought about by malfunction. Here, too, the difference between the theoretical approaches represented by this study and by Parsons and his school emerges very distinctly. The present study upholds the idea, based on abundant documentary material, that change is a normal characteristic of society. A structured sequence of continuous change serves here as the frame of reference for investigating states located at particular points in time. In prevailing sociological opinion, conversely, social situations treated as if they normally existed in a state of rest serve as the frame of reference for all change. Thus a society is regarded as a "social system," and a "social system" as a "system in a state of rest." Even when a relatively differentiated, "highly developed" society is involved, the attempt is often made to consider it as at rest and self-contained. It is not regarded as an integral part of the inquiry to ask how and why this highly developed society has developed to this state of differentiation. In keeping with the static frame of reference of the predominant system-theories, social changes, processes, and developments, which include the development of a state or a civilizational process, appear merely as something additional, a mere "historical introduction" the investigation and explanation of which may very well be dispensed with in coming to an

understanding of the "social system" and its "structure" and "functions," as they may be observed here and now from a short-term viewpoint. These conceptual tools themselves—including concepts like "structures" and "function," which serve as the badge of the contemporary sociological school of "structural functionalists"—bear the stamp of this specific mode of thinking, which reduces processes to states. Of course, their originators cannot entirely dismiss the idea that the "structures" and "functions" of the social "unit" or its "parts," which they picture as states, move and change. But the problems which thus come into view are reconciled with the static mode of thought by encapsulating them in a special chapter with the title "Social Change," as though the phenomenon were supplementary to the problems of the normally unchanging system. In this way "social change" itself is treated as an attribute of a state of rest. In other words, the basic, state-orientated attitude is reconciled with empirical observations of social change by introducing into the theoretical waxworks of motionless social phenomena a few more equally motionless figures with labels like "social change" or "social process." In this way the problems of social change are in a sense frozen and rendered innocuous to state-oriented sociology. So it happens that the concept of "social development" has almost completely vanished from the sight of contemporary sociological theorists—paradoxically, in a phase of social development when, in actual social life and partly also in empirical sociological research, people are concerning themselves more intensely and consciously than ever before with problems of social development.

VI

In writing an introduction to a book that on both the theoretical and the empirical side is squarely opposed to widespread tendencies in contemporary sociology, one has a certain obligation to tell the reader clearly and unequivocally how and why the problems posed here, and the steps taken to solve them, differ from those of the predominant type of sociology, and particularly from those of theoretical sociology. To do this, one cannot entirely evade the question how it is to be explained that sociology, for whose leading nineteenth-century representatives the problems of long-term social processes were of primordial interest, should in the twentieth century have become a sociology of states to such an extent that the investigation of long-term social

processes has as much as disappeared from its research activity. Within the scope of this introduction I cannot presume to discuss this displacement of the center of interest of sociological research, and the radical change in the entire sociological manner of thinking connected with it, with the thoroughness they deserve. But the problem is too important for an understanding of what follows, and beyond that for the further development of sociology, to be passed over in complete silence. I shall therefore confine myself to picking out a few elements from the complex of conditions responsible for this regression in the intellectual apparatus of sociology and the concomitant narrowing of its field of inquiry.

The most obvious reason why awareness of the significance of problems of long-term social change, of the sociogenesis and development of social formations of all kinds has been largely lost to sociologists, and why the concept of development has fallen into disrepute among them, is to be found in the reaction of many sociologists—above all, the leading theoreticians of the twentieth century—to certain aspects of the outstanding sociological theories of the nineteenth century. It has been shown that the theoretical models of long-term social development elaborated in the nineteenth century by men like Comte, Spencer, Marx, Hobhouse, and many others rested in part on hypotheses determined primarily by the political and philosophical ideals of these men and only secondarily by their relation to facts. Later generations had a much larger and constantly increasing supply of facts at their disposal. Reexamination of the classical nineteenth-century theories of development in light of the more comprehensive findings of subsequent generations made many aspects of the earlier process-models appear questionable or at any rate in need of revision. Many of the sociological pioneers' articles of faith were no longer accepted by twentieth-century sociologists. These included, above all, the belief that the development of society is necessarily a development for the better, a movement in the direction of progress. This belief was emphatically rejected by many later sociologists in accordance with their own social experience. They could see more clearly in retrospect that the earlier models of development comprised a mixture of relatively fact-based and of ideological notions.

In a mature discipline one might, first of all, have set about the task of revising and correcting the earlier models of development. One

might have tried, in this situation, to ascertain which aspects of the old theories could be used as a basis for further research in light of the more comprehensive factual knowledge now available, and which should find their place as expressions of time-bound political or philosophical prejudice, with a suitable tombstone, in the graveyard of dead doctrines.

Instead, an extremely sharp reaction against the type of sociological theory concerned with long-term social processes set in. The study of the long-term development of society was almost universally decried, and the center of sociological interest moved, in a radical reaction against the older type of theory, to the investigation of data on society conceived as normally existing in a state of rest and equilibrium. Hand in hand with this went the hardening of a collection of stereotyped arguments against the older sociological theories and many of their central concepts, particularly that of social development. As these sociologists did not trouble to distinguish between the fact-based and the ideological elements in the concept of development, the whole discussion of long-term social processes, particularly developmental processes, was henceforth associated with one or another of the nineteenth-century systems of belief, and so, above all, with the notion that social development, whether proceeding in a straight line without conflict or dialectically with conflict, must automatically be a change for the better, a movement in the direction of progress. From then on it appeared almost old-fashioned to occupy oneself with questions of social development. It is sometimes said that generals, in planning strategy for a new war, take the strategy of the old one as their model. To assume without question that concepts like "social development" or "long-term social processes" inevitably include the old idea of progress is to proceed in a similar way.

We find, therefore, in the framework of sociology, an intellectual development involving a radical swing of the pendulum from a one-sided position to an opposite position no less one-sided. A phase in which sociological theorists primarily sought models of long-term social development has been succeeded by one in which they are primarily concerned with models of societies in a state of rest and immutability. If research was once founded on a Heraclitean kind of basic assumption that all is in flux (with the difference that it was taken almost for granted that the flow was in the direction of improvement), it is based now on an Eleatic idea. The Eleatics, it is said, imagined the

flight of an arrow as a series of states of rest; actually, it seemed to them, the arrow does not move at all. For at every given moment it is in a particular place. The assumption of many present-day sociological theorists that societies are usually to be found in a state of equilibrium, so that the long-term social development of mankind appears as a chain of static social types, is strongly reminiscent of the Eleatic conception of the flight of an arrow. How can this swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other in the development of sociology be explained?

At first sight it seems that the decisive reason for the change in the theoretical orientation of sociology is a reaction of scientists protesting in the name of the scientific character of their research against the interference of political and philosophical ideas in the theory of their subject. Exponents of contemporary sociological theories of state are themselves often inclined to this interpretation. On closer examination, however, it is found to be inadequate. The reaction against the sociology of development predominant in the nineteenth century was not directed simply against the primacy of ideals, the dominance of preconceived social doctrines, in the name of scientific objectivity. It was not simply the expression of a concern to pull aside the veil of short-lived notions of what society ought to be, in order to perceive the real dynamics and functioning of society itself. In the last analysis it was a reaction against the primacy of *particular* ideals in sociological theory, in the name of others partly opposed to them. If in the nineteenth century specific conceptions of what ought to be or of what was desired—specific ideological conceptions—led to a central interest in the development of society, in the twentieth century other conceptions of what ought to be or is desirable—other ideological conceptions—led to the pronounced interest among leading sociological theorists in the state of society as it is, to their neglect of problems of the dynamics of social formations, and to their lack of interest in problems of long-term processes and in all the opportunities of explanation that the investigation of such problems provides.

