Theory

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Editors' Introduction

This is our final issue as co-editors of *Theory*. We would like to especially thank all of the contributors over the past four years. It would be remiss of us not to publicly thank some of the contributors and

all of the readers for their patience. As has been remarked upon in the pages of *Theory*, it is something of a challenge to function in the contemporary university system. Four years is not a sufficient period of time to demarcate major shifts in sociological theory, but it is not difficult to appreciate how changes and innovations have a background in the longer duration of projects, discussions, disputes, hopes and despairs. We hope that we have been able to convey some of the possibilities and actualities of contemporary sociological theory. One of the purposes of being a member of a Research Committee like RC16 is to make connections with scholars in your field. Editing the newsletter has provided us with a rare opportunity to interact with scholars at different junctures of their careers, the prominent as well as the soon to be recognised. We would like to thank the RC co-presidents: Ron Jacobs and Giuseppe Scortino, as well as Agnes Ku, the RC16 secretary-treasurer, for their support. Among the people who have assisted us, and which includes the post office workers whose opening hours we challenged, we would like to thank Jocelyn Pixley and, in particular, Agata Mrva-Montoya of Sydney University Press, who provided some essential voluntary assistance. There are some things a life in theory does not prepare you for, although we have learnt much on the job. When we took on the editing of *Theory* we were aware of the brilliant work of the preceding editors. We wish the next editors of *Theory* all of the best and look forward to reading future issues. Finally, we hope that you enjoy the papers in the Spring-Summer 2014 issue of *Theory*. We are sure that you will want to further investigate the books, concepts, histories, cultural interchange and theoretical innovations that these papers announce. We look forward to catching up with many of you at the ISA World Congress in Yokohama, Japan. Sayonara!

Craig Browne & Paul Jones

From the RC Presidents

As those of us in the Northern Hemisphere wind up the academic year and transition into summer, our thoughts turn with great anticipation to the World Congress of Sociology, which will take place July 13-19 in Yokohama. RC 16 has 25 sessions, including several sessions with a special focus on Southeast Asia. As always, our sessions cover a wide range topical areas including culture, media, cosmopolitanism, modernity, critical theory, Asian theory, visuality, intellectuals, urban space, sexuality, civil society, symbolic violence, globalization, and transnationalism.

RC 16 will be holding its first-ever online election, in advance of the World Congress. We will send more details about the election in a separate email later in the

month. Voting will open in early June, and will close July 6. Results will be announced at the Business Meeting in Yokohama, and will also be communicated via email after the World Congress has concluded. We thank the Nominations Committee for putting together such a strong ballot. We also thank all the candidates for agreeing to run for election, and we are delighted to share the names on the ballot, below:

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Finally, we wish to thank Craig Browne and Paul Jones for the great work they have done with the newsletter during the last four years. In addition to producing a product that has been consistently interesting and informative, Craig and Paul have also helped us to make the transition to a digital format. This is clearly the future for the newsletter, and those of you who opted in to the digital delivery will no doubt share our belief that electronic delivery of the newsletter is a great service to our membership.

Ron Jacobs and Giuseppe Scortino

Collective subjectivity: a concept, a theory

The context

Sociological theory developed, in a disciplinary mould, at its most general level, around the issue of structure and agency. This was more or less explicitly present in the early and later classics and was strongly resumed by the 1970s-1980s 'theoretical syntheses'. At that point the debate reached exhaustion. While relevant advances were made by that decentred collective movement, it was seemingly incapable of moving forward in terms of the action-structure axis. In some respects, it was a step backwards, resuming the just too often reinstated polarization between the (individual) actor and system and/or structure (society) – or between 'individualism' and 'collectivism'. I cannot discuss here those moves and stalemates. Instead, I would like to present briefly my own attempt at overcoming the impasse. The concept of *collective subjectivity* is at the core of what has become a theory that aims to provide a different perspective on such a crucial problem in sociology and social theory.

The concept

The concept of collective subjectivity as sketched here (for which *collectivity* is a shorthand) was proposed in detail elsewhere (Domingues, 1995, 2000a, 2000b). We can start its presentation with the idea of a *dialectic* between actor and structure, which appears in a number of those synthetic approaches. But this has been around at least since Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach', while at the same time it is often cast as a sort of truism – the succession of agency and structure in time, that is, at an *ontic* rather than at an *ontological* level (where processes are actually at stake). We could also fast on the concept of interaction as the analytical basic building-block of a social theory, following Marx, Simmel, Parsons and Mead, which was usually downplayed in those syntheses (except, partly, Habermas'), which were overly concerned with those two poles. We would thereby be able to escape the predicament of the reiteration of metaphysical issues – a sort of Platonist realism of ideas that we often find in those notions of individual actor and structure. Yet such are necessary but insufficient steps to overcome the reified trap of individualism-collectivism. I have therefore introduced the concept of collective subjectivity to move further along this path. While it was inspired by some important suggestions by Marx (social classes), Parsons (collective actors) and Mead (classes of the 'generalized other'), it also breaks with their outlook in a number of ways.

