



## **The Critical Theory of Religion**

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The critical theory of subject, society, culture and history of the Frankfurt School originated in the experience of the horror of World War I. Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, Friedrich Pollock, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Alfred Sohn-Rethel and other, later critical theorists tried to make sense out of the senseless war experience in Frankfurt a.M., Berlin, Stuttgart, or elsewhere, by exploring the writings of Immanuel Kant, Friedrich W.J. Schelling, Georg W.F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud.

### **Causes**

The critical theorists hoped with the help of those thinkers to discover the social-psychological, economic, political and cultural causes of World War I, and later on of the different forms of nationalism and fascism, and of World War II, and of the following cold war and restoration period. The critical theorists thought that if they would be able to understand theoretically the causes of those events, they could then maybe help to prevent practically something similar from happening once more. In this hope Horkheimer began the formal and systematic development of the critical theory in the Institute for Social Research at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Universität in Frankfurt a.M. from 1930 to 1933, the year in which Adolf Hitler came into power, and drove the critical theorists, the "negativists", out of the "Cafe Marx" in Frankfurt a.M., at least for the time being. The critical theory started as an emphatically antifascist theory of civil society and remains so up to the present.

### **Revolution and Counterrevolution**

Between World War I and II, Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Sohn-Rethel, Marcuse, Fromm and other critical theorists hoped in vain that the workers in Germany and Europe would rise against their fascist leaders and would continue their socialist post-war revolution and would conquer the fascist counterrevolution. The critical theorists were disappointed. The fascist counterrevolution overcame the socialist revolution, and even initiated a war against the only socialist country at the time, Russia. The critical theorists learned through their bitter experience, that it needed a war rather than a revolution to overcome European fascism. In 1933 the critical theorists saw their Frankfurt Institute for Social Research closed and expropriated by

the fascist cultural ministry in Berlin. Later on the Institute building was destroyed through Allied air attacks on Frankfurt. The critical theorists had to spend the years between 1933 and 1945 in exile from fascist Germany first in Geneva, Switzerland, then in Paris, France, then in London, England, and finally in New York, New York, and in Pacific Palisades, California. The critical theory cannot be understood without its historical genesis and context.

### **American Exile**

Horkheimer, Pollock, Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse, and other critical theorists of the first generation reopened the Institute for Social Research finally at Columbia University, New York, where they further developed the critical theory throughout the larger part of World War II. Later on in the war, Horkheimer and Adorno resettled in Pacific Palisades, where they wrote - besides a variety of studies e.g., on anti-Semitism - their main cooperative work, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which gave direction to the further research in the Institute for Social Research, particularly after its return to Frankfurt a.M. after the defeat of fascism and the end of World War II. The first titles of this cooperative project were the "Dialectic of Mythology" and "Philosophical Fragments." Following in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Kant and Hegel and the whole critical tradition, Horkheimer and Adorno traced the historical development from the original traditional unity of the religious and the secular through the modern disunion to a possible future resolution of that modern antagonism. They envisioned however that resolution quite differently from Kant and Hegel in terms of an inverse theology, which had its roots in Jewish and Christian mysticism as well as in Karl Marx's historical materialism: the migration of semantic material from the depth of the mythos into modern secular scientific discourse and through it into communicative and political action: not toward alternative Future I - the totally administered society; or toward alternative Future II - a militaristic society aiming at and preparing always new conventional wars or civil wars and finally at NBC wars and the consequent ecological disasters; but rather at alternative Future III - a humanity in which the relationships among all human beings would be decent, friendly, cooperative and mutually helpful.

### **Rationalization and Integration**

The main thesis of Horkheimer's and Adorno's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* was that "irrational" institutions, e.g., family, military, and religion, were not merely archaic residuals from a premodern period of social evolution, as Anglo-American sociologists like Herbert Spencer or Thorstein Veblen had asserted. They were rather the result of the extreme rationalization of industrial society: in late capitalist society modern rationalization turned into irrationality; modern systemic integration turned into social disintegration. Extreme rationalization produced extremely irrational conditions: e.g., two bourgeois world wars and European fascism. Their main thesis led the critical theorists to the central question of their cooperative work: why Western Civilization, which had developed all the productive forces to move toward alternative Future III, aimed nevertheless at alternative Futures I and II. This question retains its great actuality up to the present.

## **Return and Rebuilding**

After World War II, Horkheimer and Adorno returned from California to Frankfurt a.M. and reestablished anew the Institute for Social Research at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Universität. The Institute was rebuilt at its old location on the Campus of the Frankfurt University with the financial help of the City of Frankfurt and of the American Military Government in the American Zone of Germany. Throughout the 1950's and the 1960's the critical theorists unfolded an intense empirical and theoretical work-program at the Institute. From 1967 to 1969 the Institute was deeply involved in the student movement and revolt. The students were not only motivated by the Frankfurt School, but they also misunderstood the critical theorists and their enlightenment project most thoroughly. Horkheimer felt that the initiators of the critical theory had been misunderstood particularly by their followers, as once the founders of Christianity had been. After the student revolt and the departure of the first generation of critical theorists, the second and third generations have continued the development of the critical theory in the Frankfurt Institute, particularly through empirical studies about labor unions and later on about Right-wing extremism in Germany and Europe and the United States, up to the present. Sohn-Rethel from the first generation of critical theorists, and Jürgen Habermas from the second generation became particularly influential for the third generation and their research projects.

## **Internationalization and Globalization**

There took place after World War II an intensive and extensive internationalization of the critical-theoretical discourse. The Frankfurt School developed in a very complex way. While Horkheimer and Adorno returned to Germany in 1949, Marcuse and the other members of the group remained in the United States. A split resulted between the Americanization of the critical theory of society on one hand, and the formation of a new generation of critical theorists in Germany on the other. During the 1950's and early 1960's the two strands more or less followed their own path. After the immediate post-war discussion, a linguistic paradigm shift took place in the writings of Habermas. It had a major impact not only on the German but also on the American discourse. The impact made itself felt primarily in social philosophy and political theory. In the humanities, i.e., aesthetic theory, literature and music, the theoretical model of the first generation, i.e., Adorno and Benjamin, remained central for the American discourse of the 1970's. However, during the 1980's, the American understanding of crucial aesthetic and cultural issues, i.e., modern art and mass culture, began to move away from the position of the Frankfurt School. Adorno's and Benjamin's critical theory was appropriated by younger American theorists: among them Frederick Jamerson, Susan Buck-Morris, and Martin Jay. They differed in more than one way from the German reception of the critical theory. Habermas's theory of communicative action impacted on American theorists such as Seyla Benhabib, Thomas McCarthy, and Nancy Frazer. After the death of Adorno in 1969, a reformation of cultural and aesthetic theory took place in the German experience under the influence of the Habermasian model by theorists such as Peter Bürger and Wellmann and their reception in the United States. Finally the third generation of critical theorists on both sides of the Atlantic - among them Axel Honneth and Christoph Menke - tried to come to terms with post-structuralist theory, which Habermas had basically opposed and excluded. The globalization of the critical theory came to its peak during the 1990's.

## **Antagonistic Totality**

Nietzsche stated once, that what has a history cannot be defined. The critical theory of society has a history and therefore cannot be defined. However in terms of a working definition we can say that the critical theory is the insight into society: in the essential of society. The critical theory is the insight into what is the case in society, but in such a way that this insight is critical. This insight is critical in the sense that it measures that what is the case in society by what the latter itself claims to be, in order to discover in this contradiction the potentials or the possibilities of a change of the identity of the total social constitution. Dialectical theory is a social theory which understands modern civil society as an antagonistic totality of non-equivalent exchange processes. The critical theorists do not join those liberals, who consider the open society to be entirely and harmoniously pluralistic. It also differs from the neo-conservatives, who are disgusted liberals, who see the contradictory character of civil society but consider its competitiveness as a vehicle for progress, while ignoring the immense human suffering involved: selfishness, greed, avarice are right! To the contrary, the critical theorists are deeply impressed by the great human pain connected with the antagonistic character of modern society. Therefore, the critical theorists try to fight through the painful antagonism of civil society toward alternative Future III, i.e., a society which will no longer reproduce itself through the

bellum omnium contra omnes,  
( The war of all against all )

a war of everybody against everybody, nationally or internationally. The new society was rather to reproduce itself in terms of universal, i.e., mimetic, present, and proleptic solidarity. In the new society were to be reconciled universal solidarity and personal autonomy and sovereignty. In the new society also those human actions were to be considered to be valuable, which do not carry a price tag on them, and which have not been commodified. Egoism, greed and avarice and the consequent exploitation were no longer considered to be right. The few were no longer be allowed to live through the labor and money of the many. It was no longer necessary - as liberals and fascists asserted - that there would always have to be winners and losers, or predators and prey in human society. Not only One or a Few, but All would be free.

## **Friendly Living Together**

The critical theory of society rests on the assumption of the possibility of alternative Futures III - a society which was characterized by what Bertolt Brecht had called the friendly living together of human beings and in which a communicative-rationally planned development would be predominant, and in which subject and object, thinking and being, human need and satisfaction, reason and reality, facticity and validity would factually have identified themselves with each other. The critical theorists follow the idea of a future society as a community of free and solidary human beings. The critical theorists work and fight for the agreement between thinking and being, which in civil society appears as merely accidental, but which ought to become in the future world the behavior of rational intent and realization. The critical theory's idea of a not only instrumentally, but also communicatively rational society differentiates itself sharply from any abstract utopia through the proof of its possibility on the basis of the grown and

still growing productive forces of human beings. To be sure, the goal of a communicatively and not only functionally rational society, which today in liberal democratic or socialist society seems to be superseded at best of course only on the level of dialectical imagination, is nevertheless grounded as a potential in every individual human person.

### **Inner Critique**

From its very start the critical theory of society contained in itself more or less latently a dialectical theory of religion. Its prototype was Hegel's philosophy of religion dealing with the beginning of the history of religion in terms of magic and fetishism, with the Chinese religion of measure, with Hinduism as the religion of imagination, with Buddhism as the religion of inwardness, with Zoroastrianism as the religion of light and darkness, or good and evil, with the Syrian religion of pain, with the Egyptian religion of riddle, with the Jewish and Islamic religion of sublimity, with the Greek religion of beauty and fate, with the Roman religion of utility and with the Christian religion of freedom. In terms of a working definition, the critical theory of religion can be defined as the insight into the essential of religion. It is the insight into that which is the case in the history of religions, but in such a way that the latter is not positivistic but critical. The insight is critical in the sense that it measures what is religiously the case by what the religion itself claims to be in order to recognize in this contradiction the potentials or the possibilities of a change in the identity of the totality of the religious constitution. The insight amounts to an inner critique of religion.

### **Promise and Reality**

As such inner critique the critical theory of religion may e.g., identify as the essential of Christianity the divine promise in Revelation 21:1-8 of

...a new heaven and a new earth;  
the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now...

and of

Now I am making the whole of creation new.