This sharp change in the character of social ideals, encountered here in the development of sociology, is not an isolated phenomenon. It is symptomatic of a more comprehensive change in the ideals predominant in the countries in which the main work of sociology is concentrated. This change points, in turn, to a specific transformation that has been taking place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in

the internal and external relations of the older, developed industrial states. It must suffice here—as a summary of a more extensive inquiry—to indicate briefly the main outline of this transformation. This will facilitate understanding of sociological studies which, like the present one, give a central place to the investigation of long-term processes. The purpose is not to attack other ideals in the name of one's own, but to seek a better understanding of the structure of such processes themselves and to emancipate the theoretical framework of sociological research from the primacy of social ideals and doctrines. For we can only elicit sociological knowledge which is sufficiently adequate to be of use in solving the acute problems of society if, when posing and solving sociological problems, we cease giving precedence to preconceived notions of what the solutions ought to be over the investigation of what is.

VII

In the industrializing countries of the nineteenth century in which the first great pioneering works of sociology were written, the voices expressing the social beliefs, ideals, hopes, and long-term goals of the rising industrial classes gradually gained the advantage over those seeking to preserve the existing social order in the interests of the established courtly-dynastic, aristocratic, or patrician power elites. It was the former who, in keeping with their situation as the rising classes, had high expectations of a better future. And as their ideal lay not in the present but in the future, they were particularly interested in the dynamics, the development of society. In conjunction with one or another of these rising industrial classes, the sociologists of the time sought confirmation that the development of mankind would move in the direction of their wishes and hopes. They did so by exploring the direction and the driving forces of social development hitherto. In this activity they undoubtedly brought to light a very considerable amount of adequate knowledge on the problems of social development. But it is often very difficult in retrospect to distinguish between specific heteronomous doctrines filled with short-lived, time-bound ideals and those conceptual models which have significance independently of these ideals, solely with regard to verifiable facts.

On the other side, in the nineteenth century, were to be heard the voices of those who for one reason or another opposed the transformation of society through industrialization, whose social faith was

oriented toward conservation of the existing heritage, and who held up, against what they took to be the deteriorating present, their ideal of a better past. They represented not only the preindustrial elites of the dynastic states but also broader working groups—above all, those engaged in agriculture and handicrafts, whose traditional livelihoods were being eroded by advancing industrialization. They were the opponents of all those who spoke from the standpoint of the two rising industrial classes, the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and the industrial working class, and who, in keeping with the rising situation of these classes, drew their inspiration from a belief in a better future, the progress of mankind. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the chorus of voices was split between those extolling a better past and those celebrating a better future.

Among the sociologists whose image of society was oriented toward progress and a better future are to be found, as we know, spokesmen of the two industrial classes. They include men like Marx and Engels, who identified themselves with the industrial working class; and they include bourgeois sociologists like Comte at the beginning of the nineteenth century or Hobhouse at the end. The spokesmen for the two rising industrial classes took confidence in the thought of the future improvement of the human condition, even if what they envisaged as improvement and progress varied widely depending on their class. It is of no small importance to realize how intense the interest in the problems of social development in the nineteenth century was, and to ask on what this interest was founded, if one is to understand why the belief in progress waned in the twentieth century and why, correspondingly, interest among sociologists in the problems of long-term social development declined.

But to understand this shift it is not sufficient, as has already been indicated, to consider only class figurations, the social relationships within states. The rise of industrial classes within the industrializing states of Europe in the nineteenth century went hand in hand with the continuing rise of these nations themselves. In that century these nations drove each other by constant rivalry to a greater increase of their predominance over less developed nations than ever before. Not only the classes within them but also these state-societies in their totality were rising, expanding social formations.

One might be tempted to attribute the belief in progress in European

writing in the centuries preceding the twentieth primarily to the progress in science and technology. But that is an insufficient explanation. How little the experience of scientific and technological progress alone gives rise to an idealization of progress, to a confident faith in the continuous improvement of the human condition, is shown clearly enough by the twentieth century. The actual degree and tempo of progress in science and technology in this century exceed that in the preceding centuries very considerably. Likewise, the standard of living of the masses in the countries of the first wave of industrialization has been higher in the twentieth century than in preceding centuries. The state of health has improved; life expectancy has increased. But in the total chorus of the time, the voices of those who affirm progress as something valuable, who see in the improvement of the condition of men the centerpiece of a social ideal, and who believe confidently in the better future of mankind, have become appreciably fewer than in preceding centuries. On the other side of the choir, the voices of those who cast doubt on all these developments, who see no geat promise of a better future for mankind or even for their own nation, and whose central social faith concentrates instead on the present as the highest value, on the conservation of their own nation, on the idealization of its existing social form or even of its past, its heritage and its traditional order, are increasing in the twentieth century and gradually becoming ever louder. In the preceding centuries, in which actual progress was already very palpable yet still slow and relatively limited, the idea of further, future progress had the character of an ideal toward which its adherents were striving and which possessed high value precisely as an ideal. In the twentieth century, when actual progress in science, technology, health, the standard of living, and not least in the reduction of inequality between people exceeds by far, in the older industrial nations, the progress in all previous centuries, progress has ceased for many people to be an ideal. The voices of those who doubt all this actual progress are growing more numerous.

The reasons for this change are manifold. Not all need be considered here. The recurrent wars, the incessant danger of war, and the threat of nuclear and other new scientific weapons certainly contribute to this coincidence of accelerating progress, particularly in the scientific and technical fields, with diminishing confidence in the value of this progress and of progress in general.

But the contempt heaped in the twentieth century on the preceding centuries' "shallow" belief in progress or their notion of a progressive development of human society; the obstructions blocking sociologists' view of problems of long-term social processes; the almost complete disappearance of the concept of social development from sociological texts—these and other symptoms of an extreme swing of the intellectual pendulum are not sufficiently explained by the upheavals of war and related phenomena. To understand them, we must also take account of specific changes in the twentieth century in the overall internal structure and international position of the great industrial nations of the nineteenth century.

Within these nations the representatives of the two industrial classes, the industrial bourgeoisie and the industrial working class, now establish themselves firmly against the earlier dynastic-aristocratic military power elites as the ruling groups in their states. The two industrial classes hold each other in an often precarious and always unstable balance of tensions, with the established working class still in the weaker position, but slowly gaining strength. The rising classes of the nineteenth century, who still had to fight within their states against the traditional dynastic elite, and for whom development, progress, a better future was not only a fact but also an ideal of great emotional significance, have become in the course of the twentieth century the more or less established industrial classes whose representatives are installed institutionally as the ruling or co-ruling groups. Partly as partners, partly as opponents, the representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie and the established industrial working class now form the primary elite in the nations of the first wave of industrialization. Accordingly, alongside class-consciousness and class ideals, and partly as a disguise for them, national consciousness and the ideal of their own nation as the highest value play an increasing role within the two industrial classes—first of all in the industrial bourgeoisie, but increasingly in the industrial working class as well.