Firstly, I do not speak of 'collective actors'. This tends to reproduce the model of the

individual actor that modernity, via the Cartesian-Hobbesian model, introduced in social thought. It thus implies models of collective actors that act as supposedly modern rational individuals, clearly delimited (even physically), with clear goals or interests, transparent to themselves (notions of ideology and partial obfuscation notwithstanding) and capable of intentionally acting upon such goals and interests. Resuming whatever notion of collective subjectivity with this sort of mindset is, as I see it, really unenlightening. Marx's workers becoming a 'class for itself' and Parsons 'collective actor' as it became eventually modelled after the business firm were prime examples of such a move, but at least they were aware of the fact that there were other sort of collectivities, although they lacked instruments to go beyond that at a theoretical level. Attempts to deal with collectivities in social life at a semi-empirical level, even if supposedly theoretical or theory-laden, often do that too, although they are often also quickly watered down into typologies of such sort of 'actors'.

To move beyond this we need to incorporate to our discussion the idea of the 'decentring of the subject'. But this must not be done according to structuralism. Instead we must bear in mind the decentring of the subject via interaction, in all social durations, whereby it is never self-constituted (nor by any 'structure'), in other words, via the relentless interplay with other collective subjectivities. In addition, we must be especially attentive to the opacity of the agent to itself, as Freud taught us with the substitution of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) by the lack of it – or its partial effectiveness. This means that collective subjects may just not be capable of recognizing themselves, part of the time or permanently and partially. Nor must their material existence be framed by any reference to the individual such as it was conceived by modernity. Its frontiers may be entirely blurred and it may not be ever able to behave as some sort of modernly conceived actors. Collective subjectivities can exist as, to put it in negative terms, rather amorphous beings or entities. Positively, we can say that they are *social systems* with different *levels of centring*, therefore different *levels of intentionality*, as well as more or less closed ecological qualities – in fact they may not even be contiguous in space-time. Their identity may be low or high, their organization low or high, potentially or actually, their delimitation may be closed or open. They include individuals and sub-collectivities with intentional behaviour that may converge, but may also pull in different, even opposing, directions. It is in their interaction, and that of individuals, that social life is weaved.

We do not need therefore any notion of structure, dynamized by actors, nor actors structured by empirically successive structures (whose ontological is always unclear, unless they are defined exclusively in methodological terms – as Parsons did and Bourdieu intuited was necessary step – see discussion of 'models'): with such multilayered interactions we can grasp social life as a flux of complex social process, which are the only reality such social systems possess, contained by institutions that lend continuity to social life and are created and maintained by routine, values and norms as well as power relations. With the concept of collective subjectivity we can move further down this path, beyond metaphysics, towards a *process-oriented ontology*. This was indeed pointed out, in rather distinct but in this regard complementary ways, by Lukács and Heidegger. The former introduced the syllogism of the singular, the particular – *das Besondere* – and the universal-general to deal logically and sociologically with collectivities within social processes; the latter, despite his first phase fuzzy underlying and unexamined individualism, stress the flux of social life and the ontological link between 'being' and time.

At the analytical level we can single out a number of *dimensions* which are ontologically constitutive of collective subjectivities: material (whereby nature is intertwined with social life), hermeneutic (that of symbolic systems), space-time (which must be conceptualized beyond the Newtonian-Kantian view, both at the natural and the social levels) and that of power (either even or favourable to some individuals and sub-collectivities). It is important to note that the *properties* that characterize such dimensions of collective subjectivities lend then a specific ontological quality. They are not, nevertheless, 'emergent', otherwise we would be saying that they somehow rest upon an underlying atomistic reality. On the contrary, they are neither more nor less than the very individuals and collectivities that weave and are weaved by them. Causality must be understood according to the same sort of perspective. While individual causality must be lent some level of teleological quality, the material dimension of collective subjectivity also has to be reckoned with in its conditioning causal impact upon such systems, the same happening with their causal effects upon themselves and their constituent elements, we must not allow ourselves to be dragged back to an individualistic position vis-à-vis causality: social systems qua collective subjectivities possess a *collective causality* which cannot be reduced to the causality of its individual members, but is not its mere sum either. It is an ontological property fundamental to their own constitution and definition.(1)

