BOURDIEU, FOUCAULT, HABERMAS: WESTERN CONFLICT THEORY AND PRACTICE

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1. <u>Comparison for contrast and insight</u>

The reduction of violence--whether at the micro, meso, macro or mega-levels--is a major world concern, often called "peace". One theory of violence would focus on dangerous, even evil parties, another focus would focus on unresolved conflict as a root cause. They are also known from inter-state relations as the violence/security and conflict/peace paradigms.

The focus of this essay is on how conflict is conceived of by major social scientists from two great cultural powers, France--the historian/philosopher Michel Foucault and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu--and Germany-- the sociologist philosopher Jürgen Habermas; all with a very broad span of competence and creativity, much beyond the fields indicated.

All three are--or were, the two French are no longer with us--also public intellectuals, highly visible in public space. They interact with the public at large. And what is their image?

Some recent school studies in Norway seem to indicate that to most pupils, teachers and parents the word "conflict" stands for difficulty, trouble, with violence expressed verbally, with body language, physically. The root cause is a difficult, troublesome, violent Other,

almost always somebody else. But it could also be the dark side of Self, Jung's "shadow". The case of "bullying" meets this conceptualization well, and a frequent therapy is bully, not bully-context oriented: zero tolerance, expel, punish.

The bad news in this story is the narrow focus on Other's behavior only, neglecting Other's inside, and relation to Self.

The good news are that five ideas pointing in a different direction are easily understood when pointed out. They are not necessarily rejected but seen as both startling and liberating:

[1] The difficult Other wants something, but exactly what?;
[2] That something may be entirely legitimate by most standards;
[3] But that something may be incompatible with what Self wants;
[4] Incompatibility means conflict that may lead to violence; and [5] The solution a new reality accommodating legitimate goals.

"Want" points to goals, and the first startling discovery is that the Other has other goals than being difficult, with good arguments for their legitimacy. The second startling discovery is that Self may be a part of the problem by holding goals incompatible with Other's goals, which shifts the root cause from Other to the Self-Other relation, the "conflict". The third startling discovery is that the way out passes through the Self-Other relation, and the fourth startling discovery that the creation of a new reality accommodating both Self and

Other, maybe with goals adjusted, may make the troubles wither away. And that creation is transcendence.

Some focus on the solution of conflict by transcending the incompatibility as a road to peace, others on the new reality as a road to development, or on both. The first perspective begs the future-oriented question "how to transcend incompatibility", the second perspective to the past-oriented question "of what contradiction is this social fact a transcendence?" Both are daoist rather than marxist perspectives, interspersing between daoism and marxism the Matteo Ricci-Leibniz-Hegel steps.

In both perspectives <u>contradiction</u> comes out as a <u>force motrice</u>, not in a deterministic way but as an <u>opportunity</u>--for instance for peace and development-- wrought with <u>danger</u>, like in the two parts of the Chinese character for contradiction. A piece of wisdom thousands of years old, now slowly arriving in the West.

What we are primarily interested in is how, if at all, these five approaches to conflict, violence and its reduction, and the role of contradictions and their transcendence in general, are reflected in social science today. There is possibly a correlation between Piaget's autism versus reciprocity, a focus on Other only versus a focus on the Self-Other relation, and between a focus on winning, dominance or at most compromise versus a focus on transcendence, in the negative sense of accommodating no goals or the positive sense of accommodating (almost) all goals.

There is no assumption that the above approach is the best or the only one, nor that everybody has to be concerned with problems of peace and development. But contradiction and conflict have to be reflected in the

sciences about social reality; being that basic in social reality. The question is how it is reflected.

Theories or perspectives should also be understood dialectically, in contradiction or harmony with other theories and perspectives. Of those there are many. The West, being Western culturally and structurally focused on the top of its many pyramids, will tend to focus on the leading theorists of the leading intellectual cultures. There seem to be four big cultural powers (like five big veto powers), France, Germany, United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). The rest is seen, also often by the rest itself, as peripheral. They may be studied to understand better that country or region, but not for insight.

But who are the leading intellectuals in the West, relevant to our major field of concern, macro perspectives on social reality? Bourdieu and Foucault from France and Habermas from Germany, of course, social theory giants as they are, to serve as contrasts to our own perspectives and as sources of new insights.

To make our own position, the TRANSCEND perspective, more explicit let us now reformulate it "at a higher level", also highlighting the non-Western elements in the approach. The perspective has fetched inspiration from several and diverse cultural traditions, as indicated above:
- **Aristotelian perspectives on causality**
- **Daoist dialectic yin/yang perspectives**
- **Hindu perspectives on processes**
- **Buddhist perspectives on outcomes**
- **Judaic perspective on dialogues**

A focus on conflict invariably leads to a focus on

goals, including those held consciously by human actors, individual or collective. We are not focusing only on blind processes with a certain deterministic automaticity, like Hegel and Marx partly did.

The goal focus may make the pull from a clearly perceived goal-state to be pursued as, or more, compelling than the push away from a state to be avoided.

All states of any human condition, however, are ambiguous. There is always something good in bad and bad in the good.

Thus, in the process to create the good there will always be something to be preserved, not only something to be destroyed, and so on when the bad in the good starts making itself felt.

In these processes there is the dialectic promise of something beyond one goal-state winning over the other. There is also the option of a neither-nor, both goal-states yielding, and a both-and, both goal-states becoming compatible in some new reality, through an act of creation.

And in that act of creation dialogue as an ongoing process, not as a final statement, is an indispensable instrument.

SOME BASIC POINTS IN THE TRANSCEND PERSPECTIVE: A SUMMARY

[1] Human and social reality are dialectic in the holistic, dynamic yin/yang Daoist sense, not in the narrow Hegelian-Marxist sense focused on political and economic processes. This is so because of the human spiritual ability to reflect on forces acting upon us individually and collectively and to transcend, go beyond the existing, including existing individual and collective programming.

