3. *The Rational Structure of the Linguistification of the Sacred*

We can return now to the question of how communicative action mediates between the ritually preserved fund of social solidarity and existing norms and personal identities. We looked at the sacred foundations of moral authority so as to be able to follow the phylogenetic line of development that leads from symbolically mediated to normatively guided interaction. And we discovered in the sacrally rooted validity of norms a starting point for the development from symbolically mediated interaction to language, that is, to grammatical speech. Our formal-pragmatic description of the general structure of speech acts has to draw on the pretheoretical knowledge of speakers who belong to a modern and—in a sense still to be explained more precisely—rationalized lifeworld. If, following Mead and Durkheim, we attempt now to locate a complex of social interaction that might be postulated as the hypothetical starting point of sociocultural development, we shall have to be careful, in depicting the connection between normatively guided action and grammatical speech, that our view is not distorted by our modern preunderstanding. As we cannot step out of an objectively given horizon of interpretation at will, we must simultaneously pose the social-evolutionary question of the direction of change in the initial constellations decisive for normatively guided action (as did both Mead and Durkheim).

In answering this question I shall be guided by the hypothesis that the socially integrative and expressive functions that were at first fulfilled by ritual practice pass over to communicative action; the authority of the holy is gradually replaced by the authority of an achieved consensus. This means a freeing of communicative action from sacrally protected normative contexts. The disenchantment and disempowering of the domain of the sacred takes place by way of a linguistification of the ritually secured, basic normative agreement; going along with this is a release of the rationality potential in communicative action. The aura of rapture and terror that emanates from the sacred, the *spellbinding* power of the holy, is sublimated into the *binding/bonding* force of criticizable validity claims and at the same time turned into an everyday occurrence. I want to develop these ideas by (*A*) taking up Durkheim's theory of the evolution of law and placing legal development in the context of the changing forms of social integration he observed. (*B*) The logic of this change in

form can be clarified by means of a thought experiment based on Durkheim and (*C*) explained in terms of Mead's ideas concerning a discourse ethics. Mead's diagnosis of the irresistable advance of individuation provides a point of contact for (*D*) an excursus on identity and individuation. Finally, I would like (*E*) to mention certain reservations I have in regard to the formalistic and idealistic tendencies in Mead's social theory.

A.—The framework for Durkheim's first great work, *The Division of Labor in Society,* was the social evolution of law.[1] He offered lecture courses in the sociology of law on a number of occasions; significant parts of these lectures were published only posthumously.[2] Like Weber, Durkheim conceived of legal development as a process of disenchantment. I will not go into his attempts to classify areas of law from a social-evolutionary perspective. Archaic law is basically criminal law; he treats civil law as exemplary for modern law, with private property as its core institution and contract and inheritance as related guarantees.

The question of how the moral authority of the sacred is converted into the validity of institutions does not arise in connection with the primitive institutions of criminal law, for the latter is, to begin with, only the symbolic expression of a reaction to the violation of taboos. The original crime is sacrilege, touching the untouchable, profaning the holy. Durkheim sees in the punishment of sacrilege an expression of the horror and fear of fateful consequences; punishment is a ritual that restores the disturbed order. Condemning the sacrilege is thus merely the other side of venerating the sacred. The violation of a sacred norm counts as a crime not because sanctions are placed upon it; rather, it brings sanctions because norms are at first an apparatus for protecting sacred objects or regions. Punishment is understood as expiation:

> It is certain that at the bottom of the notion of expiation there is the idea of a satisfaction accorded to some power, real or ideal, which is superior to us. When we desire the repression of crime, it is not that we desire to avenge personally, but to avenge something sacred which we feel more or less confusedly outside and above us. This something we conceive of in different ways according to the time and the place. Sometimes it is a simple idea, as morality, duty; most often we represent it in the form of one or several concrete beings: ancestors, divinity. That is why penal law is not alone essentially religious in origin, but indeed always retains a certain religious stamp. It is because the acts that it punishes appear to be attacks upon something transcendent, whether being or concept. It is for this very reason that we explain to ourselves the need for a sanction superior to a simple reparation which would content us in the order of purely human interests.[3]

Reparation, in the sense of compensating the harm done, belongs in the profane sphere of balancing private interests. In civil law, paying damages takes the place of expiation. It is along this axis that Durkheim marks off the evolution of law. Modern law crystallizes around the balancing of private interests; it has shed its sacred character. At the same time, the authority of the sacred cannot be dropped without replacement, for the validity has to be based on something that can bind the choices of private legal persons and *obligate* the parties to a contract.

In his lectures on the sociology of law, Durkheim pursues this problem in connection with property and contract law. He elaborates on the analogies that obtain between the archaic legal institutions of property and sacred things. Property is originally borrowed from the gods. Ritual offerings are taxes paid at first to the gods, then later to the priests, and finally to the state authorities. Owing to this sacred origin, property has a magical character which it communicates to the owner—the property relation is based on a magical bond between person and thing:

> The sacred character, wherever it resides, is in its essence contagious and communicates itself to any object it comes in contact with ... The characteristic that makes a thing the property of a certain subject or individual exhibits the same contagiousness. It tends always to pass from the objects in which it resides to all those objects that come in contact with them. Property is contagious. The thing appropriated, like the sacred thing, draws to itself all things that touch it and appropriates them. The existence of this singular capacity is confirmed by a whole collection of juridical principles which the legal experts have often found disconcerting: these are the principles that decide what is called 'right of accession'.[4]

Private property is a later derivate. The rights of the gods pass first to the collectivity; property rights are then differentiated according to subcollectivities, tribes, and families; they are tied to the status of a family member and not to an individual legal person.[5] Inheritance is thus the normal form for the transfer of property. Even the competing form of acquiring and alienating property, the contract, counts to begin with as a change of status: "Indeed, men's wills cannot agree to contract obligations if these obligations do not arise from a status in law already acquired, whether of things or of persons; it can only be a matter of modifying the status and of superimposing new relations on those already existing. The contract, then, is a source of variations which presupposes a primary basis in law, but one that has a different origin. The contract is the supreme instrument by which transfers of ownership are carried through. The contract itself cannot constitute the primary foundations on which the right of contract rests."[6]

The conspicuous formalism with which contracts are concluded, the ceremonies with which they are sealed, are reminders of the religious, noncontractual bases of the contract.

(a) At this point we encounter the key question that inspired Durkheim's investigations in the sociology of law. The contract between autonomous legal persons is the basic instrument of bourgeois private law; in modern legal theory it has been elevated to a paradigm of legal relations in general. How can such a contract bind the parties to it when the sacred foundation of law has disappeared? The standard answer to this question, from Hobbes to Weber, has been that modern law is precisely coercive law. Corresponding to the internalization of morality, there is a complementary transformation of law into externally imposed law authorized by the state and dependent on the sanctioning apparatus of the state. The legality of a contract, or generally of any relation between private legal subjects, means that legal claims can be sued for. The possibility of, as it were, automatically enforcing the fulfillment of legal claims is supposed to guarantee obedience to the law. Durkheim, however, is not satisfied with this response. Even the obedience of modern legal subjects has to have a moral core. For the legal system is part of a political order, together with which it would break down if that order could not claim legitimacy.

Thus Durkheim inquires into the legitimacy of legal relationships in the form of contracts between autonomous legal persons. He denies that a contractual relation can acquire legitimacy solely on the basis of the conditions under which the contract is concluded. The obligatory character of a contract by no means follows from the fact of an agreement voluntarily entered into by two parties in their own interests. A contract of this sort "is not sufficient unto itself, but is possible only thanks to a regulation of the contract which is originally social."[7] This regulation cannot itself be an expression of mere choice; it cannot rest on the facticity of government force; but then where do the legal foundations of a contract get their moral authority once the law has been secularized? "We have seen that the rights which have their origin in things, derive from the sacred nature of things; we need not revert to this. Therefore, all moral and juridical relations and ties which derive from a personal or from a *real* status, owe their existence to some virtue *sui generis,* inherent either in the subjects or the objects and compelling respect. But how could a virtue of this kind reside in mere inclinations of the will?"[8]

The answer—which, it is interesting to note, Durkheim elaborates in connection with the example of a labor contract—is simple: the obligatory character of a contract is based on the legitimacy of the legal regulations that underlie it; the latter count as legitimate only insofar as they express a general interest. One can test this by checking whether the

contracts they authorize actually produce a balance of interests or violate, instead, the legitimate interests of one of the parties, regardless of the latter's formally free consent. "Thus, the coming on the scene of the contract by mutual consent, together with an increase in human sympathies, inclined the minds of men to the idea that the contract was only moral and only to be recognized and given sanction by society, provided it was not merely a means of exploiting one of the contracting parties, in a word, provided it was just . . . It is not enough that the contract shall be by consent. It has to be just, and the way in which the consent is given is now no more than the outward criterion of the degree of equity in the contract."[9]