At the same time the critical theory of religion may discover that Christianity has very often been allied to a powerful state, a rich ruling class - slaveholders, feudal lords, bourgeois owners of capital -, the bigger battalions, shortly to the first heaven and the first earth. Christianity wants to be faithful to its promise, but it also wants to survive in the old antagonistic world. The initiators of Christianity promised the Kingdom and all what came was the church allied with the old world and that the more so the longer the parousia delay has lasted. The critical theory of religion confronts the historical reality of Christianity with its truth claim and precisely thereby discovers its future potentials and possibilities. Christianity will certainly go under in case it surrenders to the unredeemed Old World and thus betrays its promise of the redeemed New World. The critical theory of religion may not only identify and analyze the contradiction in Christianity between its promise on one hand and that what is actually the case in its empirical reality on the other, but it may also help it theoretically and practically to return to and remain

faithful to what is essential and true in it, its promise of the new world, without going under prematurely in the old world. Christianity shares this dilemma between survival and faithfulness to what is essential, between reality and promise with all other world religions.

### **Religion in the Antagonistic Social Totality**

The critical theory of religion explores the position of religion in the antagonistic social totality. It tries to discover to what extent religion is ideology - understood not only affirmatively as the mere combination of ideas and motivating values, but rather critically as the false consciousness, or as the masking of gender-, generational-, race-, national -, individualistic-, collectivistic-, or class- interests, or simply as the untruth; to what extent religion legitimates the interests of the ruling gender, generation, race, nation, individual, collective, or class, or to what extent religion identifies with the oppressed and exploited poor masses of people no matter who they may be. The critical theory of religion is not only interested in the notion of happiness, but also in that of redemption as it occurs in different world religions. The two notions are different and even contradictory, but they can also support each other. The critical theorist of religion sees the friendly and happy living together of free human beings, characterized by communication without domination, as the very location from which arises the longing for redemption: the hope for the totally Other as the radical, but nevertheless still determinate negation of what on earth is called injustice, human abandonment and alienation. The critical theory of religion differentiates sharply between the bad religion of domination which guilds the unjust world, on one hand, and the good religion of emancipation, which states that the world has to become different - i.e., right.

### **Dialectical Sociology of Religion**

It is possible to call the critical theory of religion also a dialectical sociology of religion, if one takes into consideration the very beginning of the so-called dogma-history of sociology. Auguste Comte invented both: the concept of positivism and the notion of sociology. We can speak of a dialectical sociology of religion, if positivism and sociology can be separated: if a non-positivistic social theory or sociology is possible. Comte's positivistic sociology, the *Course de philosophie positive* orientated itself according to the great dichotomy between the static and dynamic laws of society: i.e., the static laws of order and the dynamic laws of progress. The primitively and crudeness of Comte's dichotomy is only too obvious. It is also only too clear, that one cannot reduce in any way something so immensely differentiated and complex as the modern civil or socialist society to merely two dimensions. To do that would be as much a miserable simplification, as if we would with Carl Gustav Jung reduce all human beings to two groups: introverts and extroverts.

### **Dialectical Mediation**

Such simplification is particularly not possible in sociology, because these two social dimensions, social static and social dynamic, are dialectically mediated through each other. That means, that the dynamic of modern society is brought into play precisely through the so-called static moments. The movement of the productive forces is brought into play precisely by the fact that the productive relations have fettered and halted the productive forces in Comte's and Marx's

time as they still do today in late capitalist society. Of course, Marx opposed Comte as well as his positivism and his sociology as conservative bourgeois expressions. However, we must admit that this whole question of the dialectic of productive relations and productive forces as it then determined the theory of Marx, and as it is still of central significance for the critical theorists up to the present, was expressed for the first time in Comte's relatively crude and primitive concepts in a very drastic and dramatic way.

### **Actuality**

Adorno confessed in his Introduction into Sociology at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Universität in Frankfurt a.M., Germany, in 1968, shortly before his death, that he began to comprehend a very determinate aspect of the dialectic only through Comte's antithesis of social static and dynamic. In the case of Comte's theory of social static and dynamic, Adorno learned that theoretical elements, which in their traditional form have definitely become obsolete and thus belong to the history of dogma, can nevertheless - if one reflects and develops them further - give occasion to reflections about the present situation of extraordinary actuality. Such reflections of highest actuality are not delivered today - at least not to the same extent - by the formalized, systematic social sciences, e.g., the structural functionalism of a Talcott Parsons or a Nicholas Luhmann and their disciples in America and in Europe.

### **Religion as Productive Force**

In this context it makes sense to speak not only of a critical theory of society as dialectical sociology, but also of a critical theory of religion as dialectical sociology of religion. In the framework of such dialectical sociology we may discover that precisely because it is an element of the social order, or of the productive relations, religion can also turn over dialectically into a factor of social progress, or a productive force of revolutionary development toward an identity change in late capitalist society, which would make possible alternative Future III - a society characterized by the prosperity, freedom and happiness not only for a Few, but for All. Precisely because the church, e.g., in Latin America, had been for centuries a colonial church and had as such been a pillar of the dominant feudal or capitalist order, or productive relations, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it could turn over into a factor of social progress and a productive force of revolutionary, qualitative change which it could continue to do into the future. This inversion has been and continues to be shown by the Christian base communities and their liberation theologies in Central and Latin America and elsewhere in spite of all the neo-conservative counterrevolutions in the name of law and order for the increase of corporate surplus value, and in spite of the "School of the Americas," or more precisely, the "School of the Assassins" at Fort Benning, Georgia, the products of which continue to terrorize the colonized populations into producing the highest amount of surplus labor for the lowest price for the native bourgeoisie and for 80 percent of North American industry.

### **Three Forms**

Horkheimer and his colleagues, i.e., the other critical theorists, continued to develop the critical theory or the dialectical sociology of religion as an integral part of the overall critical theory of subject, society, culture, and history. Horkheimer and his collaborators continued to

developed the critical theory of religion by concretely negating the studies of religion by Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Ernst Bloch, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem. That means that while the critical theory of society was as such the concrete supersession of the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment movements, the dialectical sociology of religion more specifically criticized the earlier theories of religion, but also preserved, elevated and fulfilled them. It was engaged in conscious making as well as in saving critique. Today the critical theory of religion consists of and exists in three forms, which are different from each other, but which are nevertheless also connected with and supporting each other.

### **The Second and Third Commandment**

The first form of the critical theory of religion has been developed by Horkheimer and Adorno. Both critical theorists emphasized the radicalization of the second and third commandment of the Mosaic Law far beyond its original intent: the prohibition against the making of images of and the naming of the Absolute. They let these religious commandments migrate into the profane dialectical method: determinate negation. Each positive religion determinately or concretely negated the previous one: but while it critically negated the previous one, it also preserved, elevated, and fulfilled certain of its structural elements. The critical theory of religion concretely supersedes the God-hypostasies of the world religions into its highest notion: the longing and the hope for the totally Other than the identity of this unredeemed world: its absolute Non-Identity. It may be called humanism as religion in inheritance. As such it gathers into itself all the characteristics which Hegel once attributed to the different world religions: measure from the Chinese religion, imagination from Hinduism, inwardness from Buddhism, goodness and evil, and light and darkness from Zoroastrianism, suffering and pain from the Syrian religion, the riddle from the Egyptian religion, the sublimity from Judaism and Islam, the beauty and fatefulness from the Greek religion, the utility from the Roman religion and the freedom from Christianity.

### **Inverse Theology**

The second form of the dialectical sociology of religion has been developed by Benjamin and Adorno against the background of Scholem's studies on the Kabbala and Chassidism: most positivistic studies for entirely non-positivistic goals. For Adorno and Benjamin, it was the task of the critical theory to rescue semantic material from the depth of the myths through a theological inversion: i.e., by letting them migrate into the discourses of the different secular expert cultures, and into profane political action. Adorno and Benjamin spoke of this their other, or inverse theology - which was neither naturalistic nor supra naturalistic, for the first time on the island of Ibiza in the early 1930's. Under the presuppositions that religion had supported humankind on its long march from animality to freedom and that the modern secularization process could not be stopped, such theological inversion was not only to rescue the religious contents from the mythos, but it was also to rescue the modern world from itself: to help the modern world to resist the always new attacks of repaganization, re-mythologization and most of all re-barbarization, for which the present abortion rate, divorce rate, suicide rate, euthanasia rate, death penalty rate in civil society, or the rate of undeclared wars, of bombings of neutral



territories and even open cities and of colonialist invasions in the international arena are only a few most cruel and monstrous examples.

### **Interpretation of Reality and Orientation of Action**

The third form of the critical theory of religion has been developed by Habermas. While for Horkheimer and Adorno the main and final goal of the critical theory was not only alternative Future III but beyond that - the totally Other, the Non-identical, the absolutely New, for Habermas it aimed in the context of his universal pragmatic, theory of communicative action, discourse-ethics, and discourse theory of the constitutional democratic state exclusively at alternative Future III - a society characterized by the reconciliation of personal autonomy and universal, i.e., anamnestic, present and proleptic solidarity, or by the friendly living together of human beings in communication without domination. For Habermas, the world religions as systems of interpretation of reality and orientation of action have become obsolete, because they can no longer solve the theodicy (theos = God; dikae = justice) problem. Of course, also Habermas's own theory of communicative action can not resolve the theodicy problem under the circumstances of modern systems of human condition or human action systems. Even the most friendly living together of human beings, even the most undamaged interaction and intersubjectivity between the one and the other, leads finally to the absolute damage in the death of the other, and in the survivor's possible loss of identity. Here, where Habermas's theory of communicative action faces the issue of time, it also reaches its aporia - its dead-end-street. A future critical theory of religion will have to resolve this aporetical situation.

### **The Totally Other**

Habermas is not able to share with Horkheimer and Adorno the hope for the totally other as the radical determinate negation of what he calls the perils of human existence: their theodicy solution. Habermas cannot see any countermovement to human transcendence. In Auschwitz or Birkenau the prayers of the believers in their most extreme distress went nowhere. The "Adonai, Adonai, Adonai" cries of the innocent victims in extreme distress remained consistently unheard. Habermas can share in Adorno's inverse theology and in Brecht's idea of friendly living together, which he rescued from the mythos - it was a dream in most world religions - into his secular epical or dialectical theater. According to Adorno, Brecht's vulgar atheism could be rescued in terms of an inverse theology for the critical theory of society. But according to Habermas's theory of communicative action we ultimately cannot refer to an entirely Other as the radical but nevertheless still concrete sublation of the God-hypostasies of the world religions: ultimately we must live disconsolately.