[2]   Aristotelian causality, with causes pushing (causa eficiens) and pulling (causa finalis), mediated by matter (causa materialis; deep nature) and form (causa formalis; deep culture and deep structure), is a useful discourse for human and social phenomena.

[3]   With goal-states, _telos_, in the future we need an epistemology that is symmetric between past and future, data and theories/values. Theories that coincide with data deliver truth about past reality, with the data having veto power. Theories coinciding with values deliver truth about new, future realities. As time advances future produces data to check trilateral data-theories-values coincidences.

[4]   Goal-states worth pursuing, _future-positive_, are human and social realities as real as data about _past-negative_. The latter are a push, a causa eficiens, the latter a pull, a causa finalis.

[5]   Contradictions in general, and between goal-states in particular, are not only normal in human and social affairs, but knowing them is indispensable for human and social understanding.

[6]   Contradictions (C) have inner, attitudinal (A), and outer, behavioral (B) concomitants for the human beings holding the goal-states. The set {A, B, C} defines a conflict, with C at its root.

[7]   A contradiction, unresolved conflict, is dynamic as goal-states translate into goal-directed action, leading to

conflict dynamics.

[8]   This being so the effort to realize goal-states, including when they are contradictory, is the <u>force motrice</u> of human-social history

[9]   A guide for this process is provided by the Hindu trinity creation-preservation-destruction: creating new reality, preserving what should be preserved, and destroying what should be destroyed.

[10] The Buddhist tetralemma accommodates comfortably the outcomes of struggles between two goal-states, adding to the two either-or the both-and and the neither-nor. In hegelian terms the latter two may be conceived of as positive and negative syntheses.

[11] Steering consciously conflict/contradiction reality becomes a major task so as to minimize violent destruction and maximize creative construction. TRANSCEND stands for that process.

[12] Dialogue is mutual search for a new reality, not debate to win with stronger arguments. In a dialogue propositions are pointers toward a common new reality; not against each other to win a verbal battle, but complementing each other in an effort to accommodate legitimate goals of all parties, inspired by theories and values, and constructive-creative-concrete enough to become a causa finalis.

2.0 PRESENTATION OF THE THREE SOCIAL THEORETICIANS

We start in alphabetical order with Bourdieu, Foucault and last but not least Jürgen Habermas. The idea is to present their basic conceptual framework and to identify the connection between their theoretical preoccupations and their critique and proposals for change in the world.

One of the main preoccupations of Bourdieu has been the attempt to re-conceptualize the social space so as to incorporate his central focus on human practice. The central concept that he argued would transcend the nexus between determinism and subjectivism was the concept of Habitus which he defines as: "...*the structures characteristic of a determinate type of conditions of existence, through the economic and social necessity which they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous universe of family relationships, or more precisely, through the mediation of the specifically familial manifestations of this external necessity (sexual division of labour, domestic morality, cares, strife, tastes, etc.), produce the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience*." (p.78 Theory of Practice)
The concept of Habitus is a concept of practice, the practical enactment of a set of objective conditions of existence.

A precision of what is meant by Bourdieu's concept of Habitus is to find out what he is arguing against, in other words what the Habitus is not.

The habitus is not an intentionalistic concept, the objective structures do not produce a specific conscious intention, rather the structures produce certain dispositions for actions that are at a deeper level than intentions. The intentional paradigm has a tendency to relate actions to the immediate context, whereas Bourdieu gives emphasis to the time that went before the immediate interaction, the basic conditios of existence established early on in life. Therefore Bourdieu refuses that actors act according to explicit norms or rules, rather it is the shared conditions of existence which produce certain inclinations of practical action. Bourdieu writes:" *The objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted in the absence of any direct interaction or, a fortiori, explicit co-ordination*." (p.80 Theory of Practice)

To deny the structuring principle of the basic conditions of existence is to fall into the occasionalist trap, which sees interaction between people as between the immanent properties inherent in the actual setting. Bourdieu writes:" *Thus, when we speak of class habitus, we are insisting, against all forms of the occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation, that 'interpersonal' relations are never, exept in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never intirely contained in the interaction*." (p.81 Theory of Practice)

The Habitus, i.e. the dispositions and inclinations obtained through shared conditions of existence, is subjected to a series of objective events occuring in the world, which demand a determinate response, originating in those same class conditions of existence. In other words, events are met in the world with certain inclinations and dispositions shaping the specfic action undertaken. (p.83 Theory of Practice) Personal style is only a small deviation within the style of a class at a certain period. (p.84 Theory of Practice)

Human beings however do not interact in a vaccum, they are structured in fields.
Any social formation is structured in hierachical fields, such as the economic, the political, the cultural, the educational fields etc. These fields are autonomous in the sense that they are governed by their own logic or laws. Field A can influence an autnomous field B only through the logic of field B. As Randal Johnson has noted:" *The degree of autonomy of a particular field is measured precisely by its ability to refract external demands into its own logic*." (Randal Johnson in Bourdieu p.8-14) Another important feature of the concept of field is that it is a dynamic concept; a change in the positions of the agents acting in the field will change the structure of the field itself. The field is therefore nothing more or less than the total positions of the agents interacting in it. The agents in the field, low versus high, compete for the scarce resource they can harvest in a particular field, for instance academic qualifications in the academic field - academic qualifications are equal to what money are in the economic field, creating a universally acceptable resource

for obtaining high or low positions in the field. (p.187
Theory of Practice) Bourdieu argues that human view not
only economic capital, but social and cultural capital as
scarce resources, which as he writes,:"...*may be 'fair
words' or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or
attention, challenges or insults, honour or honours, powers
or pleasures...*" (p.178 Theory of practice) These forms of
capital can be harvested in different fields.

The social formation is therefore hierachical.Class
location is for Bourdieu the function of a position on an
axis of cultural, social and economic capital. In this way
Bourdieu establishes vertical cleavages which is class
distinctions, dominant, middle and working class and
horizontal cleavages which is class fractions within these
three classes.