From the perspective of Max Weber, it might seem as if Durkheim wants to reclaim for formal law substantive justice plain and simple. In fact, however, his argument points in another direction. Durkheim wants to make clear that the obligatory character of constraints cannot be derived from the voluntary nature of an agreement between individuals governed by their interests. The binding force of moral agreement grounded in the sacred can be replaced only by moral agreement that expresses in rational form what was always intended in the symbolism of the holy: the generality of the underlying interest. Durkheim is here following Rousseau's famous distinction:[10] the general interest is by no means the sum of, or a compromise between, a number of individual interests. Rather, the general interest draws its morally obligating force from its impersonal and impartial character. "The role of the state, in fact, is not to express and sum up the unreflective thought of the mass of the people but to superimpose on this unreflective thought a more considered thought, which therefore cannot be other than different."[11]

In differentiated societies, collective consciousness is embodied in the state. The latter must itself provide for the legitimacy of the force over which it has a monopoly. "To sum up, we can therefore say that the state is a special organ whose responsibility it is to work out certain representations which hold good for the collectivity. These representations are distinguished from the other collective representations by their high degree of consciousness and reflection."[12] It is characteristic of the development of modern states that they change over from the sacred foundation of legitimation to foundation on a common will, communicatively shaped and discursively clarified in the political public sphere: "Seen from this point, a democracy may, then, appear as the political system by which the society can achieve a consciousness of itself in its purest form. The more that deliberation and reflection and a critical spirit play a considerable part in the course of public affairs, the more democratic the nation. It is the less democratic when lack of consciousness, uncharted customs, the obscure sentiments and prejudices that evade investigation,

predominate. This means that democracy . . . is the form that societies are assuming to an increasing degree."[13] Durkheim sees the moral superiority of the democratic principle in the arrangements for a discursive formation of will: "Because it is a system based on reflection, it allows the citizen to accept the laws of the country with more intelligence and thus less passively. Because there is a constant flow of communication between themselves and the state, the state is for individuals no longer like an exterior force that imparts a wholly mechanical impetus. Owing to the constant exchanges between them and the state, its life becomes linked with theirs, just as their life does with that of the state."[14] To the degree that the basic religious consensus gets dissolved and the power of the state loses its sacred supports, the unity of the collectivity can be established and maintained only as the unity of a communication community, that is to say, only by way of a consensus arrived at communicatively in the public sphere.

Against the background of this conversion of the state over to a secular basis of legitimation, the development of the contract from a ritual formalism into the most important instrument of bourgeois private law suggests the idea of a "linguistification" of a basic religious consensus that has been set communicatively aflow. In archaic societies the ceremonial declarations of the parties to a contract are scarcely distinguishable from ritual actions; through the words of the participants it is the consensus-forming power of the sacred itself that speaks: "The wills can effect the bond only on condition of declaring themselves. This declaration is made by words. There is something in words that is real, natural and living and they can be endowed with a sacred force, thanks to which they compel and bind those who pronounce them. It is enough for them to be pronounced in ritual form and in ritual conditions. They take on a sacred quality by that very act. One means of giving them the sacred character is the oath, or invocation of a divine being. Through this invocation, the divine being becomes the guarantor of the promise exchanged. Thereby the promise, as soon as exchanged in this way . . . becomes compulsive, under threat of sacred penalties of known gravity."[15] In modern law, by contrast, the private contract draws its binding power from its legality; but the law that gives it this legality owes its obligatory character, demanding recognition, to a legal system legitimated in the end by political will-formation. It is the achievement of mutual understanding by a communication community of citizens, their own words, that brings about the binding consensus.

(b) Durkheim treats the evolution of law in connection with a change in the form of social integration affecting society as a whole. He characterizes this trend as a departure from an initial situation in which "the individual personality is absorbed into the collective personality."[16]

Durkheim thinks of the dissolution of this mechanical solidarity of tribal members, who, assimilated one to the other, derive their own identities almost completely from the collective identity, as a process of emancipation. To the degree that social structures become differentiated, sociated individuals free themselves from a collective consciousness encompassing the whole personality structure. At the same time, they distance themselves from the basic religious consensus in which everyone is merged with everyone else. Durkheim characterizes this development from *mechanical* to *organic* solidarity at three levels. The rationalization of worldviews goes hand in hand with a generalization of moral and legal norms and with a growing individuation of individuals.

The *rationalization of worldviews* expresses itself in a process of abstraction that sublimates mythical powers into transcendent gods and finally into ideas and concepts and, at the cost of shrinking down the domain of the sacred, leaves behind a nature bereft of gods.

> In the beginning, the gods are not distinct from the universe, or rather there are no gods, but only sacred beings, without their sacred character being related to any external entity as their source ... But little by little religious forces are detached from the things of which they are first only the attributes, and become hypostatized. Thus is formed the notion of spirits or gods who, while residing here or there, as preferred, nevertheless exist outside of the particular objects to which they are more specifically attached. By that very fact they are less concrete ... The Graeco-Latin polytheism, which is a more elevated and better organized form of animism, marks new progress in the direction of transcendence. The residence of the gods becomes sharply distinct from that of men. Set upon the mysterious heights of Olympus or dwelling in the recesses of the earth, they personally intervene in human affairs only in somewhat intermittent fashion. But it is only with Christianity that God takes leave of space; his kingdom is no longer of this world. The dissociation of nature and the divine is so complete that it degenerates into antagonism. At the same time, the concept of divinity becomes more general and more abstract, for it is formed, not of sensations, as originally, but of ideas.[17]

In the end, rationalized worldviews have to compete with the authority of a fully secularized science. This gives rise to a reflective attitude toward tradition in general. A tradition that has become problematic in principle can now be continued only through the medium of permanent critique. At the same time, the traditional consciousness of time switches over to orientations toward the future.[18]

Corresponding to the abstraction of the representations of the divine, there is a *generalization of values*: "The idea of man, for example, re-

places in law, morality, religions, that of Roman, which, being more concrete, is more refractory to science."[19] The parallel development at the level of institutionalized values consists in a *universalization of law and morality* that brings with it a disenchantment of sacred law, that is, a deformalization of legal procedures. Whereas the rules of law and morality were "linked at first to local circumstances, to particularities, ethnic, climatic, etc., they free themselves little by little, and with the same stroke become more general. What makes this increase of generality obvious is the uninterrupted decline of formalism."[20] Together with their range of application, the latitude for interpreting norms and the necessity of rationality justifying them also grow. "There is nothing fixed save abstract rules which can be freely applied in very different ways. Then they no longer have the same ascendancy nor the same force of resistance. Indeed, if practices and formulae, when they are precise, determine thought and movement with a necessity analogous to that of reflexes, these general principles, on the contrary, can pass into facts only with the aid of intelligence. But, once reflection is awakened, it is not easy to restrain it. When it has taken hold, it develops spontaneously beyond the limits assigned to it. One begins by putting articles of faith beyond discussion; then discussion extends to them. One wishes an explanation of them; one asks their reasons for existing, and, as they submit to this search, they lose part of their force."[21]

Finally, in the manifestations of *modern individualism* Durkheim sees signs of a quasi-religious revaluation of the individual, of a "cult of personality, or individual dignity,"[22] which commands everyone, as it were, "to be more and more of a person."[23]

The increasing individuation can be measured by both the differentiation of unique identities and the growth of personal autonomy: "To be a person is to be an autonomous source of action. Man acquires this quality only in so far as there is something in which is his alone and which individualizes him, as he is something more than a simple incarnation of the generic type of his race and his group."[24]

This autonomy is more than a capacity for *arbitrary* free choice within an expanded and variable range of alternatives. It does not consist in the "abstract power of choice between two opposites," but rather in what we have called "reflective self-understanding." According to Durkheim, this increasing individuation and growing autonomy of the individual are characteristic of a new form of solidarity that is no longer secured by prior value consensus but has to be cooperatively achieved by virtue of individual efforts. In place of social integration through belief, we have a social integration through cooperation. Durkheim originally thought he could explain this organic solidarity as an effect of the social division of labor, that is, of the differentiation of the social system. A few years

later, in the preface to the second edition of *The Division of Labor in Society,* he revised this view. The differentiation of the system does not itself give rise to the new form of solidarity; so Durkheim sees himself forced to look for help in a morality of occupational groups that he has to postulate and to illustrate by historical examples painted in utopian hues. He does not explain what mechanism could produce this new form of solidarity in place of structural differentiation.[25]

Nevertheless he does offer an interesting suggestion; in the transition from the mechanical to the organic form of solidarity, he sees a "tendency to become more rational."[26] And at the end of the book he also specifies the standard he uses when he conceives of the modernization of society as rationalization—a universalistic morality that is realized to the extent that individuals learn to act responsibly.