Seen as an ideal, however, the nation turns attention to what already exists. Since representatives of the two powerful and populous industrial classes now have access to positions of power in the state, the nation, organized as a state, appears emotionally and ideologically as the highest value in its present condition. Moreover, it appears—emotionally and ideologically—as eternal, immutable in its essential features. Historical changes affect only externals; the people, the

nation, so it appears, do not change. The English, German, French, Italian, and all other nations are, for those who constitute them, everlasting. In their "essence" they are always the same, whether we are speaking of the tenth or the twentieth century.

Furthermore, it was not only the two industrial classes within the older industrial nations which changed, once and for all, in the course of the twentieth century. The rise of the European nations and of their offshoots in other parts of the world, which had gone on for centuries, also came slowly to a standstill in our own. To be sure, their actual lead over non-European nations (with few exceptions) at first remained large; for a time it even increased. But the idea had formed and established itself in the age of the unchallenged ascendancy of the European nations, as among all powerful and ruling groups in the world, that the power they were able to wield over other nations was the expression of an eternal mission bestowed on them by God or nature or historical destiny, the expression of a superiority over those less powerful which was founded in their very essence. This idea of their own self-evident superiority, deeply rooted in the self-image of the older industrial nations, has been profoundly shaken by the actual course of development in the twentieth century. The reality-shock suffered when a national ideal collides with social reality has been absorbed by each nation in a different way, according to its own development and the specific nature of its national self-image. For Germany the more comprehensive significance of this collision was first concealed by the more direct shock of the military defeats. But it is indicative both of the solidity of the old national ideals and of the relative autonomy of this development as a whole that even in the victorious countries of the second European-American war there were, at first, immediately after the victory had been won, as far as can be determined, only very few people who realized how radically and fundamentally the military conflicts between two groups of relatively highly developed countries would reduce the power of this class of countries as a whole over the less developed countries, a reduction which had been prepared for some time. As is often the case, this sudden diminution in their power found the previously mighty countries unprepared and bewildered.

The actual opportunities for progress, for a better future, are—leaving aside the regressive possibilities of war—still very great for the older industrial nations. But in relation to their traditional national

self-images, in which the idea of their own national civilization or culture is usually ensconced as the highest value of mankind, the future is disappointing. The idea of the unique nature and value of one's own nation often serves as legitimation for that nation's claim to lead all other nations. It is this self-image, this claim to leadership by the older industrial nations, that has been shaken in the second half of the twentieth century by what is still a very limited increase in power among the poorer, previously dependent and partly subjugated pre-industrial societies in other parts of the world.[5]

In other words, this reality-shock, insofar as it affects the emotive value of the present state of a nation in regard to its future possibilities, merely reinforces a tendency already present in national feeling present what the nation is and always has been, its eternal, unalterable heritage, possesses a far greater emotive value, as a means of self-legitimation and as an expression of the national scale of values and the national ideal, than any promise or ideal located in the future. The "national ideal" draws attention away from what changes to the enduring and the immutable.

This aspect of the transformation taking place in the European states, and in a number of closely related non-European states as well, has been matched by specific changes in the realm of ideas and in the modes of thought of intellectuals. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philosophers and sociologists who spoke of "society" were usually thinking of "bourgeois society"—that is, aspects of social life that seemed to lie beyond the dynastic and military aspects of the state. In keeping with their situation and their ideals as spokesmen for groups which were by and large excluded from access to the central positions of state power, these men, when talking of society, usually had in mind a human society transcending all state frontiers. With the extensive assumption of state power by representatives of the two industrial classes, and with the corresponding development of national ideals in these two classes and particularly in their representative ruling elites, this conception of society was changed in sociology as well.

In society at large, the various class ideals of the industrial classes increasingly mingle and interpenetrate with national ideals. Certainly, conservative and liberal national ideals show a different nuance of nationalism than do socialist or communist ones. But such nuances influenced only marginally, if at all, the broad outline of the change

that took place in the attitude toward state and nation of the established industrial classes, including their political and intellectual spokesmen, when these classes, ceasing to be groups excluded from central state power, became groups truly constituting the nation, whose leaders themselves represented and exercised state power. It accords with this development that many twentieth-century sociologists, when speaking of "society," no longer have in mind (as did their predecessors) a "bourgeois society" or a "human society" beyond the state, but increasingly the somewhat diluted ideal image of a nation-state. Within their general conception of society as something abstracted from the reality of the nation-state, the above-mentioned political and ideological nuances are again to be found. Among the leading sociological theorists of the twentieth century, conservative and liberal as well as socialist and communist shades are to be found in the image of society. Since, in the twentieth century, American sociology has taken over for a time the leading role in the development of theoretical sociology, the dominant type of sociological theory of this period reflects the specific character of its predominant national ideal, within which conservative and liberal features are not so sharply divided, or felt to be so antithetical, as in some European nation-states, particularly Germany.[6]

In sociological discussions, and in philosophical debates as well, the rejection of certain aspects of the sociological theories of the nineteenth century—above all, their orientation toward social development and the concept of progress—is often presented as based solely on the factual inadequacy of these theories. The short survey that has been given here of one of the main structural tendencies of the development of relations within and between the older industrial nations throws into sharper relief certain ideological aspects of this rejection. In accordance with the concept of ideology developed within the Marxian tradition, one might seek to explain the ideological aspects of the neglect of social development, and the preoccupation with the state of social systems, dominant in recent sociological theories solely by reference to the ideals of classes whose hopes, wishes, and ideals are related not to the future but to the conservation of the existing order. But this class-explanation of the social beliefs and ideals implicit in sociological theory is no longer sufficient in the twentieth century. In this period we must also take account of the development of national ideals transcending social classes in order to

understand the ideological aspects of sociological theories. The integration of the two industrial classes into a state structure previously ruled by numerically very small preindustrial minorities; the rise of both classes to a position in which their representatives play a more or less dominant role in the state, and in which even the weaker sectors of the industrial workers can no longer be ruled without their consent; and the resulting stronger identification of both classes with the nation—all these factors give special impetus, in the social attitudes of this time, to the belief in one's own nation as one of the highest values in human life. The lengthening and multiplication of chains of interdependence between states, and the heightening of specific tensions and conflicts between states resulting from this, the momentous national wars and the ever-present danger of war—all these factors contribute to the growth of nation-centered patterns of thought.

It is the convergence of these two intrastate and interstate lines of development in the older industrial nations that has weakened the ideal of progress, the orientation of faith and desire toward a better future and therefore also toward an image of the past considered as development. Combined, the two lines of development cause this type of ideal to be replaced by others directed at conserving and defending the existing order. They relate to something that is felt to be immutable and realized in the present—the eternal nation. The voices proclaiming belief in a better future and the progress of mankind as their ideal make way, as the dominant section in the mixed social chorus of the time, for the voices of those who give precedence to the value of what exists and, above all, to the timeless value of their own nations, for which, in the succession of great and small wars, many people have lost their lives. This is—sketched in its main outline—the overall structural development which is reflected in the development of theories of society. Theories which reflect the ideals of rising classes in expanding industrial societies are replaced by theories dominated by the ideals of more or less established classes in highly developed societies whose growth has reached or passed its peak.