Towards a general theory

As I developed the concept of collective subjectivity other issues came up. How are social systems reproduced and change? The interplay of *social memories* (broadly understood) and social (individual and collective) *creativity* was theorized to tackle this sort of question, connecting directly to the view of social life as continuous interactive processes. Not order, but the patterned reproduction and the alteration of patterns, in all durations of social life, became the focus of concern thereby. 'Reflexivity' became also an issue for the conceptual developments of collective subjectivity. This is a notion that became very fashionable a number of years ago, usually reinstating the traditional Cartesian (and phenomenological) conceptualization of individual actors – or social systems thought of after the same model – as capable of rationally, systematically and almost transparently concentrating on their own minds and reaching calculated decisions about their life courses. I have instead suggested a threefold a partly continuous concept of individual and collective reflexivity (partly trying to deepen abandoned intuitions of the early Giddens and Bourdieu's best moments): *non-identitary* (forcefully introducing creativity in social life), *practical* and *rationalized* (the only way western thought is wont to understand it, relegating experience or *Erlebnis* to an irrational, at best a-rational plane) This often relates to individual and collective 're-embedding' processes (Domingues, 2000: chs 1-2, 2008, 2012).

In relation to history (and evolution) I was led to an attempt to overcome both mechanistic perspectives (as Alexander and Colomy as well as Eisenstadt and Eder had done), but relating this systematically to collective subjectivities and collective causality, social memory and creativity (Domingues, 2000: ch. 4). This entailed the formulation of the concept of *episodic*, contingent *moves*, which in modernity become *modernizing moves*, weaving it in all dimensions (Domingues, 2008, 2012). It has recently led me to start rethinking modernity in terms of *trend-concepts* which, once understood in a very deterministic way (and implying the 'uniformity of nature'), have been thoroughly discarded – an understandable move at a point, now demanding however revision (Domingues, 2014). Ideas related to *principles of coordination* and *principles of antagonism* in social life have also derived from this endeavour (for instance in Domingues, 2012: ch. 2) and need to be further articulated.(2)

In other words, with the initial problematization of the action-structure debate and the crafting of the concept of collective subjectivity, a range of issues opened up which such a renewed approach can seemingly tackle productively,

generating new insights (without any claim, of course, to exclusivity). Here I can only suggest the outline of what has become the theory of collective subjectivity and invite the interested reader to get more deeply acquainted with it through the texts where I have formerly articulated it.

Notes

1. Latour proposed an attempt at rethinking social causality theory through the concept of 'actante'. However, trying to dialogue with Aristotle and go past Descartes, stressing the material dimension of causality, Latour overlooks the hermeneutic specificity of individual and collective subjectivities. Conflating these dimensions is less than helpful.

2. The same applies to a typology of collectivities (originally proposed in Domingues, 1995, which now seems to me unsatisfactory).

References

Due to limitations of space, I list here only the main pieces where I develop the concept and theory of collective subjectivity.

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José Maurício Domingues

Theorizing Anti-Modernity:

Eric Voegelin and Talcott Parsons

Introduction

In contemporary social science Talcott Parsons is interpreted as the theorist of the comfort-seeking creature of the 1950s, thinking about how to stabilize post-war democracy. Eric Voegelin is recognized as a fervent critique of modernity. Modernity is "Gnosticism", a huge ink blot under which the whole epoch disappears (Ottmann, 2006, p. 3). Both thinkers seem to be "conservative" in their programs of keeping society stable or giving a metaphysical order back to a world from which it disappeared.

Such an impression is misleading. Parsons and Voegelin saw the breakdown of modern society in Germany (and Austria) in the 1930s. In this situation both authors claimed to be *scientific* and subscribe to

Weber's postulates of value freedom and objectivity. In this perspective Parsons and Voegelin theorized the rise of "Anti-Modernity."

A convergence of their thought can be seen, if we bring out clearly three facts: (1) Parsons and Voegelin were witnesses of the breakdown of modern society in Germany since the 1930s. (2) Both knew that modern social science is based in methodology which implies the distinction between empirical fact and conceptual scheme as well as the pluralization of research perspectives and (3) in the framework of *Geisteswissenschaften* man has to be conceived as a person, endowed with a soul. Man is an active, creative, evaluating creature (Parsons, 1935).

Gnosticism and the two-pronged structure of social action

National Socialism is the common point of reference for Parsons and Voegelin. Parsons helped Voegelin to immigrate to the U.S. and to avoid persecution in Austria after the "Anschluss" in 1938 by securing him a short-term position at Harvard University (Gerhard, 2002, p. 128). At the beginning of the 1940s, Voegelin worked on his history of political ideas and sent its table of contents to Parsons who responded:

> "The outline you sent me looks exceedingly interesting, though it is a little difficult to understand much of it from the mere titles. It would seem that you are inter-

weaving in a most interesting way the elements of the history of thought with categories of analysis to the contemporary situation" (Parsons, May 13, 1941).