### **Theology as Theodicy**

For Horkheimer the critical theory of society contained in itself not only a theory of religion, but even a theology: it again was more specifically a theodicy, the original, primordial form of theology. As the critical theory of society understands itself in general as a determinate negation - a critical negation as well as a preservation and elevation and fulfillment - of Hegel's dialectical philosophy, so Horkheimer's, Benjamin's and Adorno's theodicy can be seen as a concrete supersession of his theodicy which penetrates and embraces his whole philosophy: the

dichotomy between God's justice and his unjust world, between the rose of Reason and the cross of the social reality, and between Providence and the slaughter bench and Golgatha of history, and its reconciliation. Hegel's whole philosophy had been one gigantic attempt to refute Kant's assertion that a philosophical theodicy was not possible, and to the contrary to resolve this problem once and for all. However, Hegel's theodicy was never sociologically universalized: it never penetrated the masses of the people. According to her own diary, even the saintly Mother Theresa of Calcutta experienced for many years most painfully the theodicy as lack of divine countermovement to the transcendence, the prayers and the sacrifices, of the believers: shortly the absence, or even non-existence of God. By the way, this terrible experience of transcendence without countermovement never prevented Mother Theresa from practicing most heroically the fifth commandment of the Sermon on the Mount: the love of the neighbor, and even of the enemy. Most recently, on September 11, 2001, the theodicy problem posed itself much more terribly than in Lisbon in 1755 for Voltaire and even more shockingly in the form of the Jihad - attack against the twin-towers of World Trade Center in New York and against the Pentagon in Washington D.C., which killed over 5000 people in the most cruel way. This most tragic event challenges all types of theodicy not only in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but in the other world religions as well: the talion-theodicy, the test-theodicy, the freedom-theodicy, the love-theodicy, the shame-theodicy, the inquiring-theodicy, the eschatological-apocalyptic theodicy, etc.

### **Theology and Politics**

For Horkheimer as well as for his younger friend Adorno theology as theodicy was in no way less important and central as for Hegel. Also the critical theory of society can be understood in its totality as a theodicy. Furthermore, in Horkheimer's and Adorno's view, behind all genuine human action stood theology as theodicy. Thus, Adorno and Horkheimer stated in their common work, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that

Politics, which does not, be it also in the most unreflected way, preserve theology in itself, remains, no matter how skillful it may be, in the last analysis mere business.

Long before Horkheimer and Adorno Thomas Hobbes had connected state and theology, politics and theodicy, when he chose from the book *Job*, the Jewish test-theodicy, the mythical notion of Leviathan for the title of his political-theological study: *Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*. Also Carl Schmitt, Adolf Hitler's jurist and political theologian, connected - being inspired by Hobbes - in his political-theological writings politics and theodicy, when he used from the *Book Job* the mythical images of Behemoth and Leviathan. The critical theorist Neumann called his excellent study on fascism *Behemoth and* precisely thereby connected once more politics and theodicy. For the new critical theory of religion and dialectical political theology to be developed in this work this connection between theodicy and political action is fundamental.

## **Positivism**

Horkheimer explained the meaning of theology as theodicy through its very opposite: positivism. For Horkheimer, from the positivistic standpoint no moral politics could be derived. In purely positivistic-scientific perspective, hate was - in spite of all social-functional difference - no worse than love. For positivism, there was no logically cogent justification, why I should not hate, if thereby I do not suffer any disadvantages in social life. The positivist can say with George Orwell:

War is as good or as bad as peace.  
Freedom is as good or as bad as the slavery: the oppression.

According to Horkheimer, positivism could not exactly justify, that I should not hate, if that is fun for me. Positivism found no instance, which transcended the human species, and which could differentiate between helpfulness and greed for profit, between goodness and cruelty, between avarice and devotion of self. Also the positivistic logic remained silent. It did not attribute any preference to the moral attitude. Long before Horkheimer the very positivistically oriented father of American educational psychology, Edward L. Thorndike, gave expression to the positivistic spirit, when he said in 1910:

The aim of education is...changing (the student) for the better...to  
produce in him the information, habits, powers, interests and ideas,  
which are desirable.

The statement's uncritical conformism to the system of civil society and to what it considers to be desirable, is obvious.

## **Toward a Beyond**

For Horkheimer, all attempts from Kant to Habermas to justify morality not through the view toward a Beyond - a totally Other - but rather through earthly prudence rested on harmonistic illusions. In Horkheimer's perspective, all what was connected with morality went in the last analysis back to theology as theodicy. All morality was grounded in theology as theodicy. For Horkheimer, in no way did theology as theodicy stand for the science of the Divine, or even for the science of God. In Horkheimer's view, theology as theodicy rather meant the consciousness that the world was appearance: that it was not the absolute truth, the Ultimate. Theology as theodicy was the hope, that the injustice, through which the world was characterized, would not remain forever: that the injustice may not be the last word of world-history. Theology as theodicy was the expression of the longing that the murderer may not triumph over the innocent victim. For Horkheimer, religion or theology as theodicy was the expression of the longing for the Infinite: for perfect justice. This perfect justice could never be realized in the secular history. Even if a better world would take the place of the present social disorder in civil or socialist society, the past misery would not be made good and the predicament and plight in the surrounding nature would not be superseded. Horkheimer's notion of theology as theodicy and thus as the longing for the totally Other was of course of Jewish and Christian origin. The critical political-theological perspective, initiated by Horkheimer as well as

by Benjamin and Adorno moves like a red thread not only through the whole development of the critical theory of society but also through this whole work toward a new critical theory of religion and a new dialectical political theology as theodicy.

### **Theory Formation**

The development of a new critical theory of religion and political theology, as it is intended in this work, attempts continually to comply with the highest standard of theory formation established in the Heracleitian-Kantian-Hegelian-Marxian-Freudian critical tradition. Its central principle is the word of Heracleitos:

panta rei!!!  
(everything flows)

In conformity to this principle of the critical tradition, all the components of the critical theory are continually in motion:

- (1) the subject, who produces and reproduces the theory - the critical theorist, changes continually from one social and historical context to the other.
- (2) the object, which is studied and researched by the critical theorist, the society and its religion, changes continually particularly in so far as it is first of all simply like objective nature, like a second nature, even more compulsive than the first one, but that its objectivity contains nevertheless in itself also the subjectivity of humankind at least as a potential. In the last analysis in the critical theory of society and religion man studies and researches himself in his objectification and reification with the practical intent to overcome this his alienation:

Gnoti se auton!  
(Know yourself)

Therefore the critical theorist cannot simply imitate the very successful natural sciences. He cannot be a positivist. He rather has to transcend the positivistic attitude in the traditional social sciences. Otherwise he will miss the potential human subjectivity in the positivity and objectivity of society and religion. While the critical theorist agrees with the positivist in so far as he collects data and quantifies and connects them, he nevertheless departs from him, when he acquiesces with the collected and registered facts, no matter how unjust they may be, and in so doing becomes inhuman.

- (3) The relationship between the continually changing constitution of the subject, on one hand, and the likewise continually changing constitution of the object, on the other, is itself in permanent flux. Changes in the object - in society and its religion - cause changes in the theorizing subject, the critical theorist, and in the text of his critical theory. When all goes well, transformations in the theorizing subject brought about through communicative revolutionary praxis can bring about changes in the object, in society and its religion.

There is a productive conflict going on between subject and object, critical theorist and society and religion:

polemos pataer panton.  
( war is the father of all things )

Thus an adequate theory of religion must try to comprehend the very constitution of its object as well as of its subject and the latter's ability to theorize and their mutual mediation. Finally, such theory of religion must make understandable these subjective and objective constitutional processes, as they mediate each other through each other, out of the overreaching process of natural and social evolution. Certainly, a new dialectical theory of religion and political theology must fulfill those subjective and objective requirements most adequately in order to gain and maintain validity.

### **Fourteen Modern Antagonisms**

To be sure, the new critical theory of religion concentrates on the modern antagonism between the religious and the secular and its possible reconciliation. However, the dialectical theorist of religion is fully aware of the fact that this contradiction is interconnected with the other thirteen main antagonisms of modern civil society: that between man and nature, that between the genders; that between the generations; that between the races, that between the nationalities; that between the individual and the collective; that between the classes; that between the right and the left; that between order and progress; that between the revolutionary and the authoritarian personality; that between the conscious and the individual and collective subconscious; that between language and work; and that between state and society. Each of the 14 antagonisms appears in modern civil society in many variations. To be sure, the contradiction between the sacred and the profane looks very different from the perspective of man or of nature, of men or of women; of Africans, Asians, Near Easterners, Europeans or of Americans; of Germans, English or of French, Palestinians or of Israelis; of individuals or of collectives; of the nobility, the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat; of the Right or the Left; of law and order or social progress; of the authoritarian or the revolutionary personality; of the consciousness or the subconsciousness; of linguistically mediated interaction or tool-mediated labor; of society or state. Any one-sided naturalistic-, humanistic-, gender-, generational-, racial-, national-, individual-, collective-, class -, Right- or the Left -, order -or the progress-, authoritarian- or revolutionary-, conscious- or subconscious-, linguistic- or economical-, societal- or state- view on the fundamental antagonism between the religious and the secular can lead to intense theoretical distortions and practical difficulties. The new dialectical theory of religion will try to avoid such one-sided distortions of the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane, by seeing all these 14 antagonisms as an interconnected network of diverse positions. All these contradictions are to be resolved in the dialectical movement of opposites toward alternative Future III - the reconciled society.

### **Different Types of Conflict**

The critical theorist of religion does not consider the modern conflict between the religious and the secular, man's struggle with nature, the war of the sexes, the struggle between

the generations, the racial conflicts, the national struggles, the conflict between the individual and the collective, the continual class warfare, the contradictions between the Right and the Left, the tensions between order and progress, the struggle between the revolutionary and the authoritarian personality, the conflict between the conscious and the subconscious, the tension between language and work and the struggle between state and society to be justified and eternal simply because they are positivistically the case. Even if these different types of cultural, social, personal and natural conflicts should have once played a positive and productive role in the formation of traditional and modern civil society and state and culture, the amount of human suffering involved in them is so enormous, that the dialectical theorist of religion cannot consider their infinite continuation to be desirable. These most painful types of conflicts will end in either of two ways: (1) They will end nihilistically in the alternative Future I - the totally administered society in Hitlerian, Stalinistic or technocratic form, which will necessarily lead to alternative Future II - the more and more militaristic society aiming at the mutual annihilation of blocks of nations and finally of the whole human species on this earth; or (2) They will come to a productive resolution in alternative Future III - a reconciled society. *Tertium non datur!* The new critical theory of religion is, like the critical theory of society in general, devoted to the realization of alternative Future III. It furthermore trusts that the reconciliation of the modern antagonism between the religious and the secular, i.e., monotheism and radical enlightenment, could also promote more understanding between man and nature, between the genders, among the races, among the nationalities, between the individual and the collective, i.e., personal autonomy and universal solidarity, between the social classes, i.e., the bourgeoisie and the workers, between the Right and the Left, between order and progress, between the revolutionary and the authoritarian personality, between the conscious and the subconscious, between social interaction and work, and between state and society.

### **Deus Sive Natura**

If Hitler, before World War I, as a student at his Benedictine high school in Linz, or in Austrian Catholicism in general, could have found help from his teachers concerning his very personal and deep crisis rooted in the unresolved modern dichotomy between the religious and the secular, between faith and science, or more specifically, between creationism and evolutionism - beyond a merely symbolical explanation - it is possible and probable that also his notions of the human conflict with nature and of the race, national, class and gender struggles would have been less one-sided and distorted and their practical political and historical consequences would have been less catastrophic all over Europe and even the rest of the world up to the present. Later on, Hitler found his own pantheistic resolution of the dichotomy between the religious and the secular. Hitler rejected the philosophy of Hegel, whose sculpture he could not find in the Great Hall of the Linz Library besides the busts of Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Hitler believed that Hegel's pragmatism had been annihilated by Schopenhauer, whose works he carried with him throughout the whole of the First World War. Thus, Hitler could not accept Hegel's theistic notion that nature was God's absolute self-externalization and self-estrangement and that it was evil in so far as it was for itself, i.e. a most cruel food chain or food web, but that he cancelled the difference between them and identified them: *Deus sive natura*. Hitler could have learned from Hegel that nature was not only immediate but also mediated by a God who was not nature but absolute Spirit.