As an example of this type of sociological theory, it may suffice to cite one of its representative concepts, that of the "social system," as used by Parsons, but certainly not by him alone. It expresses very clearly the way in which a "society" is now conceived. A "social system" is a society "in equilibrium." Small oscillations of this equilibrium do occur, but normally society exists in a state of rest. All

its parts, in this conception, are normally harmoniously attuned to one another. All individuals belonging to it are normally attuned by the same kind of socialization to the same norms. All are normally well-integrated, respect the same values in their actions, fulfill their prescribed roles without difficulty. Conflicts between them do not normally occur; these, like changes in the system, are manifestations of malfunction. In short, the image of society represented theoretically by this concept of the social system reveals itself on closer inspection to be the ideal image of a nation: all the people belonging to it obey the same norms on the basis of the same socialization, uphold the same values, and thus live normally in well-integrated harmony with one another. In the conception of the "social system" that we have before us, in other words, the image of the nation as community can be discerned. It is tacitly assumed that within such a "system" there is a relatively high degree of equality between people, for integration rests on the same socialization of people, on the uniformity of their values and norms throughout the entire system. Such a "system" is therefore a construction abstracted from a democratically conceived nation-state. From whatever side this construction is considered, the distinction between what the nation is and what the nation ought to be is blurred. Just as in the nineteenth-century sociological models of development the desired social process was presented (mingled with realistic observations) as a fact, so in the twentieth-century sociological models of a normally unchanging "social system" the desired ideal of a harmonious integration of all parts of the nation is also presented (mingled with realistic observations) as something that exists, a fact. But in the former case it is the future, in the latter the present, the nation-state existing here and now, that is idealized.

A mixture of "is" and "ought," of factual analyses and normative postulates, relating primarily to a society of a very definite type, a nation-state conceived in broadly egalitarian fashion, thus presents itself as the centerpiece of a theory which claims to be capable of serving as a model for the scientific investigation of societies in all times and places. One need only raise the question of whether and how far such sociological theories—derived primarily from present-day, more or less democratic nation-state societies which presuppose a high degree of integration of people into the "social system" as something both self-evident and desirable, and which therefore, imply a relatively advanced stage of social democratization—are appli-

cable to societies at different stages of development, and which are less centralized and democratized, in order to perceive the weakness of a general theory of society from the church-steeple perspective of the present state of our own society. If such models of a "social system" are tested for their suitability as theoretical tools for the scientific investigation of a society with a high percentage of slaves or unfree subjects, or of feudal or hierarchical states—that is, societies in which not even the same laws apply to all people, not to speak of the same norms and values—it is quickly seen how present-centered these sociological models of systems conceived as states actually are.

What has been illustrated here by the "social" system example could be shown without difficulty to apply to other concepts of dominant contemporary sociology. Concepts like "structure," "function," "norm," "integration," and "role" all represent in their current forms attempts to conceptualize certain aspects of human societies by abstracting from their dynamics, their genesis, their character as a process, their development. The rejection of the nineteenth-century ideological understanding of these dynamic aspects of society that has taken place can therefore be seen not only as a criticism of these ideological aspects in the name of a scientific concern with fact, but above all as a criticism of earlier ideals that no longer correspond to present social conditions and experience and have therefore been rejected in the name of later ideals. This replacement of one ideology by another explains the fact that it is not simply the ideological elements in the nineteenth-century sociological concept of development that have been called into question, but the concept of development itself, the very consideration of problems of long-term social development, of sociogenesis and psychogenesis. In a word, the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater.

The present study, which concerns itself once again with social processes, may be better understood if this development of theoretical sociology is kept in mind. The tendency to condemn the social ideologies of the nineteenth century from the standpoint of those of the twentieth appears to preclude the idea that long-term processes might be made the object of investigation without an ideological motive—that is, without the author, under the pretense of speaking of what is or was, speaking in reality of what he believes and wishes ought to be. If the present study has any significance at all, this results not least from its opposition to this mingling of what is and what ought to be, of

scientific analysis and ideal. It points to the possibility of freeing the study of society from its bondage to social ideologies. This is not to say that an investigation of social problems which excludes political and philosophical ideas means renouncing the possibility of influencing the course of political events through the results of sociological research. The opposite is the case. The usefulness of sociological research as a tool of social practice is increased if the researcher does not deceive himself by projecting what he desires, what he believes ought to be, into his investigation of what is and has been.

VIII

To understand the blockage which the predominant modes of thinking and feeling place in the way of the investigation of long-term changes of social structure and personality structure—and thus in the way of an understanding of this book—it is not enough to trace the development of the image of men as societies, the image of society. It is also necessary to keep in mind the development of the image of men as individuals, the image of the personality. As has been mentioned, one of the peculiarities of the traditional image of man is that people often speak and think of individuals and societies as if these were two phenomena existing separately—of which, moreover, one is often considered "real" and the other "unreal"—instead of two different aspects of the same human being.

This curious aberration of thinking, too, cannot be understood without a glance at its implicit ideological content. The splitting of the image of humanity into an image of man as individual and an image of men as societies has widely ramifying roots. One branch is a very characteristic split in the values and ideals encountered, on close inspection, in all the more developed nation-states, and perhaps most pronounced in nations with a strong liberal tradition. In the development of the value systems of all such nation-states, one finds, on the one hand, a strand which sees society as a whole, the nation, as the highest value; and, on the other, a strand which posits the wholly self-sufficient, free individual, the "closed personality," as the highest value. It is not always easy to harmonize these two "highest values" with one another. There are situations in which the two ideals are plainly irreconcilable. But usually this problem is not squarely faced. People talk with great warmth of the freedom and independence of the individual, and with equal warmth of the freedom and independence

of their own nation. The first ideal arouses the expectation that the individual member of a nation-state, despite his community and interdependence with others, can reach his decisions in an entirely self-sufficient way, without regard to others; the second arouses the expectation—fulfilled particularly in war but often enough in peacetime, too—that the individual should and must subordinate everything belonging to him, even his life, to the survival of the "social whole."

This split in the ideals, this contradiction in the ethos by which people are brought up, finds expression in the theories of sociology. Some of these theories take as their starting point the independent, self-sufficient individual as the "true" reality, and therefore as the true object of social science; others start with the independent social totality. Some theories attempt to harmonize the two conceptions, usually without indicating how it is possible to reconcile the idea of an absolutely independent and free individual with that of an equally independent and free "social totality," and often without clearly perceiving the problem. The reflection of this unresolved inner division between the two ideals is seen above all in the theories of sociologists whose national ideal has a conservative-liberal tinge. Max Weber's theoretical work—if not his empirical work—and the theories of his successor Talcott Parsons are examples of this.

It may suffice as illustration to return once more to what has already been said about Parsons's conception of the relation of individual and society, of the "individual actor" and the "social system." One description of their relation is contained in the metaphor of "interpenetration," which shows clearly the important role played by the idea of the separate existence of the two human aspects. The reification of the ideal therefore finds expression in this conceptual edifice not only in the notion of the social system as a specific ideal image of the nation, but also in that of the individual actor, the "ego," as an ideal image of the free individual existing independently of all others. In both cases the theorist's ideal image is changed unawares under his hands into a fact, something that actually exists. For with regard to the image of the individual, too, what in the mind of the theorist ought to be, the image of the absolutely free and independent individual, is treated as if it were the image of what the individual actually is.