> If, moreover, we remember that the collective consciousness is becoming more and more a cult of the individual, we shall see that what characterizes the morality of organized societies, compared to that of segmental societies, is that there is something more human, therefore more rational, about them. It does not direct our activities to ends which do not immediately concern us; it does not make us servants of ideological powers of a nature other than our own, which follow their directions without occupying themselves with the interests of men . . . The rules which constitute it do not have a constraining force which snuffs out free thought; but because they are rather made for us and, in a certain sense, by us, we are free . . . We know only too well what a laborious work it is to erect this society in which each individual will have the place he merits, will be rewarded as he deserves, where everybody, accordingly, will spontaneously work for the good of all and each. Indeed, a moral code is not above another because it commands in a dryer and more authoritarian manner, or because it is more sheltered from reflection. Of course, it must attach us to something besides ourselves, but it is not necessary for it to chain us to it with impregnable bonds.[27]

In holding out this prospect, Durkheim does not avoid the pitfalls of the philosophy of history. On the one hand, he strives for the descriptive attitude of a social scientist who merely observes historical tendencies; on the other hand, in a normative attitude, he adopts the concept of a universalistic morality that seems to arise from these tendencies, at least as a generally accepted ideal, and announces pithily the duty "to make a moral code for ourselves."[28] Durkheim is evidently not clear about the methodological conditions that a descriptive account of a developmental process, conceived as a process of rationalization, has to satisfy.

Moralism is an ironic echo of his positivism.[29] As we have seen, in his

later writings, particularly in his studies of the sociology of religion and law, Durkheim came close to the idea of the linguistification of a basic religious consensus that has been set communicatively aflow. From this theoretical perspective, I shall attempt to defend the changes in the form of social integration described by Durkheim as indicators of a process of rationalization. With this we return to Mead's point of explaining linguistically mediated, normatively guided interaction by way of rational reconstruction.

As was propaedeutically set forth in the first chapter of Volume 1, the conditions of rationality can be explained in terms of the conditions for a communicatively achieved, reasonable consensus. Linguistic communication that aims at mutual understanding—and not merely at reciprocal influence—satisfies the *presuppositions* for rational utterances or for the rationality of speaking and acting subjects. We have also seen why the rationality inherent in speech can become empirically effective to the extent that communicative acts take over the steering of social interactions and fulfill functions of social reproduction, of maintaining social lifeworlds. The rationality potential in action oriented to mutual understanding can be released and translated into the rationalization of the lifeworlds of social groups to the extent that language fulfills functions of reaching understanding, coordinating actions, and socializing individuals; it thereby becomes a medium through which cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization take place. Bringing social evolution into the perspective of rationalization in this fashion, we can combine the theoretical approaches of Mead and Durkheim to construct a hypothetical initial state; from this we can hope to learn what the change to communicative action—at first narrowly circumscribed by institutions—meant for the process of hominization, and why the linguistic mediation of norm-guided action could have supplied the impetus for a rationalization of the lifeworld.

The construction I am proposing is based, on the one hand, on the limit state that Durkheim assumes for a totally integrated society, and on the other hand, on the disintegrating effects that speech acts, by virtue of the structures we have analyzed, give rise to when the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld gets tied to communicative action. This thought experiment requires that we think of the Durkheimian zero point of society as composed of a sacred domain that does not yet *need* a linguistic mediation of ritual practice, and a profane domain that does not yet *permit* a linguistic mediation of cooperation with its own dynamics. Particularly this last assumption is artificial, but it is not completely inappropriate, inasmuch as Durkheim does not attribute any really constitutive significance to grammatical speech. Our thought experiment is intended to show that when it becomes linguistically channeled, social reproduc-

tion is subject to certain structural constraints; and that by reference to these we can—not causally explain, certainly, but—render reconstructively comprehensible, in their inner logic, the above-mentioned structural transformation of worldviews, the universalization of law and morality, and the growing individuation of socialized subjects.

B.—Let us imagine, for the moment, the limit case of a totally integrated society. Religion serves only to interpret existing ritual practices in concepts of the holy; without a strictly cognitive content, it has not yet taken on the character of a *world*view. It secures, in the sense of cultural determinism, the unity of the collectivity and largely represses conflicts that might arise from power relations and economic interests. These counterfactual assumptions signify a state of social integration in which language has only minimal significance. The prior value consensus needs, of course, to be linguistically actualized and channeled into situations of action, but the achievement of mutual understanding remains so tightly restricted to an instrumental role that the influence the structure of speech acts has on the nature and composition of the cultural tradition may be ignored. In a somewhat different context, Wittgenstein spoke of language "going on holiday"; when it is released from the discipline of everyday practice, disengaged from its social functions, it luxuriates, kicks over the the traces. We are trying to imagine a state in which language is on holiday, or at any rate, one in which language's proper weight has not yet made itself felt in social reproduction. Considerations similar to those we have introduced in connection with the function of reaching understanding can be spelled out for the functions of coordinating action and socializing individuals as well.

In a seamlessly integrated society, the religious cult is something like a total institution that encompasses and normatively integrates all actions, whether in the family or in the area of social labor, to such a degree that every transgression of a norm has the significance of a sacrilege. It is true that this basic institution can branch out into norms specific to situations and to tasks only by virtue of linguistic mediation. But in the process, communicative actions are confined to instrumental roles, so that the influence that language has on the validity and application of norms may be ignored. It is above all the third aspect of such a society that Durkheim emphasizes—the reproduction of the group identity in the personality structure of each individual member. Personality is divided into a general component that stereotypically reproduces the structures of the society and an individual, nonsocialized, residual component tied to the individual organism. This situation expresses the idea of a socialization process in which the individuating force of linguistically established intersubjectivity does not yet play any role.

Finally, the structures of worldview, institutions, and individual personality are not yet seriously separated from one another; they are fused in the collective consciousness constitutive of the identity of the group. There is a differentiation of this sort inherent in the structures of linguistic communication, but it takes effect only to the extent that communicative action has its own weight in the functions of mutual understanding, social integration, and personality formation, and dissolves the symbiotic relation in which religion and society stand. Only when the structures of action oriented to reaching understanding become effective does a linguistification of the sacred arise, determining the logic of the changing forms of social integration as described by Durkheim. Our thought experiment is meant to show that the abstraction of worldviews, the universalization of law and morality, and growing individuation can be conceived as developments that, so far as their structural aspects are concerned, set in when, in the midst of a seamlessly integrated society, the rationality potential of action oriented to reaching understanding becomes unfettered. We shall leave to one side here the empirical conditions for a dynamic of this sort.

As we have seen, in grammatical speech, propositional components are joined with illocutionary and expressive components in such a way that semantic contents can fluctuate among them. Whatever can be said at all, can also be expressed in assertoric form. With this basic feature of language in mind, we can make clear what it means for religious worldviews to connect up with communicative action. Background knowledge enters into the situation definitions of goal-oriented actors who regulate their cooperation in a consensual manner; the results of such interpretative accomplishments are stored in worldviews. As semantic contents of sacred and profane origin fluctuate freely in the medium of language, there is a fusion of meanings; moral-practical and expressive contents are combined with cognitive-instrumental contents in the form of cultural knowledge. We can distinguish two aspects of this process.

On the one hand, the normative and expressive contents of experience stemming from the domain in which collective identity is secured by ritual means can be expressed in the form of propositions and stored as *cultural knowledge;* this makes of religion a *cultural tradition* in need of being communicatively continued. On the other hand, sacred knowledge has to be *connected* to profane knowledge from the domains of instrumental action and social cooperation; this makes of religion a *worldview* with a claim to totality. To the extent that everyday communicative practice is given its proper weight, worldviews have to process the profane knowledge streaming into them, the flow of which they can less and less control; they have to bring this knowledge into a more or less consistent connection with moral-practical and expressive elements

of knowledge. The structural aspects of the development of religious worldviews, which Durkheim and Weber sketched in complementary ways, can be explained by the fact that the validity basis of tradition shifts from ritual action over to communicative action. Convictions owe their authority less and less to the spellbinding power and the aura of the holy, and more and more to a consensus that is not merely reproduced but *achieved*, that is, brought about communicatively.

As we have also seen, in grammatical speech illocutionary components are joined with propositional and expressive components in such a way that an illocutionary force is connected with *every* speech act. From these illocutionary forces is constituted a concept of validity that, while it is modeled after the paleosymbolically rooted authority of the holy, is nonetheless of a genuinely linguistic nature. Keeping this basic feature of language in mind, we can make clear what it means when institutions grounded in the sacred not only act effectively in and through processes of reaching understanding—by steering, preforming, prejudging—but themselves become dependent upon the binding effect of consensus formation in language. Then social integration no longer takes place directly via institutionalized values but by way of intersubjective recognition of validity claims raised in speech acts. Communicative actions also remain embedded in existing normative contexts, but speakers can explicitly refer to the latter in speech acts and take up different stances toward them. From the fact that speech acts get their own proper illocutionary force—independent of existing normative contexts—some noteworthy consequences follow, both for the validity and for the application of norms.