## **The Supersession of Pantheism and Theism**

Hegel could have helped Hitler not to regress from theism to pantheism - the identification of Providence and the aristocratic principle of nature - i.e., the right of the stronger predator to consume and annihilate the weaker prey in nature, society and history - but rather to supersede both of them. Hegel could have given Hitler the insight that the abyss between creator and creation could be reconciled in a process, in which the old creation, which was beyond hope, could be concretely superseded into a new one in terms of an eschatological theodicy. Hitler could have learned from Hegel that the whole project of fascism and the consequent German and Italian empire-building was one huge anachronism. Hitler could have learned from Hegel's warning that the Europeans should make no wars any longer, since their time had come to its end, and that Europe was concretely to be superseded by the American and Slavic Worlds. Instead, Hitler fulfilled Hegel's rather pessimistic statement against an all too optimistic reflecting pragmatic theory of history, that the only thing one could possibly learn from history was that people did not learn anything from it. Through Hegel Hitler could have understood that already the first World War and certainly his own second World War only played into the hands of the American and the Slavic Worlds, which were moving to the front of the world-historical process. Instead, Hitler posited himself precisely in-between those two worlds and was thus crushed by the Slavic and American armies. Contrary to Hitler, Hegel refuted Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, whose pessimism was by far surpassed by the world-historical disaster produced by their most fanatic 20th century disciple. Thus it is understandable why not Schopenhauer's or Nietzsche's works but rather Hegel's dialectical philosophy serves as a prototype for this new non-fascist or even anti-fascist, critical theory of religion. Nothing speaks more powerfully for Hegel and his dialectical universal pragmatic than its rejection by Hitler and European Fascism.

## **Not a Kingdom of This World**

In any case, Hitler's anti-Hegelian, pantheistic theory of Providence became the very foundation of the German form of Fascism, i.e., National Socialism: Deus sive natura - the false identification of the Almighty with the entirely secular aristocratic principle of nature. On November 11, 1941, in the Wolfsschanze in East Prussia, Hitler stated that what is in opposition to the laws of nature cannot come from God. In the perspective of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as well as of the new critical theory of religion and dialectical political theology, of course also the inverse is true: what is in opposition to the laws of nature can very well come from God as the totally Other of nature. On that same day, November 11, 1941, Hitler demanded that the Church must be made to understand that her kingdom is not of this world. Within this context, it is very unlikely that Hitler knew how close he had indeed come with this demand to the Christian truth: the eschatological reservation, which stands very much in opposition to all laws of nature and history. According to John 18:36-37, Jesus of Nazareth had expressed this truth as he had stood in Jerusalem before the mass murderer Pontius Pilate, representative of the Roman Empire, the civil and military power of which not only Benito Mussolini but also Hitler admired so much and took for their great example:

Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this  
world, my men would have fought to prevent my being  
surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.

The kingdom announced by Jesus was totally other than the Roman Empire or than any modern fascist empire. For this truth, many Christian martyrs had to die in the Roman Empire of Antiquity and in the modern fascist empires.

### **Providence**

In his public and private speeches, Hitler continually dragged almighty Providence into the hellish antagonistic process of nature and history, in which for millions of years almost every life form must tear to pieces and consume other living beings in order to maintain itself and its species. In doing so, Hitler deprived Providence either of its love or of its power and thus of its divinity in the Jewish, or Christian, or Islamic sense. Hitler regressed into neo-pagan mythology and idolatry. As a product of Austrian and German civil society and thus as a most optimistic practical positivist Hitler saw the world as it was the case: as gigantic food chain. He admired the beauty of the predators: animal and human alike. He understood the cosmic food chain as providential. He had not created it. He was not responsible for it. He could not change it. He refused to bother about the theodicy problem: the "why" of the providential cosmic food chain order in which almost everybody was destined to eat everybody else and finally to be eaten. He most coldly and brutally adapted and conformed his political and military actions to the cruel world order and complied with the fundamental laws of nature as Darwinism and social Darwinism had discovered them: for the purpose of the survival of the fittest. Hitler did this even after he had committed all his crimes against humanity in the name of humanity and when he and his armies were no longer the fittest and Providence was no longer on his side: after the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk and Berlin.

### **The Apostate**

Precisely on the foundation of his false, reactionary, Pre-Judaic, Pre-Christian and Pre-Islamic neo-pagan identification of God and nature, Hitler's National Socialism turned on its part into the theoretical basis of a most criminal domestic and international political and military praxis. In the final years of his life, Hitler recognized his great prototype in the reactionary late Roman Emperor Julian, whom the Christians had called an apostate, because he had abandoned his Christian faith. Julian had regressed back again behind Christianity, the religion of freedom, to the old Roman religion, to what Hegel had called the Religion of Utility. Hitler intended to follow Julian's neo-pagan reaction and counterrevolution also in the German Reich as soon as the war would be over and the time would be ripe. While the Austrian Catholic Hitler never cancelled his Empire concordat with the Roman Catholic Church and continued to pay his church tax up to his death, he had long ago - like Emperor Julian - turned into an apostate and had given up his Catholic Christianity for a kind of German pantheism. That did not prevent Bishop Bertram of Breslau, head of the German Bishops Conference, to offer To Hitler a funeral mass for the assassinated Heydrich, SS Colonel General, in Prague, on June 3, 1942, or from asking all German Catholic parishes to have a funeral mass said for Hitler, who was at least co-responsible for 10 million war-casualties, after his merely civil marriage and his wife Eva Hitler, nee Braun's, double suicide in Berlin, on April 30, 1945. Even after Hitler's death, reactionary neo-paganism has continued and prospered also without him up to the present in Europe and America. The possibility of a post-pantheistic, or even post-theistic longing or hope for the



imageless and nameless totally Other than antagonistic nature and history as source of unconditional meaning and of ethical validity claims and of new theodicy solutions remained completely closed for Hitler and his many followers in Germany and in Europe and in America and elsewhere up to the present. Personal, social, economic, political and military catastrophes of the proportion in which they happened during the 20th century are not possible without previous cultural disasters: regressions to the point of utter re-barbarization. Against Hitler and Fascism in all its forms, the new critical theory of religion and dialectical political theology emphasize the radical difference between God and nature, Providence and history, and thus de-reify, dis-enchant, de-mythologize and de-ideologize them. The dialectical theory of religion entertains the hope that from Hitler's catastrophe all races and nations can learn that the way to liberation and redemption does not lead through competing with sharks, crocodiles, lions, tigers, hyenas, bullfrogs or other predators in the strict obedience to the aristocratic law of nature, but rather through superseding it in communicative and political action. Contrary to fascist opinion, a society is the more human the less it is like nature and the more it overcomes the law of the jungle toward global alternative Future III - a democratic society without slaves and without masters and characterized by mutual recognition.

### **Interdependence of Facts**

It belongs to the essential notion of the traditional positivistic theory of nature and society, that hypothetical judgments relate themselves to exchangeable and replaceable data. This fundamental attitude gives to the dominant traditional positivistic social theories, e.g., functionalism, an extremely static character. It makes traditional social theory incapable of comprehending genuine social movements and structural changes. To the contrary, the logic of the thought-connection called the critical theory of society can be summed up in one sentence: that in the social process the facts are

dependent or better still interdependent.

That is also the simplest formulation of the essence of the method of dialectic: determinate negation of one thought- or life form by the following one. It is at the same time a formulation, which emphasizes

the strictness

of the thought connection called the critical theory of society. Every constellation calls forth a process, which changes the initial constellation, etc. The business cycle is a good symbol for the logic of this thought connection called the critical theory. At the same time, the critical theory's emphasis on strictness means something else than the merely explicative necessity of the usual traditional analysis. With every step of thought, or with every change in reality, something "new" enters into the connection or equation. This connection cannot - like the usual traditional deduction - be concluded immediately from the original premises. However, the process also cannot go in any other way. Of course, not only society and religion have a history, but also nature, in spite of the fact that in the perspective of our immediate life world the sky full of stars seems to be frozen. In reality it is not. The further expansion of the universe may empty our sky of most stars. The structure of the universe is determined by gravity, or attraction, and by

repulsion: it moves, it expands, it contracts. After Albert Einstein had discovered the expansion of the universe, more recent scholars have become aware of an immense power of contraction in dead stars, or black holes. Maybe even the universe moves dialectically: like human history, including the history of religion. In any case, it moves!

### **The Temporal and the Eternal**

Horkheimer was not only the founder of the critical theory of society, but also of the critical theory of religion as its integral part. Already in its earliest beginnings, namely in Horkheimer's expressionistic novels and diary pages of 1914-1918, his dialectical sociology of religion was the response to Schopenhauer's challenge:

to assist the temporal against the merciless Eternal.

This Schopenhaurian demand can be called the innermost impulse and motive of the critical theory of religion.

### **Religious and Moral Imperatives**

In Horkheimer's early, very much poetical critical theory, religious as well as moral imperatives did indeed appear very massively and strongly. However, these imperatives were still without any differentiation through professional, political, economical, or other interests as motives, which determined immediately the individual, or were negated by him or her. At that early time, Horkheimer was not yet familiar with the doubtful adaptation of religious and moral all-embracing principles to the particular instrumental praxis in the everyday life world of industrial society. Horkheimer experienced painfully the contradiction between religious and moral confession on one hand and the real secular behavior of the members of the German and European bourgeoisie in the time before and during World War I on the other: between religious and moral validity on one hand, and secular facticity, on the other. In any case, no critical theorist has ever been willing to deliver religion to - what Marcuse later called -

the positivistic attitude,

e.g., behaviorism, structural functionalism, or cognitivism. This scientific attitude does not rescue the semantic or semiotic materials and potentials in the depth of the mythos. It does not let them migrate into secular scientific discourse and communicative and political praxis toward the accomplishment of alternative Future III - the right society. The positivistic attitude rather instrumentalizes and functionalizes religion in the service of the status quo: as contingency experience control- and management subsystem of civil society.

### **Crisis of Religion and Morality**

Already early in his life, Horkheimer observed that the crisis of religion and morality, which became characteristic and manifest for European civil society through the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment movements, had formed - consciously or unconsciously - an important element in the personalities of the youth of the Western countries for more than a

century: as a matter of fact, since German Idealism or Transcendentalism. The unconditional religious confession, the loyalty to a religious faith, the total devotion to justice and equality - no matter how much the devotee might suffer through the loss of his or her own privileges and prerogatives - even the erotic love and the sacrifices connected with it, the virtue without compromise and its role in the secular world, were reasons of intense restlessness for the youth shortly before and still during World War I. The fate of such radicality, the expression of the contrast between the ideal and reality, determined the content of many of Horkheimer's early narratives: the content of the earliest form of the critical theory of society and of the dialectical sociology of religion.