Now this is certainly not the place to fathom the reasons for this widely disseminated split in thinking about human beings. But the

concern of the present study cannot properly be understood so long as the problems of the civilizing process are approached with the notions of the individual that have just been mentioned. In the course of this process the structures of the individual human being are changed in a particular direction. This is what the concept of "civilization," in the factual sense in which it is used here, actually means. The image current today of the individual as an absolutely independent and self-sufficient being is difficult to reconcile with the facts adduced here. It obstructs understanding of the long-term processes which people undergo on both the individual and social planes. Parsons uses on occasion, to illustrate his image of the personality, the old metaphor of the personality of the human actor as a "black box,"[8] i.e., a closed container "inside" which certain individual processes take place. The metaphor is taken from the toolbox of psychology. It basically means that all that can be observed scientifically in a human being is his behavior. We can observe what the "black box" does. But what goes on inside the box, what is also termed the "soul" or "mind"—the "ghost in the machine," as an English philosopher called it[9]—is not an object of scientific investigation. One cannot avoid, in this context, exploring in more detail an image of the individual which plays a considerable role in the human sciences today and thus also contributes to the neglect of long-term changes in human beings in the course of social development as a subject of research.

The image of the individual as an entirely free, independent being, a "closed personality" who is "inwardly" quite self-sufficient and separate from all other people, has behind it a long tradition in the development of European societies. In classical philosophy this figure comes onto the scene as the epistemological subject. In this role, as *homo philosophicus,* the individual gains knowledge of the world "outside" him in a completely autonomous way. He does not need to learn, to take this knowledge from others. The fact that he came into the world as a child, the whole process of his development to adulthood and as an adult, is neglected as immaterial by this image of man. In the development of mankind it took many thousands of years for people to learn to understand the relations between natural events, the course of the stars, rain and sun, thunder and lightning, as manifestations of a blind, impersonal, purely mechanical and regular sequence of causal connections. But the "closed personality" of *homo philosophicus* apparently perceives this mechanical and regular caus-

al chain as an adult simply by opening his eyes, without needing to learn anything about it from others, and quite independently of the stage of knowledge reached by society. The process—the individual human being as a process in growing up, human beings together as a process in the development of mankind—is reduced in thought to a state. The individual opens his eyes as an adult and not only recognizes autonomously here and now, without learning from others, what all these objects are that he perceives; he not only knows immediately what he is to classify as animate and inanimate, as mineral, vegetable, or animal; but he also knows directly here and now that they are linked causally in accordance with natural laws. The question for philosophers is merely whether he gains this knowledge of causal connections here and now on the basis of his experience—whether, in other words, these connections are a property of the observable facts "outside" him—or the connections are something rooted in the nature of human reason and superadded from "inside" the human being to what flows into him from "outside" through the sense organs. If we start from this image of man, from the *homo philosophicus* who was never a child and seemingly came into the world an adult, there is no way out of the epistemological impasse. Thought steers helplessly back and forth between the Scylla of positivism and the Charybdis of apriorism. It does so precisely because what is actually observable as a process, a development of the social macrocosm within which the development of the individual microcosm can also be observed, is reduced in thought to a state, an act of perception taking place here and now. We have here an example of how closely the inability to conceive long-term social processes (i.e., structured changes in the figurations formed by large numbers of interdependent human beings) or to understand the human beings forming such figurations is connected to a certain type of image of man and of self-perception. People to whom it seems self-evident that their own self (or their ego, or whatever else it may be called) exists, as it were, "inside" them, isolated from all the other people and things "outside," have difficulty assigning significance to all those facts which indicate that individuals live from the first in interdependence with others. They have difficulty conceiving people as relatively but not absolutely autonomous and interdependent individuals forming changeable figurations with one another. Since the former self-perception seems self-evident to those subscribing to it, they can-

not easily take account of facts which show that this kind of perception is itself limited to particular societies, that it comes into being in conjunction with certain kinds of interdependencies, of social bonds between people—in short, that it is a structural peculiarity of a specific stage in the development of civilization, corresponding to a specific stage of differentiation and individualization of human groups. If one grows up in the midst of such a group, one cannot easily imagine that there could be people who do not experience themselves in this way as entirely self-sufficient individuals cut off from all other beings and things. This kind of self-perception appears as obvious, a symptom of an eternal human state, simply the normal, natural, and universal self-perception of all human beings. The conception of the individual as *homo clausus*, a little world in himself who ultimately exists quite independently of the great world outside, determines the image of man in general. Every other human being is likewise seen as a *homo clausus*; his core, his being, his true self appears likewise as something divided within him by an invisible wall from everything outside, including every other human being.

But the nature of this wall itself is hardly ever considered and never properly explained. Is the body the vessel which holds the true self locked within it? Is the skin the frontier between "inside" and "outside"? What in man is the capsule, and what the encapsulated? The experience of "inside" and "outside" seems so self-evident that such questions are scarcely ever posed; they seem to require no further examination. One is satisfied with the spatial metaphor of "inside" and "outside," but one makes no serious attempt to locate the "inner" in space; and although this omission to investigate one's own presuppositions is hardly appropriate to scientific procedure, this preconceived image of *homo clausus* commands the stage not only in society at large but also in the human sciences. Its derivatives include not only the traditional *homo philosophicus,* the image of man of classical epistemology, but also *homo oeconomicus*, *homo psychologicus*, *homo historicus*, and not least *homo sociologicus* in his present-day version. The images of the individual of Descartes, of Max Weber, and of Parsons and many other sociologists are of the same provenance. As philosophers did before them, many sociological theorists today accept this self-perception, and the image of the individual corresponding to it, as the untested basis of their theories. They do not detach themselves from it in order to confront it and call

its aptness into question. Consequently, this kind of self-perception and image of the individual often coexists unchanged with attempts to abolish the reduction to states. In Parsons, for example, the static image of the ego, the individual actor, the adult abstracted from the process of growing up, coexists unmediated with the psychoanalytical ideas that he has taken over in his theory—ideas which relate not to the state of adulthood but to the process of becoming adult, to the individual as an open process in indissoluble interdependence with other individuals. As a result, the ideas of social theorists constantly find themselves in blind alleys from which there seems no way out. The individual—or, more precisely, what the present concept of the individual refers to—appears again and again as something existing "outside" society. What the concept of society refers to appears again and again as something existing outside and beyond individuals. One seems to have the choice only between theoretical approaches which present the individual as the truly existent beyond society, the truly "real" (society being seen as an abstraction, something not truly existing), and other theoretical approaches which posit society as a "system," a "social fact *sui generis*," a reality of a peculiar type beyond individuals. At most one can—as is occasionally done in an apparent solution to the problem—juxtapose the two conceptions unconnectedly, that of the individual as *homo clausus*, as ego, as individual beyond society, and that of society as a system outside and beyond individuals. But the incompatibility of these two conceptions is not thereby disposed of. In order to pass beyond this dead end of sociology and the social sciences in general, it is necessary to make clear the inadequacy of both conceptions, that of the individual outside society and, equally, that of a society outside individuals. This is difficult as long as the sense of the encapsulation of the self within itself serves as the untested basis of the image of the individual, and as long as, in conjunction with this, the concepts "individual" and "society" are understood as if they related to unchanging states.