The validity basis of norms of action changes insofar as every communicatively mediated consensus depends on reasons. The authority of the sacred that stands behind institutions is no longer valid per se. Sacred authorization becomes dependent instead on the justificatory accomplishments of religious worldviews. Entering into the situation interpretations of participants in communication, *cultural knowledge* takes on functions for coordinating action. So long as moral-practical elements of knowledge are mixed up with expressive and cognitive-instrumental elements in the basic concepts of mythical and religious-metaphysical worldviews, the latter can serve to explain and justify institutional systems. This means that all consonant experiences that can be consistently worked up in a worldview confirm existing institutions, whereas dissonant experiences that overload a worldview's potential for supplying reasons place belief in the legitimacy and the validity of the corresponding institutions in question. The institutional system can, however, come under pressure otherwise than through the structural transformation of worldviews; this can also happen as the result of a growing need for

specification of altered and increasingly complex action situations. To the degree that communicative actors themselves take over the application of norms, the latter can become simultaneously more abstract and more specialized. The *communicatively mediated* application of action norms depends on participants coming to shared situation definitions that refer simultaneously to the objective, the normative, and the subjective facets of the situation in question. Participants in interaction must *themselves* relate the relevant norms to the given situation and tailor them to special tasks. To the degree that these interpretative accomplishments become independent from the normative context, the institutional system can deal with the growing complexity of action situations by branching out into a network of social roles and special regulations within a framework of highly abstract basic norms.

The universalization of law and morality noted by Durkheim can be explained in its structural aspect by the gradual shifting of problems of justifying and applying norms over to processes of consensus formation in language. Once a community of believers has been secularized into a community of cooperation, only a universalistic morality can retain its obligatory character. And only a formal law based on abstract principles creates a divide between legality and morality such that the domains of action, in which the responsibility for settling disputed questions of applying norms is institutionally lifted from participants, get sharply separated from those in which it is radically demanded of them.

Finally, as we have noted, in grammatical speech expressive components are joined with illocutionary and propositional components in such a way that the first-person pronoun appearing in the subject position of performative sentences has two overlapping meanings. On the one hand, it refers to ego as the speaker who has expressed his experiences in an expressive attitude; on the other hand, it refers to ego as a member of a social group who is entering into an interpersonal relation with (at least) one other member. With this basic feature of language in view, we can make clear what it means for socialization processes to be shaped by the linguistic structure of relations between a growing child and his reference persons. The structure of linguistic intersubjectivity which finds expression in the system of personal pronouns ensures that the child learns to play social roles in the first person.[30] This structural pressure blocks the simple reduplication of group identity in the personality structure of the individual; it works as a pressure toward individuation. Anyone who participates in social interaction in the communicative role of the first person must appear as an actor who demarcates from facts and norms an inner world to which he has privileged access and who, simultaneously, vis-à-vis other participants, takes initiatives that will be attributed to him as his "own" actions for which he is responsible.

The degree of individuation and the extent of responsibility vary with the scope for independent communicative action. Insofar as the socializing interaction of parents frees itself from fixed models and rigid norms, the competences transmitted in the socialization process become increasingly formal. The trend toward growing individuation and autonomy, observed by Durkheim, can be explained in its structural aspects by the fact that the formation of identities and the genesis of group membership become further and further removed from particular contexts and are shifted more and more over to the acquisition of generalized competences for communicative action.

The thought experiment briefly sketched above draws on the idea of a linguistification of the sacred to decode the *logic* of the changes in the form of social integration analyzed by Durkheim. The experiment illuminates the path along which we can make our way back from the formal–pragmatically clarified structures of action oriented to mutual understanding to the anthropologically deep-seated structures of linguistically mediated, normatively regulated action. Norm-guided interaction changes its structure to the degree that functions of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization pass from the domain of the sacred over to that of everyday communicative practice. In the process, the religious community that first made social cooperation possible is transformed into a communication community standing under the pressure to cooperate. Durkheim shares the social-evolutionary perspective with Mead. But he is unable to conceive the transition from forms of mechanical to forms of organic solidarity as a transformation of collective consciousness reconstructible *from within;* thus it remains unclear what entitles him to conceive of the changing form of social integration as a development toward rationality. The idea of a linguistification of the sacred is, to be sure, suggested by Durkheim, but it can be worked out only along the lines of a Meadean attempt at reconstruction. Mead does in fact definitely conceive of the communicative thawing of traditionally solid institutions based on sacred authority as a rationalization. He explicitly takes communicative action as a reference point for his utopian projection of a "rational society." His remarks on the possibility of development of modern societies, his outlines of a "rational," or, as he also writes, an "ideal" society read as if he wanted to answer the question of which structures a society would have to have if its social integration were to be completely converted over from sacred foundations to communicatively achieved consensus. I want to look next at the cultural development characterized by the differentiation of science, morality, and art.

Modern science and morality are governed by ideals of an objectivity and impartiality secured through unrestricted discussion, while modern

art is defined by the subjectivism of a decentered ego's unrestricted experience of itself, freed from the constraints of knowledge and action. Inasmuch as the sacred domain was constitutive for society, neither science nor art can inherit the mantle of religion; only a morality, set communicatively aflow and developed into a discourse ethics, can replace the authority of the sacred *in this respect.* In this morality we find dissolved the archaic core of the normative, we see developed the rational meaning of normative validity.

The relationship between religion and morality can be seen in, among other things, the fact that morality gets no clear status in the construction of a structurally differentiated lifeworld. Unlike science and art, it cannot be regarded as belonging exclusively to the cultural tradition; unlike legal norms or character traits, it cannot be imputed exclusively to society or to personality. We can, of course, make an analytical separation between moral *representations* as elements of tradition, moral *rules* as elements of the norm system, and moral *consciousness* as an element of personality. But collective moral representations, moral norms, and the moral consciousness of individuals are aspects of one and the same morality. Something of the penetrating power of primordial sacred powers still attaches to morality; it permeates the since differentiated levels of culture, society, and personality in a way that is unique in modern societies.

Durkheim too credited only universalistic morality with the power to hold together a secularized society and to replace the basic, ritually secured, normative agreement on a highly abstract level. But only Mead grounded universalistic morality in such a way that it can be conceived as the result of a communicative rationalization, an unfettering of the rationality potential inherent in communicative action. In his rough sketch of a critique of Kantian ethics, he attempted to justify such a discourse ethic genetically.[31]

C.—Mead starts from an intuition common to all universalistic moral theories: the standpoint we adopt in judging morally relevant questions has to allow for the impartial consideration of the known interests of *everyone* involved, because moral norms, rightly understood, bring a *general* interest into play.[32] The utilitarians are in agreement with Kant in requiring universality of basic norms: "The utilitarian says it must be the greatest good of the greatest number; Kant says that the attitude of the act must be one which takes on the form of a universal law. I want to point out this common attitude of these two schools which are so opposed to each other in other ways: they both feel that an act which is moral must have in some way a universal character. If you state morality in terms of the result of the act, then you state the result in terms of the

whole community; if in the attitude of the act, it must be in the respect for law, and the attitude must take on the form of a universal law, a universal rule. Both recognized that morality involves universality, that the moral act is not simply a private affair. A thing that is good from a moral standpoint must be a good for everyone under the same conditions."[33]

This intuition, which has been given expression in the dogmatics of world religions no less than in the topoi of common sense, is better analyzed by Kant than by the utilitarians. Whereas the latter, with their idea of the general welfare, the greatest happiness for the greatest number, are specifying a point of view from which to test the universalizability of interests, Kant proposes a principle of legislation that all moral norms have to be able to satisfy. From a generalizing compromise among fundamentally particular interests we do not get an interest outfitted with the authority of a general interest, that is, with the claim to be recognized by everyone involved as a shared interest. Thus, the utilitarian is unable to explain that moment of uncoerced, well-considered, rationally motivated consent that valid norms demand of everyone involved. Kant explains the validity of moral norms by reference to the meaning of the universality of laws of practical reason. He presents the categorical imperative as a maxim by which each individual can test whether a given or recommended norm deserves general assent, that is, counts as a law.

Mead picks up this line of thought: "We are what we are through our relationship to others. Inevitably, then, our end must be a social end, both from the standpoint of its content . . . and also from the point of view of form. Sociality gives the universality of ethical judgments and lies back of the popular statement that the voice of all is the universal voice; that is, everyone who can rationally appreciate the situation agrees."[34] Mead gives a characteristic twist to the Kantian argument by responding in social-theoretical terms to the question of why moral norms may claim social validity on the basis of their universality. The authority of moral norms rests on the fact that they embody a general interest, and the unity of the collective is at stake in protecting this interest. "It is this feel for social structure which is implicit in what is present that haunts the generous nature and causes a sense of obligation which transcends any claim that his actual social order fastens upon him."[35] On this point Mead is in accord with Durkheim. The "ought" quality of moral norms implicitly invokes the danger that any harm to the social bond means for all the members of a collectivity—the danger of anomie, of group identity breaking down, of the members common life-contexts disintegrating.