Parsons emphasizes that Voegelin develops conceptual schemes by analyzing empirical facts of an ancient past. But these concepts allowed to understand the contemporary political situation as well, especially in Europe. In fact, the politics and the social structure of Nazi Germany can be analyzed by concepts that were developed in order to understand pre-modern societies, precisely because Nazi Germany was not a modern social structure at all. It was a violent destruction of modern society (see Gerhardt, 2009, p. 81sqq.). Despite a long line of interpretations, ranging from Adorno to Zygmunt Bauman, in which National Socialism is interpreted as part of modernity, Parsons and Voegelin offer an alternative perspective: National Socialism should be seen as an anti-modern social and political structure.

In *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), Parsons observed that in the 1930s two different structures of interaction emerged. In the Anglo-Saxon countries democracy prevailed, while in Germany and Italy dictatorship was established. He showed that under these conditions a two-pronged structure of social action must be conceptualized, one that corresponds to democracy and another one that

corresponds to dictatorship. Starting from Max Weber who argued that modern society is based on legal-rational social action, Parsons went further and elaborated three components under the conditions of modern society (the argument is fully developed in Gerhardt, 2002): (1) rationality and reciprocity of action orientation, (2) legality of institutional patterns, and (3) security of expectations towards other actors. These three components also constituted what Parsons (1951) called an integrated social system. In contradistinction to this structure, he conceptualized *anomic social action* for which Durkheim and Pareto were the major sources. It is characterized by three elements as well: (1) force and fraud, (2) anomie, and (3) insecure and instable modes of social action based in ritualism and charismatic authority. In the 1950s Parsons did not focus on the breakdown of modern society, but rather on the constitution of democracy and its social system in the U.S. However, he did not neglect the anomic structure of social action completely. In chapter VII of *The Social System* he showed how a deviant social system would look like in which reciprocity of perspectives of action orientation gets lost and is replaced, for example, by patterns of dominance and submission. Of course such tendencies also haunted American democracy when McCarthyism threatened academic freedom in the 1950s and at the beginning

of the 1970s Parsons addressed anomie when the Nixon administration drifted deeply into deviance. Integrated and anomic social action as well as deviant and integrated social systems, then, are the sociological concepts that correspond to the political symbols of democracy and dictatorship. They are, to be sure, analytical schemes which do not exist in empirical reality as such. Quite the opposite: the highly dynamic societies of the modern age are full of frictions and strains. There is, Parsons knew, no such thing as a *fully integrated* society. But there is always the chance of breakdown.

Voegelin follows a similar analytical strategy. In order to analyze the problem of order, he develops three concepts: articulation, representation and participation which are brought into a relationship to human consciousness. Articulation means the self-interpretation of society in terms of the political symbols that represent it and participation is the mode in which human beings are integrated with society. The levels of participation and of articulation must correspond, otherwise the political order is not conceived as being legitimate.

Voegelin argues that under modern conditions American democracy has reached a summit of the historical processes of articulation. Following a formula of Abraham Lincoln, it understands itself as "[g]overnment of the

people, by the people, for the people" (Voegelin, 1952, p. 40). In this formula society is articulated at the level of single individuals (personalities) which are conceived as representable units, in an *institutional* as well as in an *existential* sense. National Socialism is the loss of this level of articulation. It can be understood by using an ideal type which Voegelin called *Gnosticism*. The proposition that Gnosticism is the nature of modernity (Voegelin, 1952) caused much confusion, if the analytical frame of reference is not seen, which allows for the distinction between modern society and Gnosticism. Gnosticism is not a historical phenomenon by itself which emerged during early Christianity and persisted through the middle ages and modern times. Rather it is an analytical scheme which gives way to an adequate understanding of specific forms of political action which are opposed to the experience of man as a free human being. This ideal type has four components: (1) the sequence of the three stages (Comte, the Third Realm of the Nazis), (2) the paracletic leader, (3) the prophet of the new age, and (4) the brotherhood of autonomous persons.

Methodology

The second point of reference is methodology. The methodological foundations of the social sciences mean that conceptual schemes have to be developed in order to answer research questions. The researcher is free in three respects: (1) in asking questions, (2) in developing concepts and (3) in developing methods. Concepts, however, have neither the status of mere nominalist fictions nor of realist universals. They are developed vis à vis the social and historical reality that is constituted in the mind of human actors and to which they have to be adequate.

Parsons methodological ideas were based on Lawrence Henderson's definition of fact "in terms of a conceptual scheme" (Parsons, 1937) in order to avoid Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Voegelin reflected methodological questions in his Walgreen Lectures from 1951 which he read at the University of Chicago (published in 1952 together with a long introduction under the title *The New Science of Politics*.) He follows the same procedure as Parsons in giving an outline of a conceptual scheme in which he interprets empirical fact in terms of the constitution of political order. Voegelin is aware of the problem that, although scientific concepts must be grounded in constituted empirical reality, they must be refined at a scientific level. The role-model for this procedure is Aristotle who:

> "[...] did not invent these [i.e. scientific] terms and endow them with arbitrary meanings; he took rather the symbols which he found in his social environment, surveyed with care the variety of

meanings which they had in common parlance, and ordered and clarified these meanings by the criteria of his theory" (Voegelin 1952: 28).