### **Puberty: Will over Intellect**

For Horkheimer, the cast of mind of youthful individuals and groups throughout the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the aggressiveness of a part of the youth of the 1960's was a proof for Schopenhauer's insight, that in puberty the will overbalanced the intellect. This primacy of the will over the intellect has become true for the dialectical theory of society at least to a large extent in spite of all emphasis on rationality. But not only the young generations of past epochs and periods of history but also not a few individuals of the older generations of past and present as well were inclined to such psychological structure, in which the will has the primacy over the intellect. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said once to his secretary Eckermann about these youthful individuals of the older generations:

They experience a repeated puberty,  
while other people are young only once.

That was certainly true for most of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School of the first generation: from Horkheimer through Marcuse to Löwenthal.

### **Continual Youthfulness**

Horkheimer's critical theory of society is not only characterized by the primacy of the will over the intellect, but also by the primacy of continual youthfulness over the resignation, cynicism and despair of old age. It is thus not astonishing, that Horkheimer and Adorno finally defined religion - at least in terms of a working definition - not only as the longing that the murderer shall at least ultimately not triumph over the innocent victim, but also as the hope for the totally Other as the radical, but still determinate negation of all the perils of human existence - abandonment, loneliness, injustice, alienation, illness, aging, and deaths, and - against the otherwise continually confessed to second and third commandment and to the dialectic as their secularization - as perfect justice, and as unconditional love. The entirely Other is seen by the critical theorists as the solution of the theodicy problem, to which all great art, religion and philosophy has been devoted: the problem of finitude, the problem of suffering, the problem of evil, the problem of meaning, the problem of dying and death.

## **Universal Pragmatic**

After several previous meetings in the USA and Germany, I entered public discourse with Professor Habermas about religion during my second international course on the "Future of Religion" in the Inter-University Center for Post-Graduate Studies, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, in April 1978. At that time Habermas was not even aware that his universal pragmatic indeed contained in itself a theory of religion as an integral part. However, my colleagues and I were able to convince Habermas that his universal pragmatic, his theory of communicative action, his form of the critical theory of society, did indeed embrace something like a communicative theory of religion. Since 1978, Habermas has written and spoken so much about religion, that there can be no doubt any longer that he has a communicative theory of religion and that it constitutes a third form of the overall critical theory of religion. Religion as system of interpretation of reality and orientation of action has remained important for Habermas up to the present, because it contains an appellative semantic material, which cannot be replaced either by philosophy or by the social sciences: at least, not yet. That precisely is the reason why, after magic and fetishism have been replaced by technology, religion nevertheless continues to exist side by side with the positive sciences: that the latter knows of no absolute truth or unconditional meaning or ethical validity claims.

## **Life World**

In Habermas's view, religion is part of the life world together with art and philosophy, as well as with family, neighborhood, friendships, etc. The overall life world is still characterized by mimetic or communicative action and rationality and steered over the medium of ethical and moral norms. The economic and political subsystems have been differentiated out of the life world as the location of religion and ethics and immediate human associations. The economic subsystem is characterized by instrumental or functional rationality, and steered over the medium of money. The political subsystem is also characterized by instrumental and functional rationality, but it is steered over the medium of power.

## **Colonization and Protest Movements**

According to Habermas, the economic and political subsystems have the tendency to colonize the life world. Against such inner colonization arise protest movements from the life world, which seek to stop it: the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the ecology movement, the peace movement, the antinuclear movement, etc. These movements try to generate communicative power against administrative power, in so far as the latter tends to violate the life world of the people in terms of a one-sided application of instrumental or functional rationality. Habermas sides with religion in so far as he sees its semantic material, its meaning reserves, being threatened by such colonization. He wants to rescue this semantic material from the depth of the myths from such colonization of the life world, if also in secular form, because the modern world needs its transcendence desperately in its fierce struggle against re-barbarization. Habermas's universal pragmatic, theory of communicative action and communicative theory of religion are deeply rooted in the semantic materials and potentials, as they have been unearthed from the depth of the myths by Jewish and Protestant mystics as well as more recently by great scholars like Scholem, Buber or Bloch.

## **Further Development**

From 1977 on, my colleagues in my international course on the "Future of Religion" in the IUC and I have in yearly public discourses developed further the dialectical sociology of religion in continual exchange with other theories of religion. We have concretely superseded the critical theories of religion worked out not only by Habermas, but also by Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Marcuse, Sohn-Rethel, Ossip Flechtheim, etc., into our dialectical sociology of religion. Like these authors we have emphasized

good religion against bad religion.

We have stressed religion of liberation against religion of domination. We have emphasized the most noble part in the world religions, without which they may very well not be worthy to be maintained, but should rather be destroyed: their concern with the oppressed past; with the dead ancestors; with the fate of the innocent victims, who have never had their day in court; with the unlimited numbers of slaves, serfs and wage laborers, who - while they made the good life of their masters possible through the production of surplus value - were nevertheless denied their own. We have supported the new political theology of Johann B. Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, and Dorothy Sölle against the traditional fascist political theology of Carl Schmitt. Because our critical theory of religion has been interdisciplinary from the very start, we have never had any difficulties to include in it - besides psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy - also different types theology.

## **Challenges of Modernity**

The dialectical theory of religion responds to the fourteen specific challenges of modernity:

1. The dichotomy between the sacred and the profane;
2. Contradiction between man and nature;
3. Antagonism between the genders;
4. Alienation between the generations;
5. Contradiction between the races;
6. Antagonism between the nations;
7. Abyss between the collective and the individual;
8. Gulf between the social classes;
9. Struggle between the Right and the Left;
10. Tension between social order and progress;
11. Struggle between the authoritarian and the revolutionary personality;
12. Conflict between the consciousness and the individual and collective subconsciousness;
13. Contradiction between the human potential of language and memory and the evolutionary universal of work and tool; and the
14. Struggle between society and state.

While the new dialectical sociology of religion can never ignore the analysis and possible resolution of the dichotomies in modern civil society between man and nature, between the genders, between the generations, between the races, between the nations, between the collective

and the individual, between the social classes, between the Right and the Left, between social order and progress, between revolutionary and authoritarian personality, between the consciousness and the subconsciousness, between interaction and labor, and between state and society, its main concern and emphasis is always the fundamental contradiction between the sacred and the profane: between mythology and radical enlightenment.

### **The Sacred and the Profane**

We have developed the dialectical sociology of religion further by continuing to trace the evolution from the original traditional union of the sacred and the profane through their modern disunion toward their possible post-modern reunion. There were beginnings of modernity in old China and in old Greece, but neither in China nor in Greece was the project of modernity ever fully developed. Thus, also no deeper contradiction came about between the sacred and the profane in China or in Greece, as it has happened in the final and successful attempt at modernity in the West on the basis of Greek science and Jewish and Christian religion: of Athens and Jerusalem. Thus, the relative unity between the religious and the secular lasted throughout the known history of religions: from the African and Asian religions of magic and fetishism, through the Far Eastern religions of Taoism - the religion of measure, Indian Hinduism - the religion of imagination, and Indian Buddhism - the religion of inwardness, and through the Mid-Eastern religions of Zoroastrianism - the religion of light and darkness, the Syrian religion of pain, the Egyptian religion of riddle, the Jewish and Islamic religion of sublimity to the Western religions: the Greek religion of beauty and fate, the Roman religion of utility, and the Christian religion of concrete freedom. Each new religion determinately negated the previous one: i.e., critically negated it, but also preserved some of it and elevated it and fulfilled it. Christianity itself - like other world religions before - went through different paradigms: from the oldest model of the Jewish Christianity, through the paradigm of Orthodox Catholicism, the model of Roman Catholicism, the Reformation paradigm, and the Enlightenment model to the present Ecumenical paradigm. Each new paradigm concretely superseded the previous one: e.g., Buddhism determinately negated Hinduism, Christianity determinately negated Judaism.

### **The Modern Disunion**

The modern disunion between the religious and the secular in the West took place first of all under Christianity. This disunion was characterized for centuries by attacks from scientific and political enlighteners against Christian mythologies and theologies and philosophies and organizations, and by religious rearguard struggles and counterattacks carried out mainly by the Roman Catholic and the Reformation paradigms. All the rearguard struggles of Christianity were lost. Christianity's lost battles against the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment movements led to an intense diminishment of credibility of Christian texts and authorities. While Christianity had to suffer the onslaught of the modern enlightenment for several centuries, other world religions - Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam - have become exposed to it fully only more recently as the consequence of the globalization of modernity. It is therefore not amazing, that the critical theory of society - being itself an enlightenment product - has nevertheless still deeper roots not only in Judaism, but also in Christianity, which helped to produce modernity together with Greek science and technology, while yet suffering from it at the same time. The critical theory of society takes seriously all the religious and secular attempts in

modernity to bring about a reconciliation between the sacred and the profane, not only in Judaism and Christianity and in other living world religions, but also in humanism as religion in inheritance.

### **The Post-Modern Reunion**

The critical theory of society aims at a possible post-modern reunion of the sacred and the profane in terms of the migration of religious semantic materials or meanings from the depth of the myths into the secular discourse of the different expert cultures, as well as into the profane communicative and political praxis. This praxis moves toward alternative Future III - a form of society that no longer reproduces itself competitively and antagonistically, but rather cooperatively, friendly and solidarily. This praxis also moves beyond that toward the horizon of the totally Other as the radical, but nevertheless still determinate negation of injustice, human abandonment and alienation: shortly, toward the resolution of the problem of the fundamental human perils, or of the so-called theodicy problem. In the perspective of the critical theory of society, without the thought of an unthinkable infinite happiness, there can also be no finite happiness, which in view of its transitoriness - which can never be sublated - will never be without sorrow and grief.

### **The Dichotomy between Man and Nature**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse of the past quarter of a century we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane, we could never avoid to trace man's relationship to nature from a traditional relative harmony between them through their modern dichotomy to a possible postmodern reconciliation. We were particularly concerned with the connection between the religious-secular and the man - nature dichotomy. We discovered that not all world religions are equally close or equally distant from nature. We understood, that while, e.g., the Hindu Trimurti was still open to the coming and going in nature through its third person, Shiva, the God of birth and death, in the Neo-Platonic or Christian Trinity the third person, or the Holy Spirit, was completely emancipated from the dynamic of nature, with the exception maybe of the symbolism of the dove. We were only too painfully aware of the fact, that nowhere in the global system of human condition the dichotomy and alienation between man and nature reached such depth as in modern civil or socialist industrial society. In no other type of society did the metabolism between man and nature proceed in such contradictory and predatory way. Indeed, in modernity man has become the most extremely predatory species on earth. One must only compare how a city of Antiquity or the Middle Ages still fit into the landscape and the surrounding nature, with a modern sprawling metropolis and its most destructive contrast to the surrounding vegetative and animal ecosystems. There is something deadly around a modern industrial landscape, e.g., Gary Indiana, near Chicago. Nature seems to revenge itself for the damage done to it by modern man and his so-called civilization, based no longer on religious myths and morality but rather on science and technology, through epidemics, like the over 100 forms of cancer or aids. In Dubrovnik we were fully aware of the immense suffering which modern capitalist or socialist industrial societies produce not only for the nature around man but also for the nature in man: the will to life with its libidinous and aggressive aspects. Modern technocratic society seems to have frustrated the biophilous energies of the "Id"

in man to such an extent that they have turned into necrophilous forces expressing themselves in mass murder at home and abroad.