To the extent that language becomes established as the principle of sociation, the conditions of socialization converge with the conditions of communicatively produced intersubjectivity. At the same time, the authority of the sacred is converted over to the binding force of normative

validity claims that can be redeemed only in discourse. The concept of normative validity is cleansed in this way of empirical admixtures; the validity of any norm means in the end only that it *could* be accepted with good reasons by *everyone* involved. In this way of viewing the matter, Mead agrees with Kant that "the 'ought' does involve universality . . . Wherever the element of the 'ought' comes in, wherever one's conscience speaks, it always takes on this universal form."[36]

The universality of a moral norm can be a criterion of its validity only if by this is meant that universal norms express in a reasonable way the common will of all involved. This condition is not met merely by norms taking on *the grammatical form* of universal ought-sentences; immoral maxims, or maxims without any moral content, can also be formulated in this way. Mead puts the point as follows: "Kant said we could only universalize the form. However, we do universalize the end itself."[37] At the same time, he does not want to surrender the advantage that comes from the formalism of Kant's ethics. He poses the problem in the following terms: "But when the immediate interests come in conflict with others we had not recognized, we tend to ignore the others and take into account only those which are immediate. The difficulty is to make ourselves recognize the other and wider interests, and then to bring them into some sort of rational relationship with the more immediate ones."[38] Faced with moral-practical questions, we are so caught up in our own interests that *the impartial consideration of all interests affected* already presupposes a moral standpoint on the part of anyone who wants to arrive at an unbiased judgment. "I think all of us feel that one must be ready to recognize the interests of others even when they run counter to our own, but that the person who does that does not really sacrifice himself, but becomes a larger self."[39] Mead makes methodological use of this insight to replace the categorical imperative with a procedure of discursive will-formation.

In judging a morally relevant conflict of action, we have to consider what general interest all those involved would agree upon if they were to adopt the moral standpoint of impartially taking into account all the interests affected. Mead then specifies this condition by way of projecting an ideal communication community:

> In logical terms there is established a *universe of discourse which transcends the specific order* within which the members of the community, in a specific conflict, place themselves outside of the community order as it exists, and agree upon changed habits of action and a restatement of values. *Rational procedure,* therefore, sets up an order within which thought operates; that abstracts in varying degrees from the actual structure of society . . . It is a *social order that in-*

> *cludes any rational being who is or may be in any way implicated in the situation with which thought deals.* It sets up an ideal world, not of substantive things, but of proper method. Its claim is that all the conditions of conduct and all the values which are involved in the conflict must be taken into account in abstraction from the fixed forms of habits and goods which have clashed with each other. It is evident that a man cannot act as a rational member of society, except as he constitutes himself as a member of this wider common world of rational beings.[40]

What was intended by the categorical imperative can be made good by projecting a will-formation under the idealized conditions of universal discourse. Subjects capable of moral judgment cannot test each for himself alone whether an established or recommended norm is in the general interest and ought to have social force; this can only be done in common with everyone else involved. The mechanisms of taking the attitude of the other and of internalizing reach their definitive limit here. Ego can, to be sure, anticipate the attitude that alter will adopt toward him in the role of a participant in argumentation; by this means the communicative actor gains a reflective relation to himself, as we have seen. Ego can even try to *imagine* to himself the course of a moral argument in the circle of those involved; but he cannot *predict* its results with any certainty. Thus the projection of an ideal communication community serves as a guiding thread for *setting up* discourses that have to be carried through *in fact* and cannot be replaced by monological mock dialogue. Mead does not work out this consequence sharply enough because it seems trivially true to him. Its triviality is already attested to by the psychological argument to the effect that we are always tempted "to ignore certain interests that run contrary to our own interests, and to emphasize those with which we have been identified."[41] Mead does, however, also deploy an argument-in-principle. It holds only on the assumption that the justification of hypothetical norms cannot, finally, be isolated from the constructive task of forming hypotheses.

Kant and the utilitarians operated with concepts from the philosophy of consciousness. Thus they reduced the motives and aims of action, as well as the interests and value orientations on which they depended, to inner states or private episodes. They assumed that "our inclinations are toward our own subjective states—the pleasure that comes from satisfaction. If that is the end, then of course our motives are all subjective affairs."[42] In fact, however, motives and ends have something intersubjective about them; they are always interpreted in the light of a cultural tradition. Interests are directed to what is worthwhile, and "all the things worthwhile are shared experiences ... Even when a person seems to retire into himself to live among his own ideas, he is living really with

the others who have thought what he is thinking. He is reading books, recalling the experiences which he has had, projecting conditions under which he might live. The content is always of a social character."[43] But if motives and ends are accessible only under interpretations dependent upon traditions, the individual actor cannot himself be the *final* instance in developing and revising his interpretations of needs. Rather, his interpretations change in the context of the lifeworld of the social group to which he belongs; little by little, practical discourses can also gear into this quasi-natural process. The individual is not master of the cultural interpretations in light of which he understands his motives and aims, his interests and value orientations, no more than he disposes over the tradition in which he has grown up. Like every monological procedure, the monological principle of Kantian ethics fails in the face of this: "From Kant's standpoint, you assume that the standard is there ... but where you have no standard, it does not help you to decide. Where you have to get a restatement, a readjustment, you get a new situation in which to act; the simple generalizing of the principle of your act does not help. It is at that point that Kant's principle breaks down."[44]

Mead develops the basic assumptions of a communicative ethics with both a systematic and an evolutionary intent. Systematically he wants to show that a universalist morality can best be grounded in this way. But he wants to explain this very fact in terms of an evolutionary theory. The basic theoretical concept of the ethics of communication is "universal discourse," the formal ideal of mutual understanding in language. Because the idea of coming to a rationally motivated, mutual understanding is to be found in the very structure of language, it is no mere demand of practical reason but is built into the reproduction of social life. The more communicative action takes over from religion the burdens of social integration, the more the ideal of an unlimited and undistorted communication community gains empirical influence in the real communication community. Mead supports this contention, as did Durkheim, by pointing to the spread of democratic ideas, the transformation of the foundations of legitimation in the modern state. To the extent that normative validity claims become dependent on confirmation through communicatively achieved consensus, principles of democratic will-formation and universalistic principles of law are established in the modern state.[45]

D.—Excursus on Identity and Individuation. To this point I have made nothing of the fact that the ideal communication community provides not only a model for impartial, rational will-formation. Mead also draws on this ideal in shaping his model of nonalienated communicative interaction, which affords reciprocal scope for spontaneous self-presentation in everyday life and demands reciprocal empathy. Looked at more closely,

the ideal communication community can be seen to contain two utopian projections. Each of them stylizes one of two moments still fused together in ritual practice: the moral-practical and the expressive. Together they form the point of reference for Mead's concept of a fully individuated person.

Let us imagine individuals being socialized as members of an ideal communication community; they would in the same measure acquire an identity with two complementary aspects: one universalizing, one particularizing. On the one hand, these persons raised under idealized conditions learn to orient themselves within a universalistic framework, that is, to act autonomously. On the other hand, they learn to use this autonomy, which makes them equal to every other morally acting subject, to develop themselves in their subjectivity and singularity. Mead ascribes both autonomy and the power of spontaneous self-realization to every person who, in the revolutionary role of a participant in universal discourse, frees himself from the fetters of habitual, concrete conditions of life. Membership in the ideal communication community is, in Hegelian terms, constitutive of both the I as universal and the I as individual.[46]

Universalistic action orientations reach beyond all existing conventions and make it possible to gain some distance from the social roles that shape one's background and character: "The demand is freedom from conventions, from given laws. Of course, such a situation is only possible where the individual appeals, so to speak, from a narrow and restricted community to a larger one, that is, larger in the logical sense of having rights which are not so restricted. One appeals from fixed conventions which no longer have any meaning to a community in which the rights shall be publicly recognized, and one appeals to others . . . even if the appeal be made to posterity. In that case there is the attitude of the 'I' as over against the 'me.'"[47] Corresponding to this "appeal to the larger community" is "the larger self," precisely that autonomous subject who can orient his action to universal principles.

The "me" represents not only the particularities of moral consciousness tied to tradition, but also the constraints of a character that impedes the development of subjectivity. In this respect, too, membership in an ideal communication community has the power to burst bonds. The structures of nonalientated social intercourse provoke action orientations that reach beyond established conventions in a different way than universalistic orientations; they are aimed at filling in the spaces for reciprocal self-realization: "That capacity allows for exhibiting one's own peculiarities . . . it is possible for the individual to develop his own peculiarities, that which individualizes him."[48]

Mead illustrates these two aspects of ego-identity—self-determination and self-realization—with traits such as "self-respect" and

"sense of superiority." These feelings, too, reveal the implicit reference to structures of an ideal communication community. Thus, in extreme cases a person can preserve his self-respect only when he acts in opposition to the moral judgment of all his contemporaries: "The only way in which we can react against the disapproval of the entire community is by setting up a higher sort of community which in a certain sense out-votes the one we find. A person may reach a point of going against the whole world about him; he may stand out by himself over against it. But to do that he has to speak the voice of reason to himself. He has to comprehend the voices of the past and of the future . . . As a rule we assume that this general voice of the community is identical with the larger community of the past and the future."[49] In a parallel passage Mead speaks of the idea of "a higher and better society."[50]

It is similar with feelings of self-worth. The creative activity of the artist or scientist serves as the exemplary form of self-realization; not only they, however, but all persons have the need to be confirmed in their self-worth by outstanding accomplishments or qualities. In this way, a feeling of superiority builds up, which loses its morally questionable aspects because the self-confirmation of the one does not take place at the cost of the self-confirmation of the other. Here, too, Mead is tacitly oriented to an ideal of social intercourse free of coercion, in which the self-realization of one party does not have to be bought with the mortification of the other.