The upper class is identified by Bourdieu as consisting of
industrialists, executives, and professors, because they
have overlapping positions in the vertical cleavages and
therefore constitute the dominant class. Vertical class
position is established by connecting the total amount of
capital: cultural, economic and social capital. Farm
workers and manual and unskilled workers are at the bottom
of this axis thereby being determined as the working class.
Horisontal cleavages within a class is defined through
different compositions of capitals in the same class, like
between professors and executives. Some may be higher on
economic than on cultural capital or vice versa. (p.88
Approaches to Class Analysis, E.O. Wirght, 2005) Of key
importance for Bourdieu is the likely trajectory one has in
the social system because it tells us something about the
level of mobility between the different positions in
society.

Therefore Bourdieu's class concept is linked to the three words: volume, composition of capital and trajectory within the world of capital. People enter different fields where they harvest capital and can therefore have the possibility of mobility. (p.89) All human beings are thus embodied with certain conglomeration of competences and resources and are according to Bourdieu always to be found some place on this axis

Until a field is established as a systematic hierachy, actors will have to strategiacally create a field and the rules in the field which will be able to dominate other people. In other words, it demands overt power-exercises. (p.190 Theory of Practice.)

In any social formation there are tacit rules which are not explicitly formulated, which Bourdieu denotes as Doxa. This doxa operates by merely being followed in practice, through the habitus that is structured in various stratified fields. The doxa tends to reify these social stratefications and are therefore in the interest of the dominant class and in opposition to the dominated.

In class societies the degree of what is tacitly accepted and what is not accepted becomes the scence for a struggle over the symblic representation of reality. Bourdieu writes:" *In class societies, in which the definition of the social world is at stake in overt or latent class struggle, the drawing of the line between the field of opinion, of that which is explicitly questioned, and the field of doxa, of that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accord with*

social convention, is itself a fundamental objective at stake in that form of class struggle which is the struggle for the imposition of the dominant systems of classification. The dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy." (p.168-169 Theory of Practice)

The dominant classes therefore want the doxa in a field to remain in their interests whereas the dominated want that doxa to be explicit so that it can be confronted.

These concepts give us Bourdieu's fundamental view on domination in society.

Domination is secured by control over the mechanisms that inculcate certain inlinations and practices, which through the habitus tend to reproduce itself over time. The social capital between the groups, the solidarity, connections and relations between the different classes become objectified, exactly because the habitus is shaped according to their conditions of existence. Bourdieu writes:" *it is precisely because there exist relatively autonomous fields, functioning in accordance with rigorous mechanisms capable of imposing their necessity on the agents, that those who are in a position to command these mechanisms and to appropriate the material/or symbolic profits accruing from their functioning are able to dispense with strategies aimed expressly and directly at the domination of individuals, a domination which in this case is the condition of the appropriation of the material and symbolic*

profits of their labour." (p.184 Theory of Practice)

2.1 Bourdieu's critique of the social world

One can easily identify a connection between Bourdieu's theoretical pre-occupations and his engagement in his critique of neoliberalism. Bourdieu, as one of the founders of ATTAC, took side on behalf of the dominated classes, and sought to implement changes in various fields for the betterment of their conditions.

Bourdieu explains in an article in Le Monde, how neoliberalism is producing suffering for those who are located as the working classes in his class paradigm. Neoliberalism was according to Bourdieu a programme that gained its strength from various alliances, ranging from th economic and political fields, to the academic and cultural fields.

Bourdieu writes:" *The neoliberal programme draws its social power from the political and economic power of those whose interests it expresses: stockholders, financial operators, industrialists, conservative or social-democratic politicians who have been converted to the reassuring layoffs of laisser-faire, high-level financial officials eager to impose policies advocating their own extinction because, unlike the managers of firms, they run no risk of having eventually to pay the consequences.* " (Le Monde 1998)

Economic neoliberalism produces a whole range of sufferings in the social world. It destroys social capital, separating people in society, undermining the solidarity amongst

groups and within groups. It increases social inequality and provides uncertainty, lower wages, contract labour for the lower classes. Furthermore neoliberalism advocates privatization and financial liberalization, weakening state-interventions in the economic sphere of society. Bourdieu explains:" *And yet the world is there, with the immediately visible effects of the implementation of the great neoliberal utopia: not only the poverty of an increasingly large segment of the most economically advanced societies, the extraordinary growth in income differences, the progressive disappearance of autonomous universes of cultural production, such as film, publishing, etc. through the intrusive imposition of commercial values, but also and above all two major trends. First is the destruction of all the collective institutions capable of counteracting the effects of the infernal machine, primarily those of the state, repository of all of the universal values associated with the idea of the public realm. Second is the imposition everywhere, in the upper spheres of the economy and the state as at the heart of corporations, of that sort of moral Darwinism that, with the cult of the winner, schooled in higher mathematics and bungee jumping, institutes the struggle of all against all and cynicism as the norm of all action and behaviour.*" (Le Monde 1998)

Bourdieu attacks the foundation of neoclassical economics, defining himself against a practice in the academic field legitimizing neoliberal policies. He writes:" "*Economists may not necessarily share the economic and social interests of the true believers and may have a variety of individual psychic states regarding the economic and social effects of*

the utopia which they cloak with mathematical reason. Nevertheless, they have enough specific interests in the field of economic science to contribute decisively to the production and reproduction of belief in the neoliberal utopia. Separated from the realities of the economic and social world by their existence and above all by their intellectual formation, which is most frequently purely abstract, bookish, and theoretical, they are particularly inclined to confuse the things of logic with the logic of things." (Le Monde 1998)

Bourdieu proposes that the institutions that are attacked by this form of constellation of power should join together in order to resist and change the present condition. Bourdieu writes: "*How could we not make a special place among these collectives, associations, unions, and parties for the state: the nation-state, or better yet the supranational state – a European state on the way toward a world state – capable of effectively controlling and taxing the profits earned in the financial markets and, above of all, of counteracting the destructive impact that the latter have on the labour market. This could be done with the aid of labour unions by organising the elaboration and defence of the public interest. Like it or not, the public interest will never emerge, even at the cost of a few mathematical errors, from the vision of accountants (in an earlier period one would have said of "shopkeepers") that the new belief system presents as the supreme form of human accomplishment.*" (Le Monde 1998)