The conceptual trap in which one is continually being caught by these static notions of "individual" and "society" can only be prized open if, as is done here, these notions are developed further, in conjunction with empirical investigations, in such a way that the two concepts are made to refer to processes. But this development is initially blocked by the extraordinary conviction carried in European societies since roughly the Renaissance by the self-perception of

human beings in terms of their own isolation, the severance of their own "inside" from everything "outside." In Descartes the perception of the isolation of the individual, who finds himself confronted as a thinking ego within his own head by the entire external world, is somewhat weakened by the idea of God. In contemporary sociology the same basic experience finds theoretical expression in the acting ego, which finds itself confronted with people "outside" as "others." Apart from Leibnizian monadology, there is in this philosophico-sociological tradition scarcely a single approach to the problem that sets out from the basis of a multiplicity of interdependent human beings. Leibniz, who did just that, only managed to do so by bringing his version of *homo clausus*, the "windowless monads," in relation to one another by a metaphysical construction. All the same, monadology represents an early advance in the direction of precisely the kind of model that is urgently in need of further development in sociology today. The decisive step Leibniz took was an act of self-distantiation, which enabled him to entertain the idea that one might experience oneself not as an "ego" confronting all other people and things, but as a being among others. It was characteristic of the prevalent kind of experience in that whole period that the geocentric world-picture of the preceding age was superseded only in the area of inanimate nature by a world-picture demanding from the subject of experience a higher degree of self-detachment, a removal of oneself from the center. In men's reflection on themselves the geocentric world-picture was to a large extent preserved in the egocentric one that replaced it. At the center of the human universe, or so it appeared, stood each single human being as an individual completely independent of all others.

Nothing is more characteristic of the unquestioning way in which even today, in thinking about human beings, the separate individual is taken as the starting point than the fact that one does not speak of *homines sociologiae* or *oeconomiae* when talking of the image of man in the social sciences, but always of the image of the single human being, the *homo sociologicus* or *oeconomicus*. From this conceptual starting point, society presents itself finally as a collection of individuals completely independent of each other, whose true essence is locked within them and who therefore communicate only externally and from the surface. One must call on the help of a metaphysical solution, as Leibniz did, if, starting from windowless, closed, human

and extrahuman monads, one is to justify the notion that interdependence and communication between them, or the perception by human beings of interdependence and communications, are possible. Whether we are dealing with human beings in their role as "subject" confronting the "object," or in their role as "individual" confronting "society," in both cases the problem is presented as if an adult human being, completely isolated and self-sufficient—that is, in a form reflecting the prevalent self-perception of people in the modern age crystallized in an objectifying concept—constitutes the frame of reference. What is discussed is his relation to something "outside" himself conceived (like the isolated human being) as a state, to "nature" or to "society." Does this something exist? Or is it only produced by a mental process, or at any rate founded primarily on a mental process?

IX

Let us try to make clear what the problem actually is that is being discussed here. We are not concerned with calling into doubt the authenticity of the self-perception that finds expression in the image of man as *homo clausus* and its many variations. The question is whether this self-perception, and the image of man in which it is usually crystallized quite spontaneously and without reflection, can serve as a reliable starting point for an attempt to gain adequate understanding of human beings—and therefore also of oneself—regardless of whether this attempt is philosophical or sociological. Is it justified—that is the question—to place at the foundation of philosophical theories of perception and knowledge, and of sociological and other theories in the human sciences, as a self-evident assumption incapable of further explanation, the sharp dividing line between what is "inside" man and the "external world," a division which often appears directly given in self-awareness, and furthermore has put down deep roots in European intellectual and linguistic traditions, without a critical and systematic examination of its validity?

This conception has had, for a certain period of human development, an extraordinary persistence. It is found in the writings of all groups whose powers of reflection and whose self-awareness have reached the stage at which people are in a position not only to think but also to be conscious of themselves, and to reflect on themselves, as thinking beings. It is already found in Platonic philosophy and in a number of other schools of philosophy in antiquity. The idea of the

"self in a case," as already mentioned, is one of the recurrent *leitmotifs* of modern philosophy, from the thinking subject of Descartes, Leibniz's windowless monads, and the Kantian subject of knowledge (who from his aprioristic shell can never quite break through to the "thing in itself") to the more recent extension of the same basic idea of the entirely self-sufficient individual: beyond the perspective of thought and perception as reified into "understanding" (*Verstand*) and "reason" (*Vernunft*), to the whole "being" of man, his "existence" in the various versions of existentialist philosophy; or to his action as the starting point of the social theory of Max Weber, for example, who—entirely in keeping with the above-mentioned split—made the not wholly successful attempt to distinguish between "social action" and "nonsocial action," i.e., presumably "purely individual action."

But one would gain only a very inadequate idea of the nature of this self-perception and this image of man if they were understood merely as ideas set forth in scholarly writings. The windowlessness of the monads, the problems surrounding *homo clausus*, which a man like Leibniz tries to make at least more bearable by a speculative solution showing the possibility of relationships between monads, is today accepted as self-evident not only by scholars. Expressions of this self-perception are found in a less reflected form in imaginative literature—for example, in Virginia Woolf's lament over the incommunicability of experience as the cause of human solitude. Its expression is found in the concept of "alienation," used more and more frequently within and outside literature in the most diverse variations in recent decades. It would be not uninteresting to ascertain more systematically whether and how far gradations and variations of this type of self-perception extend to the various elite groups and the broader strata of more developed societies. But the examples cited suffice to indicate how persistent and how much taken for granted in the societies of modern Europe is the feeling of people that their own "self," their "true identity," is something locked away "inside" them, severed from all other people and things "outside"—although, as has been mentioned, no one finds it particularly simple to show clearly where and what the tangible walls or barriers are which enclose this inner self as a vessel encloses its contents, and separate it from what is "outside." Are we here concerned, as it often appears, with an eternal, fundamental experience of all human beings accessible to

no further explanation, or with a type of self-perception which is characteristic of a certain stage in the development of the figurations formed by people, and of the people forming these figurations?

In the context of this book the discussion of this complex of problems has a twofold significance. On the one hand, the civilizing process cannot be understood so long as one clings to this type of self-perception and regards the image of man as *homo clausus* as self-evident, not open to discussion as a source of problems. On the other hand, the theory of civilization developed in this study offers a procedure for solving these problems. The discussion of this image of man serves in the first place to improve understanding of the ensuing study of the civilizing process. It is possible, however, that one might gain a better understanding of this introductory discussion from the vantage point of the end of the book, from a more comprehensive picture of the civilizing process. It will suffice here to indicate briefly the connection between the problems arising from the concept of *homo clausus* and the civilizing process.

One can gain a clear idea of this connection relatively simply by first looking back at the change in people's self-perception that was influenced by the abandonment of the geocentric world-picture. Often this transition is presented simply as a revision and extension of knowledge about the movements of the stars. But it is obvious that this changed conception of the figurations of the stars would not have been possible had not the prevailing image of man been seriously shaken on its own account, had not people become capable of perceiving themselves in a different light than before. Of primary importance for human beings everywhere is a mode of experience by which they place themselves at the center of public events, not just as individuals but as groups. The geocentric world-picture is the expression of this spontaneous and unreflecting self-centeredness of men, which is still encountered unequivocally today in the ideas of people outside the realm of nature, e.g., in natiocentric sociological modes of thought or those centered on the isolated individual.

The geocentric experience is still accessible to everyone as a plane of perception even today. It merely does not constitute the dominant plane of perception in public thought. When we say, and indeed "see," that the sun rises in the east and goes down in the west, we spontaneously experience ourselves and the earth on which we live as the center of the cosmos, as the frame of reference for the movements

of the stars. It was not simply new discoveries, a cumulative increase in knowledge about the objects of human reflection, that were needed to make possible the transition from a geocentric to a heliocentric world-picture. What was needed above all was an increased capacity in men for self-detachment in thought. Scientific modes of thought cannot be developed and become generally accepted unless people renounce their primary, unreflecting, and spontaneous attempt to understand all their experience in terms of its purpose and meaning for themselves. The development that led to more adequate knowledge and increasing control of nature was therefore, considered from one aspect, also a development toward greater self-control by men.