Corresponding to the ideal communication community is an *ego-identity that makes possible self-realization on the basis of autonomous action.* This identity proves itself in the ability to lend continuity to one's own life history. In the course of the process of individualization, the individual has to draw his identity behind the lines of the concrete lifeworld and of his character as attached to this background. The identity of the ego can then be stabilized only through the abstract ability to satisfy the requirements of consistency, and thereby the conditions of recognition, in the face of incompatible role expectations and in passing through a succession of contradictory role systems.[51] The ego-identity of the adult proves its worth in the ability to build up new identities from shattered or superseded identities, and to integrate them with old identities in such a way that the fabric of one's interactions is organized into the unity of a life history that is both unmistakable and accountable. An ego-identity of this kind simultaneously makes possible self-determination *and* self-realization, two moments that are already at work in the tension between "I" and "me" at the stage where identity is tied to social roles. To the extent that the adult can take over and be responsible for his own biography, he can come back to himself in the narratively preserved traces of his own interactions. Only one who takes over

his own life history can see in it the realization of his self. Responsibly to take over one's own biography means to get clear about *who one wants to be,* and from this horizon to view the traces of one's own interactions as *if* they were deposited by the actions of a responsible author, of a subject that acted on the basis of a reflective relation to self.

To this point I have used the concept of identity rather carelessly; in any case, I have offered no explicit justification for sometimes accepting the translation [into German] of Mead's expression 'self' with the expression *Identität,* that is, 'identity' (which comes from symbolic interactionism and psychoanalysis). Mead and Durkheim determine the identity of individuals in relation to the identity of the group to which they belong. The unity of the collective is the point of reference for the communality of all members which is expressed in the fact that they can speak of themselves and each other in the first-person plural. At the same time, the identity of the person is a presupposition for members being able to speak with one another in the first-person singular. In both cases the expression 'identity' can be justified in terms of language theory. The symbolic structures constitutive for the unity of the collective and of its individual members are connected with the employment of personal pronouns, the deictic expressions used to identify persons. The sociopsychological concept of identity most readily reminds us of a child's identifications with its reference persons, but these identification processes are in turn involved in the construction and maintenance of those symbolic structures that first make possible the identification in language of groups and persons. The psychological term may have been chosen without regard for the homonymous linguistic term. It is my view, however, that the sociopsychological concept of identity can also be expounded in terms of the theory of language.[52]

The growing child develops an identity to the extent that a *social world* to which he belongs is constituted for him, and complementary to that, a *subjective world* that is marked off from the external world of facts and norms, and to which he has privileged access. The relation of these two worlds is reflected in the relation between the two components of identity, the "I" and the "me." The "I" stands, first of all, for the expressively manifested subjectivity of a desiring and feeling nature [*Bedürfnisnatur*]; the "me" stands for a character shaped through social roles. These two concepts of self correspond in a certain way to the moments of the "id" and the "superego" in Freud's structural model. With them we can explain the two specific meanings that the word "I" takes on in spontaneous expressions of subjective experiences, on the one hand, and in institutionally bound speech acts, on the other. In expressions of subjective experiences, the pathic subject speaks out its desires and feelings, whereas in norm-conformative action it is the freedom of

the practical subject that expresses itself; both forms of expression already take place, of course, without the refraction of a reflected relation to self.

As we have seen, there are other contexts in which Mead gives a further meaning to the concept of the "I." He also understands the "I" as the independent and creative initiator of fundamentally unpredictable actions. The ability to begin something new expresses both the autonomy and the individuality of speaking and acting subjects. This third concept of the self helps explain the sense of the expression "I" in institutionally unbound performative sentences. When a speaker (in the role of the first person) takes up a relation to a hearer (in the role of the second person) and thereby raises a criticizable validity claim with his speech-act offer, he appears as a responsibly acting subject. The structure of linguistic intersubjectivity that lays down the communicative roles of the person speaking, the person spoken to, and the person who is present but uninvolved, forces the participants, insofar as they want to come to an understanding with one another, to act under the presupposition of responsibility [or accountability: *Zurechnungsfähigkeit*].

The idealizations that Mead undertakes in specifying ego-identity are connected to this concept of a responsible actor. He works out the aspects of self-realization and self-determination. Under these aspects of the I-in-general and the I-as-individual, the moments of the "me" and the "I" return in reflected form, as we can now see. *Ego-identity enables a person to realize himself under conditions of autonomous action.* The actor must thereby maintain a reflected relation to himself both as a pathic and a practical self. The projection of an ideal communication community can be understood as a construction intended to explain what we mean by acting in a self-critical attitude. With his concept of universal discourse, Mead sets out his explanatory proposal in terms of the theory of communication. Between this concept of ego-identity and the problem of personal identity discussed in analytic philosophy, there is, I think, a connection that can be elucidated by semantic analysis.

Let us begin with the currently dominant view that "the connection between genuinely philosophical problems and what is meant by the term 'identity' as it has infiltrated the psychological enlightenment of the man-in-the-street is only very indirect."[53] Dieter Henrich correctly insists upon a clear distinction between the problem of numerically identifying a single person and the question of the "identity" of this person, where what is meant is that a person can appear in his actions as both autonomous and unmistakable.

> In philosophical theory identity is a predicate with a special function; by means of it a particular thing or object is distinguished as such from

> others of the same kind; conversely, this predicate permits us to say what is really only a single object can be thematic under different conditions and in different modes of access. This sort of identity precisely does not require that the identical individuals be distinguishable from one another by special qualities. Even less does it require that they evince a basic pattern of qualities in relation to which they orient their behavior, or by means of which their behavior can be explained as a unified complex. Even a thing that behaves quite erratically, or a person who changes life styles and convictions with the weather, and each year in a different way, is characterized in this formal sense as "identical with itself". If something is a single thing, identity is to be attributed to it. It makes no sense to say that it has acquired or lost its identity. The social-psychological concept of identity has an entirely different logic. Here "identity" is a complex property that persons can acquire from a certain age onwards. They may not have this property, and they cannot possess it at all times. Once they have acquired it, they are, in virtue of it, "independent". They are able to free themselves from the influence of others; they can give to their lives a form and continuity which it previously had, if at all, only through external influence. In this sense, they are, in virtue of their "identities", autonomous individuals. We can see the associations between the philosophical and socio-psychological concepts of identity. But that does not alter the fact that they have very different meanings. Any number of individuals can be independent in exactly the same way. If that is so, they cannot be distinguished by their "identities".[54]

Henrich explicitly refers to Mead's social psychology, but he emphasizes only the *self-determination* aspect of the concept of identity. He neglects the *self-realization* aspect, under which the self can be identified not only generically, that is, as a person capable of autonomous action in general, but as an individual to whom an unmistakable life history can be attributed.[55] This second aspect is certainly not to be confused with the numerical identification of a single person. For, as Ernst Tugendhat has stressed,[56] the question of who one wants to be has the sense not of a numerical but of a qualitative identification. When person *A* gets clear about who he wants to be, predicative self-identification also has the sense that he distinguishes himself from all other persons as an unmistakable individual, through his life project, through the organization of a life history that he has responsibly taken on. But this rather demanding self-identification is not, at least at first glance, a necessary condition for *A* being numerically identified by other members *B, C, D* ... of the group to which he belongs.

Both Henrich and Tugendhat want to separate the concept of ego-identity from the question of how an individual person can be identified. Henrich uses the concept of identity to refer to the ability of persons to

act autonomously, and that is a generic determination of persons in general. Tugendhat uses the concept of identity to refer to the ability of a person to identify himself, on the basis of a reflective self-understanding, as the person who he wants to be. Thus, we can distinguish three different meanings: numerical identification of an individual person, generic identification of a person as a speaking and acting subject in general, and the qualitative identification of a specific person with an individual life history, particular character, and so on. Rather than leaving things with the demarcation thesis of Henrich and Tugendhat, I will not use Mead's concept of identity as a guide in illuminating the semantic interconnections between these three kinds of identification. I argue for the following thesis: the predicative self-identification that a person undertakes is in certain respects a presupposition of others being able to identify him generically and numerically.

The word 'I' belongs—together with the other personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and demonstratives—to the class of deictic expressions. Along with names and characterizations, they make up the class of singular terms that serve to identify individual objects. "The function of a singular term consists in its use by the speaker to specify which object among all objects he is referring to; that is, he specifies the particular object among all objects to which the predicate expression is to apply that complements the singular term in a sentence."[57] Like the other deictic expressions, personal pronouns get a clear sense only in the specific context of a speech situation. With the expression 'I', the person speaking at a given time designates himself.