This is the vantage point of carefully distinguishing between the level of political or ideological concepts which are part of empirical reality and the level of scientific concepts:

"If the theorist, for instance, describes the Marxian idea of the realm of freedom, to be established by a Communist revolution, as an immanentist hypostasis of a Christian eschatological symbol, the symbol 'realm of freedom' is part of reality; it is part of a secular movement of which the Marxist movement is a subdivision, while such terms as 'immanentist,' 'hypostasis,' and 'eschatology' are concepts of political science" (Voegelin 1952: 29).

Voluntarism and the truth of the soul

The third point of reference is *voluntarism* or man as an active, creative, evaluating creature as opposed to man as an atom in space and time or part of a "total mass." This perspective was developed in the wake of German idealism by Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel and Max Weber and emphasized the meaningful structures of the human mind in its objective materializations and subjective orientations. With the rise of National Socialism, the denial of human will as an empirical fact was not just a problem of scientific theory, but also a political and existential problem.

Voegelin argues that within the structure of political action as constituted by National Socialism, the articulation of society is destroyed, meaning that the individual personality becomes part of a total mass which is the material of a determined historical process, announced by a prophet and realized by a paracletic leader. Voegelin emphasized that Gnosticism was based on a kind of denial of asking questions concerning the foundations of the Gnostic vision as well as a denial of acknowledging the "truth of the soul" (the existence of personality). The Gnostic intellectual is part of this process in becoming the prophet of the new age. He and a group of elected persons (the National Socialist party) know the truth while the people remains the material of its realization. However, a "science" which is based on revelation and which claims to know the truth about the meaning of history, cannot be scientific from the viewpoint of methodology.

Gnosticism, then, is an analytical scheme which allows understanding the de-differentiation of science and reality (the fallacy of misplaced concreteness) and the breakdown of a constituted social order which implies man as an active, creative, evaluating creature.

Parsons and Voegelin, both readers and interpreters of Max Weber, started from the fact and the concept of modern society, based on a differentiated (and integrated)

social structure and the Anglo-Saxon democracies were the most advanced versions of this process. From this vantage point, National Socialism can be understood as a regression, a breakdown, a "closure of the soul" (Voegelin's pneumopathology) in which reciprocity based on rationality was denied.

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Christopher Schlembach

The Dark Side of Modernity (1)

To say that modernity has been a disappointment would be understating horrors that continue to endanger the very existence of humankind. Yet to say modernity has been only a nightmare would be telling a one-sided story. Modernity has been liberating as well, providing ideals, movements, and institutions that can repair, not only some of its self-inflicted injuries, but cultural and structural disorders that have plagued social life from its beginning.

In Western societies, the once rosy hopes for modernity have faded. The twentieth century produced a series of catastrophes that had been adumbrated in the centuries before. Voltaire, the intellectual hero of the Enlightenment, was a deeply anti-Semitic. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, was a slaveholder. Kant, the Enlightenment's most important philosopher, was racist and orientalist. As modernity emerged, so did colonial expansion; as modernity intensified, colonial domination deepened in the name of Enlightenment and civilization. From Napoleon onward, modern nations waged wars for progress with heinous weapons forged by technological reason. In the middle of the 20th century, Germany, a nation of scientific achievement and Enlightenment *Bildung*, committed genocidal murder against six million Jews and killed millions more innocents and soldiers in a war that almost

succeeded in returning Europe to medieval times. Two decades later, the American air force tried bombing Vietnam back to the Stone Age. In the years since, social theory and social movements have relentlessly uncovered new forms of irrational prejudice at the very core of Western institutions, from abiding racism and misogyny to orientalism and homophobia.(2)

As these shockingly "antimodern" events and qualities have piled up, great social thinkers became critics of modernity itself. Marx had fervently believed that, with the advent of socialism, modernity's basic structures could be saved. After the Holocaust and two world wars, Frankfort school Marxists came to reject the Enlightenment as such. Speaking the fatalistic language of Weber, Horkheimer and Adorno described the "disenchantment of the world" as "the dissolution of myth and the substitution of knowledge for fancy."(3) They asserted that Enlightenment reason had become merely instrumental, authentic meanings and responsible feelings impossible, and that culture, having losing its autonomy, was reduced to an industry. Marcuse argued capitalism had so quantified modern mental life that one-dimensional society had entirely suppressed critical thought and moral responsibility.(4)