It is not possible to go into more detail here about the connections between the development of the scientific manner of acquiring knowledge of objects, on the one hand, and the development of new attitudes of men toward themselves, new personality structures, and especially shifts in the direction of greater affect control and self-detachment, on the other. Perhaps it will contribute to an understanding of these problems if one recalls the spontaneous, unreflecting self-centeredness of thought that can be observed at any time among children in our own society. A heightened control of the affects, developed in society and learned by the individual, and above all a heightened degree of autonomous affect control, was needed in order for the world-picture centered on the earth and the people living on it to be overcome by one which, like the heliocentric world-picture, agreed better with the observable facts but was at first far less satisfying emotionally; for it removed man from his position at the center of the universe and placed him on one of many planets circling about the center. The transition from an understanding of nature legitimized by a traditional faith to one based on scientific research, and the shift in the direction of greater affect control that this transition involved, thus represents one aspect of the civilizing process examined from other aspects in the following study.

But at that particular stage in the development of these more object-related than self-related conceptual instruments for exploring extra-human nature, it was apparently not possible to include in the investigation, and to reflect upon, this civilizational shift itself, the move toward stronger and more "internalized" self-control that was taking place within man himself. What was happening to human beings as they increased their understanding of nature remained at first inac-

cessible to scientific insight. It is not a little characteristic of this stage of self-consciousness that the classical theories of knowledge representing it are concerned far more with the problems of the object of knowledge than with the subject of knowledge, with object-perception than with self-perception. But if the latter is not included from the start in posing epistemological problems, then this very posing leads to an impasse of equally inadequate alternatives.

The development of the idea that the earth circles round the sun in a purely mechanical way in accordance with natural laws—that is, in a way not in the least determined by any purpose relating to mankind, and therefore no longer possessing any great emotional significance for men—presupposed and demanded at the same time a development in human beings themselves toward increased emotional control, a greater restraint of their spontaneous feeling that everything they experience and everything that concerns them takes its stamp from them, is the expression of an intention, a destiny, a purpose relating to themselves. Now, in the age that we call "modern," men reach a stage of self-detachment that enables them to conceive of natural processes as an autonomous sphere operating without intention or purpose or destiny in a purely mechanical or causal way, and having a meaning or purpose for themselves only if they are in a position, through objective knowledge, to control it and thereby give it a meaning and a purpose. But at this stage they are not yet able to detach themselves sufficiently from themselves to make their own self-detachment, their own affect restraint—in short, the conditions of their own role as the subject of the scientific understanding of nature—the object of knowledge and scientific enquiry.

Herein lies one of the keys to the question of why the problem of scientific knowledge took on the form of classical European epistemology familiar today. The detachment of the thinking subject from his objects in the act of cognitive thought, and the affective restraint that is demanded, did not appear to those thinking about it at this stage as an act of distancing but as a distance actually present, as an eternal condition of spatial separation between a mental apparatus apparently locked "inside" man, an "understanding" or "reason," and the objects "outside" and divided from it by an invisible wall.

If we saw earlier how ideals can turn unawares in thought into something actually existing, how "ought" becomes "is," we are here confronted with a reification of a different kind. The act of

conceptual distancing from the objects of thought that any more emotionally controlled reflection involves—which scientific observations and thought demand in particular, and which at the same time makes them possible—appears to self-perception at this stage as a distance actually existing between the thinking subject and the objects of his thought. And the greater restraint of affect-charged impulses in the face of the objects of thought and observation, which accompanies every step toward increased conceptual distancing, appears here in people's self-perception as an actually existing cage which separates and excludes the "self" or "reason" or "existence," depending on the point of view, from the world "outside" the individual.

The fact that, and in part the reason why, from the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance on, there was a particularly strong shift in individual self-control—above all, in self-control acting independently of external agents as a self-activating automatism, revealingly said today to be "internalized"—is presented in more detail from other perspectives in the following study. The transformation of interpersonal external compulsion into individual internal compulsion, which now increasingly takes place, leads to a situation in which many affective impulses cannot be lived out as spontaneously as before. The autonomous individual self-controls produced in this way in social life, such as "rational thought" or the "moral conscience," now interpose themselves more sternly than ever before between spontaneous and emotional impulses, on the one hand, and the skeletal muscles, on the other, preventing the former with greater severity from directly determining the latter (i.e., action) without the permission of these control mechanisms.

That is the core of the structural change and the structural peculiarities of the individual which are reflected in self-perception, from about the Renaissance onward, in the notion of the individual "ego" in its locked case, the "self" divided by an invisible wall from what happens "outside." It is these civilizational self-controls, functioning in part automatically, that are now experienced in individual self-perception as a wall, either between "subject" and "object" or between one's own "self" and other people ("society").

The shift in the direction of greater individualization that took place during the Renaissance is well enough known. This study gives a somewhat more detailed picture of this development in terms of personality structure. At the same time, it points to connections that

have not yet been properly clarified. The transition from the experience of nature as landscape standing opposed to the observer, from the experience of nature as a perceptual object separated from its subject as if by an invisible wall; the transition from the intensified self-perception of the individual as an entirely self-sufficient entity independent and cut off from other people and things—these and many other phenomena of the time bear the structural characteristics of the same civilizational shift. They all show marks of the transition to a further stage of self-consciousness at which the inbuilt self-control of the affects grows stronger and reflective detachment greater, while the spontaneity of affective action diminishes, and at which people feel these peculiarities of themselves but do not yet detach themselves sufficiently from them in thought to make themselves the object of investigation.

We thus come somewhat closer to the center of the structure of the individual personality underlying the self-experience of *homo clausus*. If we ask once again what really gives rise to this concept of the individual as encapsulated "inside" himself, severed from everything existing outside him, and what the capsule and the encapsulated really stand for in human terms, we can now see the direction in which the answer must be sought. The firmer, more comprehensive and uniform restraint of the affects characteristic of this civilizational shift, together with the increased internal compulsions that, more implacably than before, prevent all spontaneous impulses from manifesting themselves directly and motorically in action, without the intervention of control mechanisms—these are what is experienced as the capsule, the invisible wall dividing the "inner world" of the individual from the "external world" or, in different versions, the subject of cognition from its object, the "ego" from the "other," the "individual" from "society." What is encapsulated are the restrained instinctual and affective impulses denied direct access to the motor apparatus. They appear in self-perception as what is hidden from all others, and often as the true self, the core of individuality. The term "the inner man" is a convenient metaphor, but it is a metaphor that misleads.

There is good reason for saying that the human brain is situated within the skull and the heart within the rib cage. In these cases we can say clearly what is the container and what is contained, what is located within walls and what outside, and of what the dividing walls consist.

But if the same figures of speech are applied to personality structures they become inappropriate. The relation of instinct controls to instinctive impulses, to mention only one example, is not a spatial relationship. The former do not have the form of a vessel containing the latter within it. There are schools of thought that consider the control mechanisms, conscience or reason, as more important, and there are others which attach greater importance to instinctual or emotional impulses. But if we are not disposed to argue about values, if we restrict our efforts to the investigation of what is, we find that there is no structural feature of man that justifies our calling one thing the core of man and another the shell. Strictly speaking, the whole complex of tensions, such as feeling and thought, or spontaneous behavior and controlled behavior, consists of human activities. If instead of the usual substance-concepts like "feeling" and "reason" we use activity-concepts, it is easier to understand that while the image of "outside" and "inside," of the shell of a receptacle containing something inside it, is applicable to the physical aspects of a human being mentioned above, it cannot apply to the structure of the personality, to the living human being as a whole. On this level there is nothing that resembles a container—nothing that could justify metaphors like that of the "inside" of a human being. The intuition of a wall, of something "inside" man separated from the "outside" world, however genuine it may be as an intuition, corresponds to nothing in man having the character of a real wall. One recalls that Goethe once expressed the idea that nature has neither core nor shell and that in her there is neither inside nor outside. This is true of human beings as well.