Among other characteristic features, one has been especially noted: a speaker who uses the word 'I' in a meaningful way can make no mistake. If, in such a case, a hearer should argue that the entity intended by the speaker is not identical to the one designated by him, or that it did not exist at all, one would have to ask him whether he understood the deictic significance of the expression 'I'.[58] Tugendhat explains this by showing that with the expression 'I', viewed in isolation, a speaker is not making an identification at all; rather, he is designating himself as a person who can be identified by others in appropriate circumstances. Tugendhat is relying here on a theory he has advanced elsewhere,[59] to the effect that every identification of an object requires a subjective and an objective component. The objective, spatiotemporal indications have to be relatable to the here and now of the speech situation; in this respect, the speaker and his situation are the ultimate reference point for all identifications. On the other hand, a description of a speech situation with deictic expressions such as 'I', 'here', and 'now' does not suffice to identify an object; the situation of the speaker must, conversely, also be relatable to objective spatiotemporal locations. Mountain climbers who have lost

their way and signal an SOS back to the valley could no more identify their position with the word 'here' than a speaker could identify himself to a questioning telephone caller with the laconic answer "I". Tugendhat uses these examples to show that in this respect 'I' is like the two other fundamental deictic expressions 'here' and 'now'.

The differences are more interesting. Whereas those who have gotten lost and answer "here" do not know where they are, the person on the phone who answers "I" knows very well who he is; the information is (in general) only insufficient for the hearer. The "here" of the lost mountain climbers would suffice to identify their position if there were a search party in hearing distance who knew their own position. Even in the case of the telephone call, a spatiotemporal identification might succeed by, say, the unknown party confirming the number of his phone to the caller; the latter might then know (or be in a position to learn) that he is speaking with the person holding in his hand the phone in the downstairs hall of the house three doors down from his. The caller knows now the position of the other party, but his question—with whom is he speaking—is not yet thereby answered. He could hurry over to the nearby house to see who had just been on the phone. Let us suppose he does that, finds an unfamiliar face, and asks: "Who are you?" It follows that the unknown individual had referred the caller to an identifiable *person* with his answer "I," and not just to an *object* identifiable through observation. As a perceptible person, the unknown individual has indeed been identified; nevertheless, the question about his identity is not answered in the sense that the answer "I" had suggested. Of course, the caller could afterward report to a friend who has returned in the meantime that in his absence he had encountered a stranger in his apartment. He could provide a description of the stranger's outward appearance, and perhaps his friend could then explain who the unknown individual was. Let us suppose that the matter is not cleared up. Then the caller could, in subsequent accounts, identify the other party as the person who used a specific telephone at the given time and place. And yet, there is still a need to identify the person. For the identifiable person whom the speaker designated with "I" was not intended as an entity that could be identified on the basis of observation alone.

Peter Geach has defended the thesis that the identity predicate can be used only in connection with the general characterization of a class of objects.[60] In discussing this thesis, Deter Henrich comes to an interesting distinction between conditions and criteria of identity: "It makes no sense to say that an object appears under one description as (the same) number, under another as (different) marks. The black mark on the paper that designates the number 8 is not that number itself, as is easy to see from the fact that it can also be written as 'VIII' or 'eight'. *Conditions* of

identity divide off types of objects fundamentally from one another, whereas *criteria* of identity can individuate in various ways within the domain of an object type."[61] Obviously, persons cannot be identified under the same conditions as observable objects; for them, spatiotemporal identification does not suffice. The additional conditions depend on how a person can be identified generically, that is, as a person in general.

Whereas entities are generally determined by the fact that a speaker can say something about them, persons belong to the class of entities that can themselves assume the role of speaker and thereby employ the self-referential expression 'I'. For categorization as a person, it is not only essential that these entities be equipped with the capacity for speaking and acting and be able to say "I"; *how* they do this is crucial as well. The expression 'I' has not only the deictic meaning of reference to an object; it also indicates the pragmatic attitude or the perspective in which or from which the speaker expresses himself. An 'I' used in a first-person sentence means that the speaker is presenting himself in the expressive mode. With the perspective of the first person, he takes on the role of self-presentation in such a way that the desires, feelings, intentions, beliefs, and so forth uttered can be ascribed to him. The ascription of experiences that an observer undertakes from the perspective of a third person must rest, *in the end,* on an act of reaching understanding, where alter, from the perspective of the second person, accepts ego's expressive utterance as sincere. In this respect, the expression 'I', as used in expressive sentences, points to the homonymous expression as used in performative sentences. This means that someone in the communicative role of a speaker takes up an interpersonal relation with (at least) one other party in the communicative role of a hearer, such that they encounter one another against the background of those who are presently uninvolved but are potentially participants. The interpersonal relation tied to the perspectives of the first, second, and third persons actualizes an underlying relation of membership in a social group. It is here that we first encounter the *pronominal* meaning of the expression 'I'.

To return to our example, when the unknown party on the phone responds to the question of who he is with "I", he makes himself known as an identifiable *person,* that is, as an entity that fulfills the identity conditions for a person, that cannot be identified merely through observation. The stranger indicates that a subjective world to which he has privileged access and a social world to which he belongs have been constituted for him. He indicates that he can take part in social interactions and act communicatively in the proper ways. If he satisfies the identity conditions for a person, it is also clear how he might be identified: by a proper name.

Naturally, the name as such is not sufficient. But the institution of giving names is such that a proper name functions as a guidepost by which we can orient ourselves in gathering the data that would be sufficient for identification: date and place of birth, family background, nationality, religious affiliation, and so forth. These are, as a rule, the criteria on the basis of which a person is identified—for instance, when he presents a passport. The usual identity criteria refer the questioner to those situations in which alone, ***in the final analysis***, persons can be identified. They refer him virtually to those interactions in which the identity of the person in question was formed. When the identity of a person is unclear—when it turns out that a pass has been forged, that a person's own statements are incorrect—our inquiries lead, ***in the end***, to asking neighbors, colleagues, friends, family, and, if necessary, parents whether they know the person in question. Only this sort of primary familiarity gained from common interactions—***in the last analysis*** from socializing interactions—enables us to order a person spatiotemporally in a life-context whose *social* spaces and *historical* times are symbolically structured.

The peculiarity of identifying persons as opposed to objects can be explained by the fact that persons do not satisfy from the start (perhaps it would be better to say: by nature) the conditions of identity, or even the criteria by which they might be identified under these conditions. They first have to acquire their identities as persons if they are to be identifiable as persons at all and, if need be, as specific persons. Since, as we have seen, persons acquire their identities through linguistically mediated interaction, they satisfy the conditions of identity for persons, and the basic criteria of identity for specific persons, not only for others but for themselves as well. They understand themselves as persons who have learned to take part in social interactions; they understand themselves as specific persons who have been raised as daughters or sons in specific families, in specific geographical areas, in the spirit of specific religious traditions, and so on. A person can ascribe to ***himself*** such properties only by answering the question, ***what kind of*** a person he is, and not the question, ***which*** of all persons he is. A person satisfies the conditions and criteria of identity according to which he can be numerically distinguished from others only when he is in a position to ascribe to himself the relevant predicates. In this respect, the predicative self-identification of a person accomplished at an elementary level is a presupposition for that person's being identifiable by others as a person in general—that is, generically—and as a specific person—that is, numerically.

Mead introduced a two-level concept of personal identity and thereby cleared up an ambiguity in the idea of "acquiring" an identity.[62] A conventional identity, one tied to specific roles and norms, is also "acquired,"

and indeed in such a way that the child internalizes the behavior patterns ascribed to him and makes them his own in a certain way. From this appropriation of an ascribed identity, Mead wants to distinguish an identity maintained under one's own direction, as it were. He works out two aspects of this ego-identity by means of a counterfactual reference to universal discourse: on the one hand, the ability to act autonomously on the basis of universalistic action orientations, and on the other hand, the ability to realize oneself in a life history to which one lends continuity by responsibly taking it over. From the viewpoint of the ideal communication community, the level of requirements for the predicative self-identification of sociated individuals changes. At the level of role identity a person understands himself in such a way that he answers the question, what kind of a person he is (has become), what character he has (has acquired) by means of ascribed predicates. At the level of ego-identity a person understands himself in a different way, namely, by answering the question, who or what kind of person he *wants* to be. In place of an orientation to the past, we have an orientation to the future, which makes it possible for the past to become a problem. This has consequences for the manner of numerical identification as well. Of course, this holds true only on the assumption that the concept of ego-identity is not an idle construction but does in fact capture the intuitions of members of modern societies to an increasing degree and does become sedimented in social expectations.

If, following Durkheim, we affirm a trend toward the linguistification of the sacred that can be seen in the rationalization of worldviews, in the universalization of law and morality, and in progressive individuation, we have to suppose that the concept of ego-identity will increasingly fit the self-understanding accompanying everyday communicative practice. In this case, we face the serious question of whether, with a new stage of identity formation, the conditions and criteria of identity do not also have to change. Normally, with the answer "I" a speaker indicates only that he can be identified generically as a speaking and acting subject and numerically by a few significant data that throw light on his background. However, when he satisfies the level of requirement of ego-identity by means of predicative self-identification, he indicates by the answer "I" (in the appropriate contexts) that he can be identified generically as an *autonomously* acting subject and numerically by such data as throw light on the continuity of a life history he has responsibly taken upon himself. At any rate, this is the direction pointed in by the Western (i.e., articulated in the Judeo-Christian tradition) concept of the immortal soul of creatures who, in the all-seeing eye of an omnipresent and eternal creator, recognize themselves as fully individuated beings.