Suggestions that modernity empties culture of meaning, eliminating the very possibility of morality, have become widespread.(5)

Such arguments represent an understandable emotional and moral reaction to the traumas of the 20th century, but empirically they are incorrect. Rather than modernity repressing moral substance and emotional imagination, we must see it as Janus-faced, as blocking and facilitating at the same time. Immensely difficult and deeply destructive, modernity has also produced new technologies of self and society that facilitate far-reaching repairs. A civil sphere has been partially institutionalized, its culture and institutions providing unprecedented opportunities for group incorporation and individual recognition. Ministering to individual rather than collective wounds, psychotherapy has emerged as a central institution in modernity. Modern societies overflow with critical counter-narratives that illuminate political alternatives and frequently demand moral responsibility.(6)

One can no longer conceive modernity as representing a sharp break from orders of a "traditional" kind, if, indeed, it were ever possible at all. Decades ago, Umberto Eco already identified a contemporary "return of the Middle Ages," suggesting that a broad spirit of "neo-medievalism" has permeated modern life.(7) We have witnessed the return of the sacred in our time, paroxysms of apocalypse and utopia, romanticism and chivalry, ecstasy and repentance, barbarism and crusades, localism and difference, blood and soil.(8) There has also unfolded a

proliferating attention to signs and icons, the intellectual response to which has been the renewal of semiotic theorizing and hermeneutical methods of interpretation. In contemporary social science, cultural sociology has been one particularly notable disciplinary result of such proliferation.

At the foundation of cultural sociology is the anti-historicist claim that structures of meaning – cultural codes, symbols, and narratives – are a permanent, not transitory element of consciousness and society.(9) As Robert Bellah once put it, "neither religious man nor the structure of man's ultimate religious situation evolves" over historical time; what changes is "religion as a symbol system."(10) Culture structures remain anchors for collective meanings without which social and individual life is impossible to conceive. Rather than evicting meaning, modernity reformulates cultural structures and subjects them to new strains.

This line of theorizing has been severely constrained by the reluctance of cultural theorists to confront the dark side of modern meaning. For Durkheim and Parsons, simply to sustain culture meant creating social value and moral good; it was the absence of meaning that created instability and evil. Simmel and Eisenstadt seemed to move beyond such an idealizing model of culture, the former identifying the stranger, the latter associating normative institutionalization with tension rather than

stability. Neither, however, viewed evil as residing inside the core of modern culture itself. Only Weber tries to theorize both sides of modernity, conceptualizing not only autonomy but also terrifying discipline, the combination of which produce endemic efforts at flight. Yet Weber believed such escape efforts to be doomed: Authentic meanings and emancipatory movement were impossible in the modern age.

Ovid imagined Janus first as the ancient god Chaos, presiding over the disorderly mass of matter before the formation of the world, a "crude, unstructured mass, nothing but weight without motion, a general conglomeration of … disparate, incompatible elements" inside of which "the sky had no light." Eventually, according to Ovid, Janus "divided the substance of Chaos and ordered it … into its different constituent members," among which was "the strange new figure of Man."(11) The ancient Romans saw Janus as the god of beginnings and of transitions to the future from the past. With one face, Janus could see backward in time; with the other, he looked forward into the future, marking the midpoint between barbarism and civilization.

Social theorists have struggled to comprehend the Janus faces of modernity. Even as Weber linked this-worldly asceticism to autonomy and domination, understanding escape as endemic, he

declared no remedy for rationalization. Simmel pointed to the otherness haunting modernity, yet normalized the stranger. Eisenstadt celebrated ethical transcendence in the Axial Age, but barely acknowledged its capacity for barbarity. Parsons heralded American community, but ignored modernity's fragmentation.

Inside the culture and structure of modernity, good and evil are tensely intertwined. We should not be naïve about the evils of modernity. Modernity's contradictions cannot be resolved in some magisterial new synthesis. Indeed, it is a dangerous delusion to think modernity can eliminate evil; it will produce new kinds of dangers to challenge new kinds of good. Social theory must accept modernity as Janus-faced. We need to theorize the dangerous frictions endemic to modernity and also lay out new lines for social amelioration and emotional repair. We need to be able to see backward and forward at the same time.

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A Note on *Globalized Knowledge Flows and Chinese Social Theory*

Treatments of globalization tend to focus on economic transformation and its consequences, especially for popular culture. In *Globalized Knowledge Flows and Chinese Social Theory* (Routledge: New York & London, 2014) I direct attention to the question of knowledge flows and the consequential conceptual transformations which have far-reaching

political, cultural and intellectual significance, but which have not previously been given central place in discussion of globalization. In a sense this can be construed as the old problem of cultural diffusion. But knowledge flow and conceptual transformation brings in institutions and agency, typically ignored in accounts of diffusion, especially the agency of 'intellectual entrepreneurs' who not only select and transform foreign techniques and concepts but overcome the resistance of the local culture in order to introduce what now become quite distinct ideas. These issues connect with another discussion.