2.2 CRITIQUE OF BOURDIEU
Bourdieu stands closer to Weber than to Marx, even though

he utilizes a concept of capital. Bourdieu have abandoned
the concept of exploitation.
Bourdieu's vision for a new future is all based on the
traditional forces behind the welfare state. (NEED MORE)

2.3 FOUCAULT

Foucault does only indirectly touch upon the concept of
conflict. Conflict is not a central concept for Foucault;
it is rather the concept of power that is at the root of
Foucault's thinking, and which indirectly shapes his view
on conflicts. Foucault argues that power-struggles are
inevitable, they condition and form truth and all human
relations. His view of conflicts is enmeshed in his
definition of power:" *Isn't power simply a form of warlike
domination? Shouldn't one therefore conceive all problems
of power in terms of relations of war? Isn't power a sort
of generalized war which assumes at particular moments the
forms of peace and the state? Peace would then be a form of
war, and the state a means of waging it.*"(Foucault Reader,
Interview with Rabinow)
In other words conflicts and power struggles are normal,
they are everywhere in Foucault's view, something that
always conditions the human existence and interaction.

Foucault describes in his works how different discourses
have existed in the way we conceive the excluded and the
abnormal in society. By doing that Foucault tries to
relativize the present discourse concerning these contested
issues, by identifying different discourses on the same
theme through history. He does this in order to critizise
the present discourse which are made up of conventions that

are not more natural than other possible conventions.
Foucault does not want his readers to become aware of the
possibility of conflict transformation, rather wants us to
be aware of the many different ways in which such systems
as prisons and mental hospitals have been organized
throughout history, without giving us any direction of
which one to prefer over the other. Foucault shows us that
there have been tried different solutions without that
these solutions were better or worse than others. The
problem continues. This can be seen as a continuation of
inherent either/or logic connected to his concept of power
and his concept of truth and moral rightness. Proposing a
solution with the aim of making people better of, by for
instance proposing a solution to the prison system, would
already be on the wrong track according to Foucault – some
problems are inherently unsolvable.

http://foucault.info/foucault/interview.html

In other words Foucault rejects that there is always a
possible transformation of conflicts in society. The
conflicts between the sane and the insane, the excluded and
included, the normal and the anormal are not possible to
transform.

2.4 CRITICISM OF FOUCAULT'S APPROACH

The first problem that one finds in Foucault's approach is
his reification of zero-sum, either or relations, in his
concept of power. Foucault has the same problem as Marx,
only focusing on war-like relations, and the practical
implications are as dark as Marx' implications. The
practical implications of such a theory would be to destroy
one or the other discourses, which of course have ethical
implications for the people that are involved in a

struggle, and who use Foucault's concept of power as a guiding light for their actions in the world.

Like Marx, Foucault prefers antagonistic struggle where one win over the other, and this war-like confrontation can have problematic real world consequences; it normalizes and shapes the political world through debate instead of dialogue, war instead of conflict transformation.

The way in which Foucault identifies the limitations of political transformation also shapes his reluctance to come up with clear-cut policy proposals that is meant to transform the themes he is dealing with. One problem is that Foucault is reluctant to propose alternatives because they would not be able to overcome the problems <u>completely</u>. This sought of thinking leaves out the possibility of solving such problems <u>partially</u>.

Furthermore by focusing on the <u>past</u> and the different discourses that were present in the past, Foucault is unable to grasp something <u>new</u> that have not been tried out before. The combined methods of the past might have been wrong.

As Charles Taylor have noted, Foucault's project is to lay bare some 'evils' in society, but Foucault does not offer us any exist strategy to progress. Taylor writes:" *This is rather paradoxical, because Foucault's analyses seem to bring evils to light; and yet he warns to distance himself from the suggestion which would seem inescapably to follow, that the negation or overcoming of these evils promotes a good."* Foucaults Nietzchean legacy is highly problematic because it leaves out any guiding set of rules for social policies. There are only regimes of truth and these regimes are determined by power relations. The problem inherent in

the relativistic position is that one stands without any
effective measure of evaluating when something is better or
worse. Human rights, or human basic needs are then only
human rights/needs according to some regime of truth. There
is no moral anchor. Charles Taylor writes:" *This regime-
relativity of truth means that we cannot raise the banner
of truth against our own regime. There can be no such thing
as a truth independent of its regime, unless it be that of
another*." (Critical Foucault 1986 EUI) When confronted with
injustices one thus not claim that it is wrong because the
other party could just as easily say that it is right from
my perspective, and since there is only truth according to
power, the truth that have the most power to set itself
through is true.

Foucault was a political activist, in the 1970s a maoist,
an was founder of the *Groupe d'information sur le prisons*,
which aimed at giving prisoners a forum in which they could
advance their cause. Foucault advanced the rights of
homosexual peoples and spoke out against racism. However
given his epistomological rooting in Nietzchean philosophy
a genuine alternative is hard to find in Foucault's works
and practice, and in that sense he is barred from the world
of alternatives, and by advancing prisoners rights a he
creates a performative contradiction in relation to his
axiological relativity.

2.5 HABERMAS

For Habermas conflicts are a recurrent potentiality in
everyday communication. Habermas's pragmatic philosophy
deals with the rational potential for criticism in everyday

communication. When someone disagrees there is a push to give reasons for ones standpoint and in that sense there is a conflict. There is always the risk that an utterence can be rejected or contested on three grounds, that is its proportional truth, its normative rightness and its sincerity. When an utterence put forward by A is rejected by B and B does not accept this rejection then there is a conflict between the two actors.