On the one hand, therefore, the theory of civilization which the following study attempts to develop helps us to see the misleading image of man in what we call the modern age as less self-evident, and to detach ourselves from it, so that work can begin on an image of man oriented less by one's own feelings and the value judgments attached to them than by men as the actual objects of thought and observation. On the other hand, a critique of the modern image of man is needed for an understanding of the civilizing process. For in the course of this process the structure of individual human beings changes; they become "more civilized." And so long as we see the individual human being as by nature a closed container with an outer shell and a core concealed within it, we cannot comprehend how a civilizing process

embracing many generations is possible, in the course of which the personality structure of the individual human being changes without the nature of human beings changing.

This must suffice here as an introduction to the reorientation of individual self-consciousness and to the resulting development of the image of man, without which any ability to conceive a civilizing process or a long-term process involving social and personality structures is largely blocked. So long as the concept of the individual is linked with the self-perception of the "ego" in a closed case, we can hardly conceive "society" as anything other than a collection of windowless monads. Concepts like "social structure," "social process," or "social development" then appear at best as artificial products of sociologists, as "ideal-typical" constructions needed by scientists to introduce some order, at least in thought, into what appears in reality to be a completely disordered and structureless accumulation of absolutely independent individual agents.

As can be seen, the actual state of affairs is the exact converse. The notion of individuals deciding, acting, and "existing" in absolute independence of one another is an artificial product of men which is characteristic of a particular stage in the development of their self-perception. It rests partly on a confusion of ideals and facts, and partly on a reification of individual self-control mechanisms—of the severance of individual affective impulses from the motor apparatus, from the direct control of bodily movements and actions.

This self-perception in terms of one's own isolation, of the invisible wall dividing one's own "inner" self from all the people and things "outside," takes on for a large number of people in the course of the modern age the same immediate force of conviction that the movement of the sun around an earth situated at the center of the cosmos possessed in the Middle Ages. Like the geocentric picture of the physical universe earlier, the egocentric image of the social universe is certainly capable of being conquered by a more realistic, if emotionally less appealing picture. The emotion may or may not remain: it is an open question how far the feeling of isolation and alienation is attributable to ineptitude and ignorance in the development of individual self-controls, and how far to structural characteristics of advanced societies. Just as the public predominance of emotionally less appealing images of a physical universe not centered on the earth did not entirely efface the more private self-centered experience of the sun

as circling around the earth, the ascendancy of a more objective image of man in public thinking may not necessarily efface the more private ego-centered experience of an invisible wall dividing one's own "inner world" from the world "outside." But it is certainly not impossible to dislodge this experience, and the image of man corresponding to it, from its self-evident acceptance in research in the human sciences. Here and in what follows one can see at least the beginnings of an image of man that agrees better with unhindered observations of human beings, and for this reason facilitates access to problems which, like those of the civilizing process or the state-building process, remain more or less inaccessible from the standpoint of the old image of man, or which, like the problem of the relation of individuals to society, continually give rise from that standpoint to unnecessarily complicated and never entirely convincing solutions.

The image of man as a "closed personality" is here replaced by the image of man as an "open personality" who possesses a greater or lesser degree of relative (but never absolute and total) autonomy vis-à-vis other people and who is, in fact, fundamentally oriented toward and dependent on other people throughout his life. The network of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people. Since people are more or less dependent on each other first by nature and then through social learning, through education, socialization, and socially generated reciprocal needs, they exist, one might venture to say, only as pluralities, only in figurations. That is why, as was stated earlier, it is not particularly fruitful to conceive of men in the image of the individual man. It is more appropriate to envisage an image of numerous interdependent people forming figurations (i.e., groups or societies of different kinds) with each other. Seen from this basic standpoint, the rift in the traditional image of man disappears. The concept of the figuration has been introduced precisely because it expresses what we call "society" more clearly and unambiguously than the existing conceptual tools of sociology, as neither an abstraction of attributes of individuals existing without a society, nor a "system" or "totality" beyond individuals, but the network of interdependencies formed by individuals. It is certainly quite possible to speak of a social system formed of individuals. But the undertones associated with the concept of the social system in contem-

porary sociology make such an expression seem forced. Furthermore, the concept of the system is prejudiced by the associated notion of immutability.

What is meant by the concept of the figuration can be conveniently explained by reference to social dances. They are, in fact, the simplest example that could be chosen. One should think of a mazurka, a minuet, a polonaise, a tango, or rock 'n'roll. The image of the mobile figurations of interdependent people on a dance floor perhaps makes it easier to imagine states, cities, families, and also capitalist, communist, and feudal systems as figurations. By using this concept we can eliminate the antithesis, resting finally on different values and ideals, immanent today in the use of the words "individual" and "society." One can certainly speak of a dance in general, but no one will imagine a dance as a structure outside the individual or as a mere abstraction. The same dance figurations can certainly be danced by different people; but without a plurality of reciprocally oriented and dependent individuals, there is no dance. Like every other social figuration, a dance figuration is relatively independent of the specific individuals forming it here and now, but not of individuals as such. It would be absurd to say that dances are mental constructions abstracted from observations of individuals considered separately. The same applies to all other figurations. Just as the small dance figurations change—becoming now slower, now quicker—so too, gradually or more suddenly, do the large figurations which we call societies. The following study is concerned with such changes. Thus, the starting point of the study of the process of state formation is a figuration made up of numerous relatively small social units existing in free competition with one another. The investigation shows how and why this figuration changes. It demonstrates at the same time that there are explanations which do not have the character of causal explanations. For a change in a figuration is explained partly by the endogenous dynamic of the figuration itself, the immanent tendency of a figuration of freely competing units to form monopolies. The investigation therefore shows how in the course of centuries the original figuration changes into another, in which such great opportunities of monopoly power are linked with a single social position—kingship—that no occupant of any other social position within the network of interdependencies can compete with the monarch. At the same time, it indicates

how the personality structures of human beings also change in conjunction with such figurational changes .

Many questions that deserve consideration in an introduction have had to be left aside here; otherwise, the introduction would have become a separate volume. Limited as they are, however, these reflections show perhaps that an understanding of the following study requires a fairly extensive reorientation in the sociological thought and imagination predominant today. To detach oneself from the idea of oneself and of every individual human being as *homo clausus* is certainly not easy. But without detachment from this notion, one cannot possibly understand what is meant when a civilizing process is referred to as a transformation of individual structures. Similarly, it is not easy so to develop one's own imaginative capacity that one is able to think in figurations, and, moreover, in figurations whose normal characteristics include a tendency to change, sometimes even in a specific direction.

In this introduction I have endeavored to discuss some fundamental problems which, had they not been discussed, would have stood in the way of an understanding of this book. The ideas expressed are not all simple, but I have attempted to present them as simply as I could. I hope they may facilitate and deepen the understanding, and perhaps also the pleasure, afforded by this book.

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