A number of scholars have questioned the universality of Western theory. In this book I go beyond mere critique by showing how to overcome Euro-centrism by integrating concepts from the 'periphery' into mainstream theory. In particular I demonstrate how selected Chinese concepts can enhance the intellectual competence and research capability of a more global social science. Chinese concepts are especially relevant for the enhancement of social theory because they tend to be concrete rather than abstract and sensitive to the relational properties of associations. The argument is not that only Chinese concepts have these properties but that the relevant literatures concerning Chinese history, society and philosophy are sufficiently developed to make the

argument cogent and supported with firm evidence.

Before the book develops solutions, however, it examines the nature of the problem of asymmetric knowledge flows, which are documented in the first two chapters. The first chapter shows that knowledge flows and their organizational and cultural apparatuses tend to maintain the inequalities associated with the idea of Western dominance. At the same time, though, I demonstrate that there is no simple direct or one-way flow. Indeed, various pressures tend to influence the shape, forms and directions in which knowledge flows in a globalized world. After considering the problematic terms 'West' and 'East', which are almost unavoidable in discussion of global inequalities, I consider different conceptualizations of globalization, its historicity and the ways in which it operates as a context for knowledge flows. I also consider the role of institutions, research careers, publishers and publishing practices in the chapter.

The empirical analysis of globalized knowledge flows is continued in the next chapter, 'A Case Study of Globalised Knowledge: *Guanxi* in Social Science and Management Theory', which reports a review of 214 journal articles published between 1999 and 2009. For a number of reasons, the Chinese concept of *guanxi* has become the subject of research reported in

predominantly American and European academic journals. It is possible, then, to examine the degree to which the theories applied in such studies have been modified by their apprehension of this concept; that is, whether the direction of 'knowledge flow' has been influenced by such contact. I show in the chapter that in the vast majority of instances, *guanxi* is explained by theories that are simply applied to Chinese cultural contexts without the concept influencing the development of the theories themselves. I explain this in terms of the national ownership of journal publishing houses and the geographic location of editorial board members and their educational backgrounds. I go on to consider how the ways in which *guanxi* is treated in this literature overlooks broader implications of the concept and therefore misses opportunities to expand the competence of existing theories. Through a detailed analysis, I demonstrate that *guanxi* can augment current understandings of social capital and related notions in the social sciences, indicating how aspects of *guanxi* might transform existing theoretical formulations.

This discussion raises a more general question of how alien concepts become assimilated into theories that originally has no place for them. The possibility of the transfer of alien ideas into another cultural and intellectual context is not merely hypothetical because contact between different societies results in cultural borrowing of various kinds. The assimilation of ideas from one society into another has occurred since human societies have existed. I set out to understand and develop a theory of this process and its mechanisms, through which concepts from one culture become assimilated into the 'thinking' of another, in the two following chapters.

In Chapter 3, 'Western Thought in China: A Historical Case of Knowledge Flow', I analyze the historical process of the selection, transformation and assimilation of European and American concepts into China from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Republican period in the early twentieth century. The Western incursion into China at this time left the Chinese political and social structure more or less intact but brought a national sense of defeat and humiliation to China's ruling imperial elite, its intelligentsia of literati and educated youth. I treat in detail the various phases of the selection and incorporation of foreign ideas enacted to make China 'strong'. I do this to explain the processes whereby alien concepts are transformed so that they might be fitted into an existing theoretical framework. In the chapter I answer the question of how knowledge diffusion occurs by identifying the activities of 'intellectual entrepreneurs' who combine ideas in new ways, paying attention not only to the selection of alien

concepts that they develop, deploy and elaborate, but also to the modification of the existing intellectual framework into which the transformed concepts are inserted.

I argue in Chapter 3, then, that in their combination of elements from both a foreign and domestic context, intellectual entrepreneurs make something that had not previously existed and that can operate as a newly introduced knowledge only if the resistance of the established intellectual framework can be overcome. In this way the local and original conceptual structure cannot remain unchanged. This raises the question of how meaningful it is to refer to an enduring intellectual heritage. I answer this question in Chapter 4, 'China's Intellectual Heritage: Paradigms as Frameworks'. I begin with an examination of how Indian Buddhism was sinicized in the period from the first century, when Buddhism was first introduced into China, to the ninth century by which time Buddhism had become an accepted aspect of Chinese intellectual life. This is another instance of asymmetric knowledge flow, and it provides an excellent case from which to develop further the argument of the book. My major purpose in this chapter, however, is to show how an intellectual heritage persists through the manner in which it undergoes profound transformation. I demonstrate in the chapter the paradigmatic nature of the notion of

intellectual heritage through a discussion of the work of the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn. An intellectual heritage, as I show, is a framework that provides continuity for the generation and acceptance of conceptual change. I identify in the chapter the characteristic features of the Chinese intellectual heritage and discuss the contexts that contribute to its distinctiveness and provide a framework for its continuance. These contexts are China's geographic isolation, its social structure based on inland trade and agriculture and its logographic written and tonal spoken language.