### **No Romanticism**

In Dubrovnik we certainly did not opt for any romantic return to nature in the form of primitive, archaic, or even historical-intermediate societies. We did not want — like anti-modernist fundamentalists in different world religions — to correct the metabolism between man and nature by regressing behind modern industrialized civil and socialist society, but rather by moving beyond it through its determinate negation. Thus, we rather aimed not at global alternative Future I - the most nature-distant and nature-alienated, one-dimensional, totally mechanized, automated, robotized, computerized, bureaucratized society, but at global alternative Future III - a society, in which man would be naturalized through the humanization of nature and nature would be humanized through the naturalization of man. While in religious or half-secular idealistic philosophical systems man is not naturalized and nature is not humanized, in the pornography so dominant in modern civil society man is indeed naturalized, but nature is not humanized, and thus he and his partner lose their humanity. When people say, that a television-evangelist, who visits prostitutes after his Jesus - shows, is also "human", then they really mean, that he has become naturalized, but they forget, that at the same time nature has not become naturalized and that thus he and his partners have lost their humanity and at least he his Christianity. In Dubrovnik we were aware of the fact, that the obviously very difficult reconciliation of nature and man - the humanization of nature and the naturalization of man - had long been anticipated in Jewish, Christian and Islamic mysticism. Thus, we asked ourselves, what further contribution the world religions could possibly make to a postmodern reconciliation between man and nature. We searched for a possible solidarity of man with nature beyond the mere recognition of plant- or animal- rights. We felt much sympathy for the struggle of the ecological protest movement to diminish the suffering in the surrounding nature as much as possible. We considered even vegetarianism among most advanced human beings. At the same time, we knew that the reconciliation between man and nature could not happen without the mediation through the longing and the hope for the imageless and nameless totally Other than nature and history.

### **Patriarchy versus Matriarchy**

As we tried to resolve the modern problem of the religious-secular dichotomy in our Dubrovnik discourse in the past 25 years, we did in no way neglect to trace the third modern problem: the development from the traditional matriarchal and patriarchal union of the genders through their modern disunion to their possible postmodern democratic reunion, which would transcend past forms of matriarchy as well as of patriarchy. We paid particular attention to the connection between the two dichotomies in modern civil society: the religious-secular and the gender disunion. We were only too painfully aware of the patriarchal character of all living world religions. We looked for matriarchal traces in patriarchal religions. We did not opt for a romantic return to pre-patriarchal, chthonic, mother-right religions. We were fully aware of women's suffering under patriarchal religions. We felt much sympathy and solidarity with the feminist struggle to overcome such suffering.



## **Distance Between the Generations**

Although we were mainly concerned with the modern dichotomy between the religious and the secular in Dubrovnik, we nevertheless also paid attention to the generational problem in modern civil society. When we started our discourse in Dubrovnik the great international student movement had just been repressed and reintegrated into what Max Weber had called the iron cage of capitalism and had thus come to its end. Two times before a great international youth movement had been reintegrated into modern civil society in a similar way: before World War I and between World War I and II. Thus, we were fully aware that while in traditional societies three or four generations could be socially and culturally so close that one could hardly see any historical movement, in modern civil society, to the contrary, even two generations could be so distant from each other that they could hardly come to any agreement about any social or cultural issue. While the new generation of sons and daughters wanted to have a new love, a new mode of production, a new politics, a new religion, the old generation of fathers and mothers were afraid that nothing would remain if the old order of family, society, state and religion would collapse. Out of this, bourgeois skepticism - a caricature of pantheism - opted for a conservative, or even reactionary attitude toward society and history, which still continues today in the forms of neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and deconstructionism. Thus, we traced the development from the relative closeness among the generations in traditional society to the growing distance between the generations in modern civil society. Furthermore, we searched for ways to bring the generations closer together again through the exploration of the causes of distance: e.g., accelerated religious, moral, social, political, economic scientific, technological change; tendencies of cultural regression and decay; increased domination of the economic subsystem, characterized by instrumental rationality and steered over the medium of money and of the political subsystem also characterized by functional rationality but steered over the medium of power, over people's every day Lifeworld still characterized by communicative and mimetic rationality and still steered over the medium of religiously grounded ethical values and norms. It was helpful to our discourse in Dubrovnik that most of the time three generations were present in it.

## **The Conflict of the Races**

As we explored the modern dichotomy of the sacred and the profane during our 25 years of Dubrovnik discourse we were painfully aware of the tragic role the notion of race had played in the conflicts of the 20th century. Furthermore, we discovered how deeply religion had been involved in the conflict of the races, e.g., in the form of a Christian anti-Semitism, and how much impact the race struggle had on religion and had distorted its interpretation of reality and orientation of action. We accepted of course the factual diversity of the races: Africans, Asians, Near Easterners, Europeans, and Native Americans. The one human species or genus had differentiated itself into at least five major races. The differentiation was not a metaphysical one but rather a historical one. The different races were not different species. During the time of our Dubrovnik discourse in the 1980s it was discovered that not even the Neanderthals had been a separate human species from the Homo Sapiens: they had had the ability to speak and they had been able to procreate with the Homo Sapiens. The Homo Sapiens proved to be superior over the Neanderthals and finally annihilated them because they were better in speech and therefore in organization. However, this differentiation did not amount to a species or genus separation.

Since the differentiation of the one human species into different races along geographical, continental lines had been a matter of history it was also possible that it would be superseded again concretely and historically in terms of a racial reunion. Religion could hinder or promote such reunion. Often we concentrated specifically on the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe and America because it had taken on such catastrophic proportions during the 20th century: Dachau, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Buchenwald, etc. We explored the causes of the problem of racism and searched for ways to resolve it: be it in religious or in secular ways.

### **Polymorphous Nationalism**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse we dealt with the dialectic of the religious and the secular and the future-tendencies and trends involved in it, we could hardly ignore the problem of nationalism. In his "Diary Pages" of May 1918, shortly before the end of World War II, Horkheimer himself only knew of love and hate. Horkheimer loved Rosa Riekher, i.e., Maidon, his future wife. Horkheimer hated the generals and he hated the dignified and the firmly honorable and all nationalists and others greedy for blood, the envious, the raw, the evil ones with the low foreheads, the enemies of the spirit, those eager to serve and the ambitious, the big and the small judges of social morality, the cruel, the threatening guys in uniforms.

### **Ethics of Nationalism?**

In the perspective of the critical theory of religion, Horkheimer hated the polymorphous nationalism which had produced World War I. He anticipated the polymorphous nationalism which would produce World War II. Thus, Horkheimer never developed any ethics of nationalism like Martin Buber, Mahatma Gandhi, Paul Tillich, Jacques Grand'Maison, Emmanuel Hirsch, or Gregory Baum. Baum has tried to develop such ethics of nationalism in spite of the fact that in Berlin, out of a spirit of German nationalism, his own father helped to produce and apply the poison gas which was used the first time by German troops during World War I, in order to save casualties for Germany and to accelerate its victory. The same mustard gas killed Baum's wife Shirley's father who fought on the British/Canadian side. Neither Horkheimer nor any other critical theorist was ever a Zionist. For Horkheimer in principle there was no qualitative difference between Israeli, Indian, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Quebecois, Afghani, Pakistani, American or any other nationalism, no matter how different their empirical form may be. They all had the same tendency to become equally murderous. The rest is romantization and idealization. Polymorphous nationalism stands always under ideology suspicion: ideology understood as false consciousness and the masking of race-, national- and class- interests, shortly as untruth. Certainly, all words have a history. So does polymorphous nationalism. Thus, one must at least say that through the fascists use of the word nationalism, it has been ruined and disqualified forever and therefore should not be used any longer except in a most critical sense. Nationalism is for a nation what egoism and selfishness is for the individual. As there is no ethical selfishness, thus there is no ethical nationalism. These are two forms of the same immorality and the same sickness: one collective, the other individual. Rightly and wisely the Roman Catholic Church has never developed any ethics of nationalism. There is none. Also, nationalism does not become more ethical when it is combined with socialism into National Socialism, as the German and other examples have shown only too drastically and clearly. Whom the 20th century has not taught what polymorphous nationalism is, will unfortunately and

tragically never learn it and thus must suffer the sad consequences of its repetition in the future. The true result of the radical negation of the negativity of all forms of polymorphous nationalism - i.e., right or wrong my country, love it or leave it - is what Habermas has called constitutional patriotism - i.e., love of one's country based on the recognition of its and other nations' constitutions as well as of international laws and treaties: based on normativism rather than fascist decisionism.

### **Contradictio in Adjecto**

In the perspective of the dialectical theory of religion, an ethical nationalism is a *contradictio in adjecto*. I personally have never seen a moral or a healthy nationalist in my whole long life: be it in Frankfurt or Berlin, in Washington D. C. or in New York, in Toronto, Montreal or Fredericton, in Warsaw or in Budapest or in Kiev, in Zagreb or in Belgrade, in Jerusalem or in Haifa, or anywhere else. Since out of the nationalism of a strong nation develops its imperialism which oppresses weaker nations, their nationalism can hardly be the right means for them to liberate themselves from any empire. One immorality or insanity cannot heal from the other. Sometimes unfortunately religion legitimates nationalism in spite of the fact that the latter is essentially an entirely secular affair. That happened, e.g., when the Roman Catholic Church allied itself with fascist Germany, Italy, Spain, and Austria. Even after the Church had recognized the pagan character of National Socialism in the Papal encyclical letter "With Burning Care" late enough in 1937, it did not cancel the Concordat with Hitler. It is not even canceled today in the German Federal Republic. Also Hitler never cancelled the Concordat. There is nothing more tragic than the combination of universalistic Christianity and any particularistic nationalism. Of course, the nationalisms need from organized religions their myths of origin for their legitimization, and religions need from nationalisms power and money in order to solve their goal attainment and adaptive, i.e. political and economic problems, without which it can not carry out their pattern-maintenance function: i.e. their dogmatic interpretation of reality and their moral orientation of action.

### **Nationalist Wars**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse we dealt with polymorphous nationalism and the consequent nationalist wars, we came to the insight, that as the human species had differentiated itself into races, thus those races had developed themselves again into nations which often would come into conflict with each other. However, as races could historically differentiate themselves into nations, these nations could also historically reunite themselves again. Religion could play an important role not only in the disunion but also in the reunion of nations. The older resource persons and participants in our discourse on the "Future of Religion" had personally experienced different forms of nationalism in Europe and the Americas, in Africa, Asia, and the Near East. In some cases this nationalism had developed to the extreme of utter fascism and had ignited conflicts among nations even to the extend of two world wars. The first 13 years of our Dubrovnik discourse took place in the united socialist Federation of Yugoslavia. Then in the 1990's, we experienced in Dubrovnik how nationalism in the particular Yugoslav republics, supported by the West, particularly Germany and the Papacy, tore apart the old Yugoslav Federal State. We met in Dubrovnik even during the four years of Yugoslav civil war and brought money and medicine for the wounded and ill civilians of all nationalities. In the first war year I

sometimes even could not recognize my Yugoslav friends any longer: so much their consciousness had been distorted by different nationalisms. All reason seemed to have evaporated. Sometimes we were even shot at like in World War II. Because of our experiences in different parts of the world, some of us in Dubrovnik were inclined to see in nationalism not only an ethical or socio-ethical problem, but also a collective mental illness, which had destroyed more human lives than the worst physical epidemics. The Yugoslav civil war cost the lives of over 200,000 people.