Habermas critical endeavours is rooted both in his pragmatic philosophy of communication, where conflicts should be dealt with through rational dialogue aiming for mutual consensus. Habermas is therefore critical of every social institutions that bars itself from rational debate, such as the capitalist system, where the potential for critique is established by psyedo-communication, which exist when someone is forced to do something because of power relations or because the structure in which the communicative setting is placed itself was not established through rational consensus. Habermas has therefore been critical of the hermeneutic position proposed by Hans-Georg Gademar 1900-2002, that sought to re-establish prejudice and tradition from the critique it had received from the Enlightenment philosophers. Habermas gives one example where he says the hermeneutic position fails to deal with social conflicts. One such institution that was not established without rational acceptance was the capitalist system; even though workers may accept their position as wage-labourers now at the present moment and tradition, they did not themselves chose to become wage-labourers and the establishment of the labour-market did not occur through a rational debate but rather through force and

strategic action. It is therefore pseudo-communication when the structure into which the worker became a worker in the first place is barred from critique. In this sense these institutions should be criticised and their basic foundations should be examined and understood in order to re-establish the communicative potential in that conflict. (Hermeneutics reader)

In this sense Habermas's critique of the existing traditions in society also becomes an epistomological critique of science that does not interact and tries to transform the social world with which it is part of. He writes:" *The claim by which theory was once related to practive has become dubious. Emancipation by means of enlightenment is replaced by instruction in control over objective or objectified processes. Socially effective theory is no longer directed toward the consciousness of human beings who live together and discuss matters with each other, but to the behaviour of human beings who manipulate.*" This normative endeavour has brought Habermas to the conclusion that the existing social world should be transformed so that it is brought into line with the moral ideal that one adheres to.

Habermas writes:" *The systematic sciences of social action, that is, economics, sociology, and political science, have the goal, as to do the empirical-analytic sciences, of producing nomological knowledge. A critical social science, however, will not remain satisfied with this. It is concerned with going beyond this goal to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be*

transformed." (HABERMAS READER)

Habermas wants issues of transformation to be arrived at
through rational dialogue. This implies that the strength
of the better argument will decide.

At the level of product the participants deals with a set
of reasons that support certain conclusions. Because of
this and this the world is round or because of this and
this we should do the following.The strength of such
argument however depends on how well one has taken into
account the relevant information and the possible
objections to the product of a dialogue.TCA vol I p.26)

In other words we may only regard the products of our
arguments as strong if it has procedural adequacy.
Procedural adequacy implies that the participants have
subjected their discussion to a formal procedure where
arguments and counterarguments can be discussed. Habermas
calls it a 'ritualized competition for the better
arguments' (TCS vol. 1 p.26) The formal procedure implies
that the participants should 1) address the issue at hand,
2) should respond to objections and 3) meet the burden of
proof.

However the critical testing of arguments also pre-suppose
that the relevant arguments are there - in other words, in
order to evaluate the product we, in addition to an
adequate procedure of critical discussion, also needs an
adequat process. An adequat process requires 1) that no one
capable of making a relevant contribution have been

excluded, 2) that the participants have an equal right to be heard, 3) that they are free to speak their honest opinion i.e. that they can be sincere, 4) and that there is no coersion or force build into the procedures, i.e. they should not be foreced to say something. (Habermas 2005 p.89) Habermas sets up these four criteria as an idealized setting knowing that in reality it often occurs that some party has been excluded intended or unintended, that there are elements of coercion in politics and that not everyone has an equal voice. In other words full inclusion is problematic, non-coersion is problematic and equality of the right to make an utterance is all problematic, which Habermas acknowledges - these principles therefore functions as standards for learning-processes in order to find the better argument as an ideal type. (2005 p.91) If the parties follow the adequat procedures and process there should be consensus concerning the product, the better argument.

Habermas argues that the better argument is found via consensus. For truth claims dealing with the objective world, Habermas claims, that consensus is possible because we all share this same world of physical things, such as atoms etc. Any claim about the objective world is therefore subject to universal discourse, with the possibility of universal consensus. For the validity claim of normative rightness, Habermas holds, that valid moral rules holds for all human beings. An appropriate participation in dialogues concerning truth and moral rightness would therefore, in Habermas's eyes, in principle ensure a universal consensus, given that the the procedure and the process is adequat. The claim to sincerity is not subject to discourse in the

same way as the two other validity claims. A claim to
sincerity is judged on the expression of an intention and
evaluated according to the behaviour of the person. If one
says something and repeatedly does something else we have
reasons to doubt his/her sincerity.

2.6 EXAMPLES: GULF WAR 1991 AND THE GERMAN UNIFICATION PROCESS

In this present section we will take a look at how Habermas
looks at two contemporary conflicts, in order to identify
the way in which his theory is put into practice.

2.7 HABERMAS ON THE GULF WAR

According to Habermas one can distinguish between four
aspects of the Gulf War 1991. (p.8-9 Habermas, Jürgen :"
The past as future, 1994 (german 1991), Polity Press, 1994)
One is the element of power politics. The western nations
were afraid of loosing their oil-supplies.
The second dimension was a struggle between the West
dominating, and the dominated arab cultures, with history
of colonialism and de-colonization.
The third aspect was Saddam Hussein's threat to use
chemical and nuclear weapons against Israel.
The fourth dimension was the role of the United Nations for
the deployment of military forces, as Weltinnenpolitik.
(p.9)

Habermas acknowledges that all four aspects play into the
considerations concerning the legitimacy of the war

conducted against Iraq. Of most importance for Habermas is the fourth aspect. Habermas argues that the fourth aspect of the Gulf War is a positive sign for the future, although he is aware that the war was not carried out under UN command he writes:" *It wasn't carried out under the command of the United Nations; the nations that actually conducted the war weren't even accountable to the UN. And yet the Allies claimed the legitimation of the UN until the end. In theory, they acted as deputies of the world organization. That's better than nothing*." (p.11) Habermas is aware that the legitimation of the UN for the most part served as a pretext for the allies and that the war degenerated into a brutal war of 'unchecked brutality'. (p.12)

The reason why Habermas gives so much importance to the fact that Iraq broke international law is because he considers the moral substance in those laws to be of universal validity. He agrees with John Rawls that there is an overlapping consensus within world perspectives that makes these rules universal. Habermas explains:"...*I'm convinced that Rawls is right, that the basic content of the moral principles embodied in international law is in harmony with the normative substance of the great historical prophetic doctrines and metaphysical world-views*." (p.20-21)

Even though Habermas is aware that a peaceful cosmopolitan order lacks empirical support, he in the spirit of Kant, argues that it is the idea that is worth striving for. (p.22) The fact that the US and its allies appealed to the UN for legitimation is a fact that for Habermas confirms that we are moving in the direction of an international

order governed by international law. Habermas writes:" *The institutions of the UN, and the basic principles of international law expressed in the UN charter, embody what Hegel would have called a piece of 'existential reason' - a small portion of the idea that Kant had already clearly formulated two hundred years ago.*" (p.22) Habermas continues that the appeal to the legitimation from the UN makes the powers subject to clear moral principles and duties.