I identify a number of distinctive elements of the Chinese intellectual heritage in Chapter 4. These include a focus on concrete rather than abstract aspects of phenomena. Another leading idea I discuss in the chapter is that no matter how dissimilar or opposed things may be they nevertheless partake in a fundamental interrelationship with all other things through which development continuously occurs. The qualities referred to here can be found in Chinese concepts that have particular relevance for the development of social theory, a proposition explored in the three remaining chapters of this book in which in each chapter there is consideration of a particular Chinese concept and how it addresses questions of social analysis and adds to existing approaches in social theory.

The social anchoring of self in the gaze of others is a universal phenomenon, treated in sociology in terms of the notion of a 'looking-glass self' by Charles Horton Cooley and much earlier by Adam Smith, and through the concept of face by the twentieth-century American sociologist Erving Goffman. I show in Chapter 5, 'Face: A Chinese Concept in a Global Sociology', that Goffman drew on the Chinese concept of face in developing his theory of 'face-work'. I demonstrate in the chapter how a return to the Chinese concept, which embraces two distinct terms for face, *lian* and *mianzi*, is the base from which a comprehensive account of face can be developed that extends existing theories. Although face is a universal experience, the high salience of face in Chinese society means that the Chinese concept of face highlights aspects of face that are less visible in non-Chinese societies and in existing sociological accounts of the phenomenon. It is an irony of the development of sociology in China that until recently Chinese discussions of face have been conducted in English in explaining Chinese characteristics to foreigners. I also discuss this phenomenon in the chapter and show that it as a further consequence of asymmetric knowledge flows.

I explore in Chapter 6, 'Relations of Emotion and Reason: The Challenge of the Concept of *Xin* (Heart/Mind)', the Chinese concept of *xin* in discussion of the relations between emotion and reason. In the European intellectual heritage, emotion and reason are typically seen as opposed and antithetical forces. While there are now philosophical, sociological and neurological arguments against this dichotomy, it nevertheless persists for social structural reasons that I discuss in the final section of the chapter, which also considers the social structural basis of the Chinese conceptualization of the unity of emotion and reason in *xin*. The Chinese concept of *xin*, then, operates in terms of a nonoppositional interdependence of emotion and reason, unified as 'heart/mind'. All the major classical thinkers of China discuss *xin*, some of them in great detail. I show how the concept of *xin* supports those Western approaches critical of the conventional opposition of emotion and reason, but that are themselves unaware of this resource. Through consideration of *xin* neglected aspects of the ways in which emotion and reason interact together in human action are captured.

It is fitting that the concept treated in the final chapter of the book, 'Paradoxical Integration, Contradiction and the Logic of Social Analysis', is methodological rather than substantive, in which questions of the logic of inquiry are addressed. I focus here on a concept taken from the classic source *Daodejing* (*Tao te ching*) in which the relations of opposites are given meaning. The place of the *Daodejing* and philosophical Daoist thought in general are discussed as background to an exposition of the concept of paradoxical integration (*fanhe*). I examine three distinct forms of paradoxical integration

that are relevant for social research. These are, first, interdependency of opposites, in which one element of a pair is required for the meaning and purpose of the other element. Second, the paradoxical integration of generation is outlined through which one thing contemporaneously becomes something else. Finally, the paradoxical integration of reversal is described, which refers to those situations in which one thing provides access to its opposite. Instances of *ad hoc* use of paradoxical integration in recent social science are then discussed to demonstrate the importance of the principle of paradoxical integration for social research and theorizing.

It can be seen from this brief description of the seven chapters of this book that I draw upon a number of different literatures, methods and disciplinary resources in the research underlying the account I spell out. The question of concept formation and refinement is relatively neglected in sociology, but because concepts are the elements from which theories are constituted it is possible to contribute much to our understanding of social theory and theory change by concentrating on concepts. Conceptual innovation and refinement invigorates theories, and it enhances their competence and capacity for understanding and explaining social and cultural phenomenon, relationships and characteristics. The novelty of my approach in this book is the focus on concepts in understanding knowledge flow and theory development. The approach will stimulate and

encourage subsequent research along similar lines, possibly drawing on and integrating concepts from other cultures in order to expand, refine, reinvigorate and even improve social analysis – and affect the quality and direction of knowledge flow.

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