E.—The utopian sketch of an ideal communication community could be misleading if it were taken to be the introduction to a philosophy of history; this would be to misunderstand the limited methodological status that can sensibly be attributed to it. The construction of an unlimited and undistorted discourse can serve at most as a foil for setting off more glaringly the rather ambiguous developmental tendencies in modern societies. Mead is interested in the pattern common to these tendencies—the increasing prevalence of structures of action oriented to mutual understanding or, as we put it in reference to Durkheim, the linguistification of the sacred. By this I mean the transfer of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization from sacred foundations over to linguistic communication and action oriented to mutual understanding. To the extent that communicative action takes on central societal functions, the medium of language gets burdened with tasks of producing substantial consensus. In other words, language no longer serves merely to *transmit* and actualize prelinguistically guaranteed agreements, but more and more to *bring about* rationally motivated agreements as well; it does so in moral-practical and in expressive domains of experience no less than in the specifically cognitive domain of dealing with an objectivated reality.

In this way Mead can interpret certain evolutionary trends (which Durkheim also has in view) as a communicative rationalization of the lifeworld. This is a matter, first, of the differentiation of structural components of the lifeworld which are tightly interwoven in the collective consciousness: culture, society, and person separate off from one another. It is also a question, second, of changes on these three levels, some of which are parallel, others complementary: sacred knowledge is superseded by a knowledge specialized according to validity claims and based on reasons; legality and morality get separated from one another as "law" and "morality" and are universalized; finally, individualism spreads along with its heightened claims to autonomy and self-realization. The rational structure of these tendencies toward linguistification can be seen in the fact that the continuation of traditions, the maintenance of legitimate orders, and the continuity of the life histories of individual persons become more and more dependent on outlooks that refer, when problematized, to yes/no positions on criticizable validity claims.

The overt simplification and level of abstraction that marks statements of this sort give rise, surely, to doubts concerning their empirical usefulness. And yet they serve to clarify what we might understand by the communicative rationalization of a lifeworld. Even in this connection, however, two qualifications are in order. Mead mentions them himself,

but does not give them sufficient weight. The first has to do with Mead's fixation on the *formal* features of modern legal and moral development, and on the formal features of individualism in the domain of personality development. He neglects the other side of this formalism and does not consider the price that communicative reason has to pay for its victory in the coin of concrete ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*]. The treatment of this theme in the wake of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* does not stand alone. Hegel's critique of the formalism of Kantian ethics today serves as the model for a theory of post-Enlightenment that goes back to Arnold Gehlen and Joachim Ritter.[63] More radical in its approach and less traditionalistic in its outcome is the critique of modernity directed at similar phenomena in the context of French poststructuralism, for example, by Foucault.[64] The other qualification relates to the scope of the reconstructive procedures preferred by Mead. He ignores the external restrictions on the logic of the change in forms of social integration that he distilled out. The functional aspects of societal development have to be set over against the structural aspects if we do not want to deceive ourselves concerning the importance of communicative reason. Today, this is the dominant theme of systems theory.[65]

The critique of ethical formalism takes exception, first of all, to the fact that preoccupation with questions of the validity of moral norms misleads us into ignoring the intrinsic value of cultural life-forms and life-styles. From the perspective of Durkheimian analysis, there is the question of what remains from the collective consciousness constitutive of the identity of tribal societies when the ritually secured, basic normative consensus about concrete values and contents evaporates into a merely procedurally secured consensus about the foundations of communicative ethics. The content has been filtered out of this procedural consensus. Cultural values that have not been abstracted into basic formal values (such as equality, freedom, human dignity, and the like) surrender their authority and stand at the disposition of processes of mutual understanding which are not prejudged. In mass culture, value contents have been deflated into stereotypical and, at the same time, manipulable elements; in the hermetic works of modern art, they have been subjectivized. To be sure, it is only at the level of culture that formal and material, normative and expressive elements can separate off from one another in this way; in everyday communicative practice, where the lifeworlds of different collectives are demarcated from each other, they are now as ever woven into concrete forms of life. Traditional, habitual forms of life find their expression in particular group identities marked by particular traditions that overlay and overlap one another, compete with one another, and so on; they are differentiated according to ethnic and linguistic, regional, occupational, and religious traditions. In modern

societies these forms of life have lost the power to totalize and thus to exclude; they have been subordinated to the universalism of law and morality; but as concrete forms of life, they are subject to standards other than that of universalization.

Whether the life-form of a collectivity has turned out more or less "well," has more or less "succeeded," may be a general question we can direct at every form of life, but it is more like a clinical request to judge a patient's mental and spiritual condition than a moral question concerning a norm's or institutional system's worthiness to be recognized. Moral judgment presupposes a hypothetical outlook, the possibility of considering norms as something to which we can grant or deny social validity. The analogous assumption that we could choose forms of life in the same way is a contrast without sense. No one can reflectively agree to the form of life in which he has been socialized in the same way as he can to a norm of whose validity he has convinced himself.[66]

There is, in this respect, a parallel between the life-form of a collective and the life history of an individual. If we start from Mead's concept of ego-identity, the question arises of what remains of concrete identities tied to specific social roles and norms when adults have acquired the *generalized* ability to realize themselves autonomously. The answer was that ego-identity proves itself in the ability to integrate a series of concrete—partly disintegrated, partly superseded—identities into a life history responsibly taken upon oneself; concrete identities, displaced into the past, are in a certain sense *aufgehoben* [cancelled and preserved in a new synthesis] in the individual conduct of life. An autonomous conduct of life depends in turn on the decision—or on successively repeated and revised decisions—as to "who one wants to be." Hitherto I have adopted this existential mode of expression without comment. But this way of describing the situation stylizes what actually takes place in the form of a complex, obscure process into a conscious, spontaneously exercised choice. In any case, the answer to the question, who does one want to be, cannot be rational in the way that a moral decision can. This existential "decision" is indeed a necessary condition for a moral attitude toward one's own life history, but it is not itself the result of moral reflection. There is an indissoluble element of arbitrariness (*Willkür*) in the choice of a life project. This is to be explained by the fact that the individual cannot adopt a hypothetical attitude toward his own origins and background, that he cannot accept or reject his biography in the same way as he can a norm whose claim to validity is under discussion. There can be no comparable distance to one's own life conduct, no matter how high the degree of individualization. This is stressed by Mead himself: "One difference between primitive human society and civilized human society is that in primitive human society the individual self is much

more completely determined, with regard to his thinking and his behavior, by the general pattern of the organized social activity . . . In civilized society individuality is constituted rather by the individual's departure from, or modified realization of, any given social type than by his conformity, and tends to be something much more distinctive and singular and peculiar than it is in primitive human society. But even in the most modern and highly-evolved forms of human civilization the individual, however original and creative he may be in his thinking or behavior, always and necessarily assumes a definite relation to, and reflects in the structure of his self or personality, the general organized pattern of experience and activity exhibited in or characterizing the social life process in which he is involved, and of which his self or personality is essentially a creative expression or embodiment."[67]

Insofar as a person does make his decision about who he wants to be depend on rational deliberation, he orients himself not by moral standards, but by the standards of happiness and well-being that we intuitively use to judge forms of life as well. For the life conduct of an individual is entwined with the life-form of the collectivity to which he belongs. Whether a life is a good one is not decided by standards of normative rightness—though the standards of a good life are also not completely independent of moral standards. Ever since Aristotle, the philosophical tradition has dealt with this difficult-to-grasp connection between happiness and justice under the title of "the good." Life-forms, no less than life histories, crystallize around particular identities. If it is to be a good life, these identities may not contradict moral demands, but their substance cannot itself be justified from universalistic points of view.[68]

The second, more radical reservation has to do not with the formalism, but with the *idealism* of Mead's theory of society. Although Mead does not entirely leave functional considerations out of his account, he is not clear about the scope and limits of reconstructive analyses of the emergence and transformation of linguistically mediated, normatively guided interaction. The one-sidedness of his communication-theoretic approach and his structuralist procedures can be seen already in the fact that mainly those societal functions come into view that devolve upon communicative action and in which communicative action cannot be replaced by other mechanisms. The material reproduction of society—securing its physical maintenance both externally and internally—is blended out of the picture of society understood as a communicatively structured lifeworld. The neglect of economics, warfare, and the struggle for political power, the disregard for dynamics in favor of the logic of societal development are detrimental, above all, to Mead's reflections on social evolution. Precisely insofar as social integration has more and more to be secured via communicatively achieved consensus, there is a

pressing question as to the limits of the integrative capacity of action oriented to reaching understanding, the limits of the empirical efficacy of rational motives. The constraints of reproducing the social system, which reach right through the action orientations of sociated individuals, remain closed off to an analysis restricted to structures of interaction. The rationalization of the lifeworld, which occupies Mead's interest, has to be located in a *systematic* history accessible only to functional analysis. In this regard, Durkheim's theory of the division of labor has the advantage that it connects the forms of social solidarity to the structural differentiation of the social system.