If international law was strengthened the western powers would have to put an end to international arms trafficking, and be prepared to give more executive force to the UN itself, to have a neutral police force that could intervene to enforce UN resolutions. They would also be forced to take seriously the distribution of resources of the planet and therefore be pushed towards the establishment of a more just world economy. Strengthening the UN system would furthermore also have to overcome their imperialistic attitudes and move to greater understanding and respect for foreign cultures. (p.23)

In this sense Habermas sees the Gulf War as legitimate because it was an important step to institutionalize a new political culture in international relations, where countries seek legitimation from the UN-system and its laws in their military interaction with other nations. It is in this sense that Habermas approved of the military intervention against Iraq, before it degenerated into military barbarism, in his words. It furthermore connects with his idea that the force of the better argument is based on the possibility of universal consensus on moral matters. International law is functioning here as Habermas idea of a universally accepted moral norm, that should be

arrived at under his criteria for rational acceptance of a
moral system.

Habermas view of the conflict constellation: "*Nobody can
seriously doubt that Iraq's anexation of Kuwait and its
announcement of its intention to open a war with Israel,
even a war with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons,
constituted an injury to international law*." (p.12)

Habermas's argument for the justification of the military
intervention:" *The question of the appropriateness of a
military strategy that included area bombardment and that
produced hundreds of thousands killed and wounded, huge
streams of refugees, enormous destruction of the civilian
infrastructure, long-term ecological damage, and persistent
catastrophic conditions in both Iraq and Kuwait – this
question can hardly receive an affirmative answer. But I
think that, at least in regard to Israel – that is, the
nightmare scenario of an Israel encircled by the entire
Arab world and threatened with the most horrific kinds of
weapons – the authorization for military sanctions against
Iraq was justified*." (p.15)

2.8 HABERMAS ON THE UNIFICATION PROCESS

Habermas was critical of the German unification because of
several considerations.
Habermas argues that the top-down approach to unification
favoured by the politicians in charge of it, neglected a
democratic process on the level of civil society. Habermas
explains:" *Unification hasn't been understood as a
normatively willed act of the citizens of both states, who*

in political self-awareness decided on a common civil union." (p.44 Past as future) Such a process is for Habermas harmful for the political culture in the sense that it undermines a democratic tradition of inclusion in the political process. In other words the product was not subjected to a proper procedure of arguments and counter arguments in the civil society and did not include all the relevant parties in the process. Instead Habermas wanted a new constitution rather than incorporating the GDR into the existing constitution. In Habermas's eyes the democratic foundation of the political culture would have been strengthened if a new constitution could have been adopted if it was supported by the Germans on both sides and not only by the politicians on the top of the pyramid. (p.xiv)

Furthermore Habermas is critical of the way the two economies were integrated, arguing that the process destroyed much of the economic potential of the GDR. Many jobs and production could have been saved if the government had scaled down the pace of transition:" *The destruction of productive capacities and jobs that we now have could well have been avoided, at least on this scale, by a 'slow path' in which the government controlled the pace of the transition process with subsidized rest periods*." (p.45 Past as Future)
Habermas continues:" *The structural collapse of the former GDR will result in clear winners and losers. The price of admission into a market economy has to be paid in the currency of social inequity, entirely new kinds of social divisions, and in higher long-term unemployment*." (p.55)
Habermas predicted in 1991 that the following years would be haunted by increasing social divisions and tensions in

Germany. He continues:" *The 4.5 % rate of annual economic growth that was forecast for 1991 also means a growth of social inequity, namely, mounting profits from falling wages. It means an even more sharply segmented society: while the rich get richer, the poor not only get poorer, but more and more of the poor will be pushed out of the system and into the underclasses, where they will have no access to veto power and won't be able to improve their situation through their own efforts. In a word: the social climate is going to get a lot colder*." (p.56 Past as Future)

Furthermore Habermas was sceptical of the German unification because it was used by the Kohl government to normalize the German past as coming back to 'the normal state of affairs'. Habermas feared that a discourse that would minimize Germany's moral responsibility of the atrocities committed during the Nazi period would be popularized by the Kohl government and its supporters. The old Germany they called the normal state of affairs, had resisted the liberal type of democracy that gained importance after the war in the Federal Republic. A discourse founded on normalization would therefore neglect the anti-democratic tendencies in the old Germany. (p.xv-xvi an p.52-53 and p.133)

2.9 CRITIQUE OF HABERMAS'S APPROACH TO PRACTICAL CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

It is highly questionable if Habermas lived up to his own norms for dialogue, with regard to his legitimization of military action in the Gulf War, 1991. Habermas's anchor is that the war represented a positive sign for international

law, because the allies were acting as the instrument of the UN. However, it is highly dubious if the UN rules have been accepted without force since they have been dictated to the rest of the world, putting the victors of the Second World War un top. The laws of the UN were decided by the victors of the Second World War, excluding therefore a country (or the OIC) with roots in islamic culture. In relation to Habermas's theory, these regulations are therefore an example of pseudo-communication, since the rules were implemented without people or state's having a real alternative. The UN security council does not have any democratic legitimacy in the world, and resembles more the club of the powerful and rich countries in the world than a democratic forum.