### **Religion as Peacemaker**

However, in Dubrovnik we became aware of the fact, that religion was able not only to support nationalism and thus to become part of the problem, but that it could also be able to overcome nationalism and to heal the illness. We came to the conclusion that there could be no peace among the nations without peace among the world religions; that there could be no peace among the religions without discourse among the religions; and that there could be no argumentative dialogue among the religions without foundation research in the particular religions. We saw one of our tasks in contributing to this fundamental research inside and outside of the different world, in order thereby to promote peace among the world religions and through it peace among the nations.

### **Pacifism**

Of course, we were also aware of the general observation, that pacifists of all types, religious or secular, stand up for peace - except in times of war. In October 2001, Senator McGovern, who as Presidential candidate opposed the Vietnam and who still today thinks he should have resisted it more effectively and who stands weeping at the black wall at Arlington Cemetery with the names of 56,000 fallen Vietnam Veterans, nevertheless today supports wholeheartedly President Bush and his war against Afghanistan. Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize and declared right afterwards that while he was of course for peace, he nevertheless was not a pacifist in terms of the on-going war of the USA against Afghanistan, or of the on-going Israeli war against Palestine: such wars were simply necessary. We may speak of a selective pacifism. In this sense, even Hitler was a pacifist. He talked about peace all the time, even while he made war. When Pope John Paul II returned to the fourth commandment of the Sermon on the Mount - the breaking of the *lex talionis*, i.e., the "eye for eye" in the Torah and the "free man for free man" in the Koran - and told the Muslims to abstain from jihad and the Americans from retaliation, the Vatican was afraid that he was maybe understood as being anti-American, and therefore emphasized once more the old Catholic tradition of the Augustinian "Seven Point Just War Theory," which as selective pacifism had been practiced merely twice in 1500 years. However, in October 2001, the World Bishops Conference in Rome in consensus with the Pope condemned all forms of terrorism. At the same time, they connected causally the terrorism of September 11, 2001 with the increasing inequality between rich and poor nations. The Bishops sent

a moral SOS

to the United States and Western European nations to stop the further globalization of this inequality. All so called Christian nations thought their national wars were just no matter how unjust they may actually have been. Sometimes one may be tempted to agree with the Marquis de Sade, who thought that murdering was natural for men and nations. There are of course also still brave men and women who are not blinded by nationalism - right or wrong my country, love it or leave it - and who are committed to a full pacifism. Two families at least, who lost members in the jihad attack on the World Trade Center, let the President and the nation know that they did not feel that the retaliatory war against Afghanistan was the best way to remember and to honor the victims. The former Attorney General Ramsey Clark was consistent in his pacifism when he opposed the war against Yugoslavia as well as against Afghanistan. Today, Clark defends President Milosovich of Yugoslavia in Den Hag. In any case, in the perspective of the critical theory of religion the brave breaking of the talion is by far more rational - in the sense of communicative rationality and action - than its infinite compulsive repetition.

### **The Non-Identity between Collective and Individual**

Also, while we tried to resolve the modern problem of the religious-secular dichotomy in Dubrovnik, we did in no way neglect to trace the seventh modern problem: the development from the original traditional union of collective and individual, through their modern dichotomy, to their possible post-modern reunion. For the time being we were deeply impressed by the actual non-identity of individual and collective in modern civil society. Many of our discourses and even much of our praxis aimed at global alternative Future III -a society, in which personal autonomy and universal, i.e., anamnestic, present and proleptic solidarity would be reconciled. We thought that the world religions could make a contribution to such reconciliation. As we paid particular attention to the possible connection between the two dichotomies of modern society - the religious/secular and the collective/individual disunion - we opposed any materialistic, or atheistic reduction of the first to the second dichotomy as a scientifically non-permissible simplification.

### **Class Antagonism**

As we traced the dynamic of the modern dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, we did finally in no way forget to pay attention to the eighth antagonism in civil society: the class antagonism. We traced the historical development from a possible primordial matricentric or patricentric classless society through a large variety of class-societies - particularly, the modern ones - to alternative Future III - a possible new classless society which would concretely supersede in itself the personal, social and cultural accomplishments of all the previous class societies. We differentiated between the religions of the lower, middle and upper classes in civil society, and how these classes use religion. We applied ideology critique to religion: ideology understood in the critical sense of false consciousness, of the masking of gender, race, national, individualistic, collectivistic and class interests, or simply as the untruth. We never considered religion to be nothing else than ideology. In any case, we searched for the possible truth core of religion behind its ideological abuse by the upper classes. We also knew always that every truth, particularly the religious truth, has a time core and thus changes from one antagonistic social system to the other: from the primitive through the slaveholder - and feudal - society to the bourgeois and post bourgeois society; from the primitive through the archaic and the historical -

intermediate to the modern and post-modern society. We explored what role religion could possibly play in facilitating the way from the traditional class societies to a possible future classless society. Obviously, there are semantic and semiotic potentials in the depth of religious myths which point to alternative Future III - a society, in which all people would be free: Exodus!

### **The Struggle between the Right and the Left**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane, we could never avoid to trace the modern dichotomy between the Right and the Left. We remembered that this dichotomy arose the first time in the National Assembly in Paris during the great bourgeoisie revolution. Here the representatives of the low bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers, were seated on the Left and the representatives of the middle and high bourgeoisie, the bankers, were seated on the Right. Later on Hegel's school differentiated itself into a Right and a Left. The Right was inclined to consider all religious myths to be historical. The Left was disposed to make all religious history into mythology. The Left held on to Hegel's revolutionary dialectical method. The Right insisted on and preserved the often-conservative content of Hegel's philosophy. The Hegelian Right represented the interests of the bourgeoisie. The Hegelian Left stood up for the rights of the proletariat. The Hegelian Left developed from Hegel through Ludwig Feuerbach, Sören Kierkegaard, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Arthur Schopenhauer to Ernst Bloch and the praxis philosophers, particularly the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School of the first, second and third generation. The Hegelian Right evolved from Hegel through Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Alfredo Pareto, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, to Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Niklas Luhmann and the neo-conservative and deconstructionist theoreticians of modernity. While the Hegelian Center, represented by Arnold Toynbee or Hans Küng, wanted to be open toward the Hegelian Right and Left, it was nevertheless more inclined toward the former than the latter. Around 1989, when the Soviet Empire broke down, scholars on the Right in our Dubrovnik circle tried to announce the end of ideology and simply to cancel the Right-Left dichotomy altogether. However, only too soon we discovered that the division between the Right and the Left couldn't simply be done away with by an ideological fiat. The Right - Left antagonism is deeply rooted in the class structure of late capitalist society and can therefore disappear and become history only with the identity change of modern civil society in direction of alternative Future III - a society in which personal autonomy and universal solidarity will be reconciled, and in which then friendly and helpful living together will really be possible among human beings - cooperation rather than competition. While the new critical theory of religion takes seriously thinkers on the Left, in the Center and on the Right, it places itself nevertheless clearly in the long and great tradition of the Hegelian Left from Hegel, Marx and Kierkegaard to Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Marcuse and Habermas.

### **The Dichotomy between Order and Progress**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse of the past 25 years we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane and the ten other antagonisms in modern civil society, we could never bypass the modern dichotomy between the social order and progress. We concentrated particularly on the historical movement from the feudal order through the

progressive bourgeois revolutions to the new bourgeois order of modern civil society, as well as on the transition from the bourgeois order through the progressive socialist revolutions to societies with a post-bourgeois social order. August Comte, who was the inventor of the words "positivism" and "sociology," and whose work aimed at the right constitution of modern society, was on one hand the heir of the bourgeois emancipation in the French revolution and on the other hand was already fully conscious of the fact that civil society was - as Hegel had put it - pushing beyond itself. For Comte this contradiction expressed itself sociologically in the dichotomy between the principle of order and the principle of progress, i.e., the principle of static and the principle of dynamic. While Comte's teacher Saint-Simon, who still belonged to the revolutionary bourgeoisie, put the main accent on the social progress or dynamic, he himself was already more in sympathy with the social order or static. Comte was already concerned with the issue, how the social progress and dynamic elicited by the bourgeois revolutions could possibly be curbed and limited.

### **The Ambiguity of Productive Forces and Productive Relations**

Instead of the dichotomy of progress and order, Marx, the opponent of Comte and of bourgeois sociology, spoke rather of productive forces and productive relations. Marx's teaching on the productive forces shared with Saint Simon and Comte the technocratic motive: that the technical factor produced progressive social change. However, Marx had nevertheless on one hand the rather optimistic opinion, that the stage, state or level of the technical productive forces had under all circumstances to assert itself as key-category of social change, while on the other hand, he considered the specifically social conditions, the order of property, the productive relations according to the position toward the means of production, as the socially determining factor. Thus, Marx did not answer unambiguously the question as to whether the technical productive forces or the productive relations determined the social process of civil society and world-history: i.e., social progress or order. For Horkheimer's and Adorno's dialectical theory of society, a teaching of the absolute priority of the productive forces, i.e. progress, or of the productive relations, i.e., social static or order, was not possible. It was rather so that the relationship between social order and progress, productive forces and productive relations, changed in accordance with the stage or state of the social struggles in each period of the development of civil society or of world-history. As long as the interests of the rising, still revolutionary bourgeois class were to unleash the productive forces and thus social progress, then a certain equilibrium happened between the productive forces and the productive relations. Thus, Marx was justified to identify the productive forces as key category of social change. However, according to Adorno in the present historical situation of late monopoly-capitalist society, which is fundamentally different from the liberal-capitalist society analyzed by Marx, the productive social relations have simply because of the changed interests of the disposing, no longer revolutionary bourgeoisie the supremacy over the technical forces of production and destruction in spite of all the talk about the so called globalizing industrial society: law and order have the supremacy over social dynamic and progress. According to Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Nichlas Luhmann and structural-functionalism in general there are only two fundamental types of social change: one which destabilizes the social order and one which again restores it. Thus, in the 1960's the rebellious student movement destabilized the American social order and the neoconservative movement under Nixon, Reagan and Bush, father and son, re-stabilized it again. With Habermas's linguistic paradigm change in the critical theory, with his

move from what Hegel had called the human potential of work and tool to the evolutionary universal of language and memory, besides the productive force of technology also public discourse was identified as productive force able to determine social progress and dynamic as well as social order. In the perspective of the new critical theory of religion, insofar as religion has been privatized, ideologized, functionalized, or "highjacked," by the bourgeoisie as contingency-experience-management subsystem of civil society, it definitely stands on the side of social order rather than of social progress. However, insofar as religion maintains its eschatological reservation, its apocalyptic hope and expectation, not only technology and public discourse but also religion can be a productive force and can promote social progress and dynamic in modern civil society. Liberation theologians and Christian base communities have proven this point.