If Habermas argues that these laws would be accepted universally, then why not have more democractic deliberation in establishing the rules of interaction in the international system? Furthermore we see no reference at all to the goals of the parties in the Gulf-conflict, which is one of the criteria for a rational dialogue. If the parties are not allowed to have a voice then the product of the dialogue will not be rationally grounded.

Concerning the unification process one notices that Habermas has a stronger feeling of the facts, more parties are listened too, rather than was the case in the example of the Gulf War.

In addition to an internal critique of the examples above one can criticise Habermas on another level, namely an external critique. Here the Habermasian world view or the haberworld can be criticised from the outside for:

[1] <u>Lack of transparency: The haberworld is covered by verbal mist</u>

The point is not that the reading requires efforts by the reader in a world where most others resort to spoon-feeding, often because they have nothing more substantial to offer. Mathematics also puts demands on the reader, so does learning a foreign language. The problem is whether the effort is legitimized by deeper insights than what could have been communicated through shorter words, and through shorter sentences.

For people who believe that difficult means deep, and easy means shallow, Habermas is by definition deep. Like Parsons before him he is actually both deep and difficult, like Hegel before both.

But this creates a barrier between author and reader. There is also a barrier created between those who have acquired that mode of speech and those who have not. The haberworld becomes a closed community within such intellectual communities as universities, and between them and the rest of the world. Important, if words, say, about peace, should serve as guides for action they must be understandable. The haberworld is awe-inspiring, but speaks a tongue hard to translate. One way out, of course, is to focus on the real world the haberworld of words is supposed to reflect.

[2] <u>The scarcity of concrete cases as examples, even case studies.</u> In his writings Habermas rarely exposes himself to the test of checking verbalisms through correspondence or not with examples, taking discrepancies as a major challenge to change the verbalisms. Visible in the

haberworld is above all words, and many of them. There are references to empirical phenomena but usually only in passing and then by taking much for given, assuming that the reader shares the author's perception. The high verbal dissolution of concepts and mental processes is not mirrored in the detailed anatomy and physiology of case studies (except for the German reunification and the Gulf war of 1990-91; see comments).

This means that those processes are not really put to empirical test by the author, in front of readers with critical eyes. (DELETE NOT EXACTLY TRUE, A VULNERABLE ARGUMENT, SINCE HE AFTERALL AS WE ALSO POINT OUT HAS ALTERNATIVES) This is disturbing because of the frequent references to rationality as implying having at least one foot in the world of facts, and even more disturbing because the reader might like to use them to understand better what happens in, say, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, and 9/11. Thus, his hypotheses about the blessings of modernity may not be confirmed when tried out in a world of concrete conflicts: in the examples above the attackers, usually Anglo-America, are more "modern" than the attacked, with 9/11 an event in a chain of attacks on the Arab-Muslim world.

One looks in vain for empirical examples where the criteria for the processes he studies are fulfilled so that outcomes should correspond to the conclusions. Thus, is it the case that consensus follows the force of the strongest argument when the discourse is free from stick and carrots? Or, is this a tautology, defining the stronger argument = winning argument = consensus position? The test of the pudding is in the eating, and there is not much eating.

[3] <u>The haberworld is peaked with the West at the top and four cultural big powers, USA, UK, France and Germany, at the very top</u>. The contribution of the rest to human civilization is not covered by mist, it is absent; reducing true intellectual controversies to the Anglo-America vs the Continent debate dear to intellectuals in the West. (NOT TRUE RATIONALITY AND RELIGION 2002) There is also the German, European or generally Western idea that thinking becomes universal when the West does the thinking. The rest of the world, with primitive and traditional formations, but also contemporary, is rejected in the haberworld.

One example would be the distinction between we-cultures and Western I-cultures; celebrating as actors groups, or individuals. Thus, Western human rights are almost only individualist; excluding such rights as those of villages, traditional crafts and clans.

Another example would be Oriental yin-yang thinking, with its insistence on the truth in the false and the false in the truth is not Occidental <u>tertium non datur</u>, true or false, thinking. To many, maybe most of humanity, true <u>vel</u> false thinking, rather than the Western true <u>aut</u> false strait-jacket, is liberating and closer to reality as experienced. But this is problematic from a Western point of view because it makes logical deduction, based on <u>modus ponens</u> (Premise 1: if A then B, Premise 2: A, Conclusion: B) impossible; possibly a major reason why it is excluded as pre-modern.   More holistic, less linear ways of reasoning are needed.

Discourses that exclude Oriental discourses impoverish the West and also in themselves demonstrate the absence of yin-yang and tetralemma thinking, for fear of ambiguity and

contradiction.

For that reason dichotomies may become too sharp, failing to include, say, the irrational in rational/modern faith in factual and moral laws, and the rational in irrational/mythical traditions.

[4] <u>The higher the modernity, the higher up on the haberworld peak</u>
There are many ways of defining modernity, and capital logic and state logic are less central to the haberworld than rational logic. The beaming lights in the haberworld of Enlightenment, <u>Aufklärung</u>, are <u>rationality</u> as a human faculty, walking on the two legs of some <u>factual regularity</u> ("law") in the empirical world, and the <u>human rights</u> as the moral law. Both are seen as universalizable, the Kantian criterion that is found all over the haberworld. It is also found the US insistence that all they are doing is to spread universal values. The EU comes close to that. Ask the victims.

Universalizability means universal acceptability. There is compatibility between the kantian project and a world democracy project with a voice to all, <u>glasnost'</u>. But that implies the right of <u>any</u> culture, or macro-culture=civilization, to propose factual and/or moral truths as candidates for universalizability tests; like collective human rights, yin-yang and tetralemma thinking, vegetarianism, bans on ecological degradation. Can a modernized West take that, will they argue that ideas taken off the shelves of mythical-traditional-nonrational cultures are not candidates for universalizability, or make them invisible like in the haberworld. Is the implicit criterion for universalizability Western origin, like it

seems to be in the Western, even euro-centric, haberworld?

That is a recipe for converting cultural differences into structural inequities. "Who imprints whom" is as important as "who exploits whom", "who decides over whom", "who invades/kills whom". If modernity is the condition for having a voice, then the weaker will imitate and the stronger will, like the Sinic and Islamic, may exit. This makes the haberworld less a recipe to a common humanity than to scaling the Western pyramid - or to deep world cleavages.

[5] <u>The haberworld is compatible with Western elite world views</u>

The haberworld map ranks the world's countries the traditional Western way, making it highly acceptable to Western elites. "Modern vs non-modern" is close to "more vs less developed", MDCs vs LDCs, and the spread of science teaching and human rights law is a basic part of it. The haberworld highlights facts and morality as seen by the West, not only growth and institutions. To Western elites, however, capital and state logic are basic to modernity, ranking countries in terms of economic and political/military power. They use Habermas to legitimize all aspects correlated with modernity.

The haberworld is part of post-War, post-Nazi Germany project of finding a foothold in the enlightenment values of a rationality based on scientific and moral laws. The scientific part rejects the Nazi cultural project with strong mythical elements of Chosen <u>Herrenvolk</u>, master race, and the moral part rejects the rest.

Habermas has played a key role in defining a new German legitimacy. But the problem is that the leading

power of the modern West, the USA, exhibits the same patterns of being chosen, not only as a <u>Herrenvolk</u>, but <u>by</u> the <u>Herr</u>, the Lord himself and also commits military, political and economic atrocities around the world. The problem is exacerbated when Israel, based on its myth of origin, does the same on a more regional scale. Both are considered modern, in spite of their strong mythical linkages to the abrahamitic god.

The haberworld is eloquently silent, sharing the German taboo on critical discussions of US and Israel mainstream religious orthodoxy and military aggressiveness. The taboo also protects EU, focused on technocratic rationality and human rights, blaming the French and Dutch when an EU draft constitution favored by Habermas fails the universalizability test of a democratic referendum.

[6] <u>The haberworld favors power of the word over money and force</u>
The haberworld is different in placing rationality above economic growth and political strength, and in favoring the power of the stronger argument over the powers of rewards and punishment. The theory of rational discourse and communicative action is based on this, and has the rise of intellectuals as a logical consequence.

<u>Herrschaft</u> and its absence play major roles in the haberworld, so there is certainly class and structural awareness. There are peaks and troughs in society, and it is easily applicable to, for instance, gender and generation relations even if this is not made explicit. The women, the young and the old should learn to argue.

The haberworld gives key legitimacy to masters of rationality, as opposed to, for instance, masters of

compassion, with criteria that are obviously intellectual, hence favoring intellectuals as opposed to, for instance, people with money and coercive force. His is a strong plaidoyer for certain types of <u>brahmins</u> as opposed to <u>kshatriyahs</u> and <u>vaishyas</u>, and a major source of <u>shudra</u>, common people, power: nonviolence, arguing with non-coercive action.

The haberworld rejects outside use of pressure, interpreted as the power of force and/or money; the idea being to let the strength of arguments decide. But arguments do not work in vacuum, they must be articulated, they need carriers to be communicated and the carriers need contexts. Steering by the unenforced strength of the strongest argument presupposes control of many variables.

The general conclusion is a social order privileging people strong on knowledge of facts and higher order moral principles, meaning <u>brahmins</u>, intellectuals, and among them people with a habermasian bent. They will soon discover that their level of acceptability correlates with compatibility with elite interests.

[7]   <u>The haberworld: A world of Western cultural imperialism?</u>

The haberworld is strongly peaked, but down the gradient does not flow US type economic exploitation, political manipulation, or military intervention. The support for the attack on Serbia 1999 was probably more the outcome of naivete and lack of information (eg., that "Operation Horseshoe" to push out all Albanians was a falsum fabricated by the Bulgarian secret services, used by the BND and others to justify German participation), and wish to side with an EU seen as the carrier of

enlightenment to the dark Balkans.

There is no support for the 2003 attack on Iraq, but for the 1991 attack as an effort to enforce world law. But the cultural gradient is unmistakable and an intelligent version of Western cultural supremacy in the tradition of Christian evangelism. Kant's universalizability is a secular version of the evangelical universalizability implicit in the missionary command of Matthew 28:19: "go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost".

This places the haberworld in the Christian-kantian tradition, with a smattering of marxist critique of capitalism, and silence on political manipulation and military intervention. The haberworld fits the elite Western world view like the glove fits the hand. To those economic, political and military elites the assumed cultural supremacy becomes an instrument to legitimize the direct violence of intervention in the name of human rights and democracy, and the structural violence of political hegemony & economic exploitation. One misses compassion with the suffering, enlightened or not.

Thus, the haberworld easily become a habitat for the "useful idiots of imperialism". And the general reason is not Nietzsche's menschlich, allzu menschlich, but europäisch, allzu europäisch.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion one can say that we found more critique than creativity, more criticism of the world than proposals to

change it. We find that this criticism is extremely useful in orienting oneself in the world, it can however not stand alone: a critique without an alternative is an empty critique. Habermas has some elements of a positive future, so does Bourdieu but Foucault's philosophical point of departure is a straitjacket for alternatives. Habermas's approach to the Gulf War was even contrary to his own theory of dialogue.

By putting emphasis both on the critical and on the constructive, we can also draw a line between a social scientist and an a-social scientist. A social scientist is someone that is critical of the way the world is shaped, but in addition to this a social scientist is also a person that proposes alternatives to this world where they feel something is wrong. Our friends under examination here is strong on the first but weak on the last, giving them a profile that is somewhat empty to the challenges in the world.

Furthermore the questions of universalizability of the Habermasian paradigm is questionable taking into account that there has been a rather meagre dialogue in the world concerning the moral values that he actually argues are universalizable. Therefore we would not reject universalization but rather make a true universalization, one that actually reflects a dialogue amongst different religions and world-views, a dialogue where one can know what different cultures agree upon instead of assuming that the principles originating in the West are the universal true principles.