### **The Struggle between the Authoritarian and the Revolutionary Personality**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane and the ten other antagonisms in modern civil society, we could never bypass the modern dichotomy between the authoritarian and the revolutionary personality in civil society. Fromm had discovered and developed the social psychological continuum between the authoritarian or fascist and the revolutionary character in the 1920's. He worked out a social psychological research instrument through which he tried together with three other psychoanalysts, among them Karl Landauer, in the framework of the Institute for Social Research at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M., in the early 1930's to determine the possible victory or defeat of the national socialists in Germany before 1933. After Fromm had emigrated from fascist Germany to the USA he renamed the revolutionary into the democratic personality in order to adapt to the new conservative environment. Fromm's same social psychological instrument was later on used in an investigation concerned with the percentage of authoritarian and democratic personalities in the American labor unions in the 1940's and in a broader segment of the American population in the 1950's, and in a Mexican village in the 1970's. While the authoritarian character evolved psychoanalytically from the anal phase of human sexual development and was a hoarding type, the revolutionary character developed from the genital stage and was a giving type. While the authoritarian personality was fundamentally patriarchal, the revolutionary character preserved in itself matriarchal elements. The authoritarian personality was romantic, nationalistic, pro-capitalistic, sado-masochistic and often racist. The democratic personality was future-oriented, internationally and socialistically oriented, inclined to sublimate aggressions into productive work and opposed to any form of racism. Fromm developed the social psychological concept of an authoritarian and democratic or better humanistic religion. This concept corresponded somewhat to Horkheimer's notion of the bad religion, which legitimated and guided the status quo, and good religion, which demanded that things must become different in direction of the right society. With Fromm and Horkheimer the critical theorists of religion prefers the democratic or revolutionary over the authoritarian or fascist character.

### **The Conflict between the Conscious and the Subconscious**

As in our Dubrovnik discourse we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane and the ten other antagonisms in modern civil society, we could never



bypass the modern dichotomy between the conscious and the subconscious. In the beginning of the 20th century, Freud had discovered the antagonism between the conscious and the unconscious. Freud and Jung agreed that there was not only an individual but also a collective subconsciousness. In order for the development of a healthy person, Freud demanded that where the subconscious Id was the conscious Ego should be. That precisely was Freud's enlightenment program. Like the great world religions, Freud tried to promote the independence of the individual Ego. For Jung modern man was ill because he could not reconcile in himself his consciousness on one hand and his individual or collective subconsciousness on the other. They were supposed to be complementary. Contrary to Freud, Jung was closer to Friedrich Schleiermacher's definition of religion as feeling of dependence. Jung found in religion the symbols which represented the subconscious archetypes of animus, anima and self and their positive and negative aspects and demanded the sacred marriage of the anima and the animus in the self as completion of the individual's individuation process. The critical theory of religion shares in Freud's enlightenment program and thus tries to let as much forgotten content from the personal and collective subconsciousness surface into consciousness. The dialectical theorist of religion tries to conquer forgetfulness and to promote re-membrance and thus self-knowledge of the individual and the collective:

knoti se auton!  
( Know yourself! )

The critical theorist of religion is aware of the intensive and extensive amnesia in modern civil society, which relegates large parts of its history to the subconscious. Even if we put the names of our past university presidents on our buildings, the students have forgotten them as soon as they have retired or died. Priests serve a parish for many years just to find out shortly after their departure that most parishioners can hardly remember that they had ever been there. In so far as there exists in civil society a historical consciousness at all, it is identified with monuments: Pearl Harbor, the Twin Towers in New York, etc. Insofar as there is a historical consciousness at all left in late capitalist society it does not see the present historical epoch as the result of all the earlier stages of world history, in which are synthesized the most modern and the most archaic, primitive and barbarous elements. Germany is not the only country that has repressed the negative aspects of its recent history into its collective subconsciousness in order to be able to develop a new national identity. Other civil societies have done so and are doing so as well. Some of these negative aspects of the collective subconsciousness can easily be recalled to consciousness. Others have been repressed so powerfully that it needs long, hard and painful anamnestic work to bring these negative contents of the collective subconsciousness to the surface of consciousness. The critical theory of religion considers such labor of anamnesis to be absolutely necessary for an identity change in civil society towards alternative Future III - the right society. The dialectical theory of religion is particularly interested in the rescue of the mythical semantic and semiotic material from the depth of the collective subconscious into the secular consciousness of civil society in order thus to enable it to resist more effectively the onslaught of re-barbarization: it will be the right society, or it will be barbarism, or mutual annihilation! Often the twelve antagonisms in modern civil society are forgotten for some time in the everyday life world, or they are at least not made thematic, and are in the structural-functional social sciences even harmonized beyond recognition. However, in the perspective of the critical theory of religion the 14 antagonisms are not resolved by merely being forgotten and

by thus being pushed into the collective subconsciousness. The twelve fundamental dichotomies of civil society can be reconciled only by being made conscious and by being worked through and fought through in a painful process toward alternative Future III. The dialectical theory of religion participates in this work of enlightenment and emancipation.

### **The Tension between Language and Work**

Finally, as in our Dubrovnik discourse during the past 25 years we dealt with the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane, we could never bypass the fundamental modern tension between what Hegel had called the human potential of language and memory on one hand and the evolutionary universal of work and tool on the other. The evolutionary universal of language and memory was formally and materially the very foundation of our discourse. We noticed that the project of modernity had through the centuries been more and more determined by the human potential of work and tool and the instrumental and functional rationality and action rooted in it. To the contrary, the evolutionary universal of language and memory and the mimetic or communicative rationality and action grounded in it was more and more neglected. The same was true of the other human potentials which were characterized by communicative rationality: the evolutionary universals of sexual and erotic love, the struggle of recognition and genuine constitutional national community. Originally the modern project did not only contain the promise of high technology, but also of a friendly and helpful living together of human beings in free associations. Today in late capitalist society we drive in the most advanced and comfortable cars and fly in airplanes in which millions of scientific discoveries and technological inventions are combined most ingeniously, while our friendships, marriages, and families fall apart and while our neighborhoods are dead and while our inner cities deteriorate and while our international relations degenerate continually and while more and more other species disappear around us. While great Western thinkers from Jefferson through Adam Smith and Marx emphasized man's ability to work and to develop always more refined tools, the critical theorists criticized from the very start of the still poetical critical theory of society instrumental rationality. In the second generation of critical theorists made thematic what had long been prepared by the first generation: the shift from the human potential of work and tool, instrumental rationality and action, subject- philosophy, to the evolutionary universal of language and memory and anticipation, mimetic and communicative rationality and action, linguistically mediated interaction, philosophy of undamaged intersubjectivity.

### **Withdrawal of the Mimetic and Communicative Foundation**

In the perspective of the critical theory of religion, as modernity proceeded more and more along the lines of functional rationality, based in the human potential of work and tool, and invested more and more energy into it, there was no need any longer to attack particular religious interpretations of reality or orientations of actions. It rather was so, that modernity withdrew from religion its very foundation: the mimetic and communicative rationality without which the religious interpretations and orientations lose their meaning and can not stand. The world religions felt more and more threatened by the globalization of a modernity which was more and more characterized by functional rationality and tried to defend themselves against it. On the other hand, modernity suffered more and more from a most painful open flank - the lack of communicative rationality - into which religious and political fundamentalisms could launch

their critical attacks. Today the modern overemphasis on instrumental rationality points to alternative Future I - the totally mechanized, automated, cyberneticized, robotized signal society. Weber and Huxley and others foresaw this alternative Future I - the technocratic society. In the 1970s, Horkheimer still thought that we had some time before alternative Future I would arrive and we could still do something maybe to mitigate it. Adorno thought we had already arrived in the totally administered society. Habermas had doubts if a society which would separate itself completely from the human potential of language and memory and would steer itself entirely over the evolutionary universal of work and tool was anthropologically possible at all. In the perspective of the dialectical theory of religion, the task is not to diminish functional rationality - that would lead to greater catastrophes - but rather to increase communicative rationality and to engage in a public discourse - based in it - about the conditions under which alternative Future III could become possible: a society which would be able to struggle successfully for the reconciliation of the fundamental antagonisms of modern civil society between the sacred and the profane, between man and nature, between the genders, between the generations, between the races, between the nations, between the individual and the collective, between the social classes, between the Right and the Left, between social order and progress, between the authoritarian and the revolutionary personality, between the consciousness and the subconsciousness, and between the social interaction and the tool-mediated labor.

### **The Antagonism between State and Society**

As we tried to resolve the modern problem of the religious-secular dichotomy in our Dubrovnik discourse in the past 25 years, we did in no way neglect to trace the fourteenth contemporary problem: the development of the modern differentiation between state and society into an always deeper antagonism and possibly into a future reconciliation. Already Hegel differentiated sharply between civil society and the state: be the state understood as the state of necessity and of analytical understanding, or be it the real state of freedom and dialectical reason. While for Hegel family and civil society were still included in the state legitimated by religion, for Talcott Parsons and Niclas Luhmann a century later family, state and religion were functional subsystems - the pattern maintenance subsystem, the goal attainment subsystem, and the integrative subsystem of civil society and had entirely to function for the survival of the latter. Nevertheless, during the past century there did not only not disappear the difference between civil society and the state of necessity and analytical understanding, but even turned more and more into a deep antagonism. Already for Hegel the state had continually to intervene into civil society in order to police its business cycle and its class struggle. At the same time bourgeois society was driven by its own class-antagonism beyond itself into colonialism, imperialism, and always more generalized wars. So far this dialectic of civil society has never reached the concrete utopia of alternative Future III: the state of freedom and dialectical reason. While the state of necessity and analytical understanding continually supported - mostly militarily - the self-transcendence of civil society, it nevertheless also controlled it, and more so in war than in peace. This control reached its climax wherever the state became socialistic. While in the Soviet Union the state seemed to have swallowed up civil society, in the United States the bourgeois society has the tendency to consume the state. However, also in the United States and in the European Union one can continually observe that the state tries to intervene into civil society in order to protect the workers and consumers from the corporations, and the smaller corporations from the bigger ones. George Soros blames the failure of the return of bourgeois society into

Eastern Europe on the fact that it was attempted without social thought: i.e. without social legislation by which the state has to prevent civil society from committing suicide. While the state is definitely based on family and civil society, the latter also need the former. Today the President of the Russian Republic, Putin, demands not a civil society but a civilized society. He means precisely a civil society, which is under the control of a strong state steered through socio-ethically-informed legislation and its political enforcement. The resolution of the antagonism between civil society and state remains the most fateful task of the Western civilization on the way to alternative Future III: the concrete supersession of civil society and the state of necessity and analytical understanding into a state of freedom and dialectical reason. The dialectical theory of religion struggles against the always threatening totalitarization of modern civil society and to keep open the difference between family, state and religion from late capitalist society in order thus to enable them to carry out their critical function toward a new social identity, instead of being merely highjacked and colonized in the interest of the survival of the bourgeois system of human condition, or action system.

### **Internalization**

In the view of the critical theory of religion, while the 14 dichotomies are located in modern society, state, history and culture, they penetrate nevertheless at the same time also the family and are through it internalized into the individuals and their psychics, or their personality - and character- structures. In the individuals the collective antagonisms turn into most painful psychological contradictions and problems: into neuroses and psychoses. The different schools of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy try to resolve these internalized, now psychological antagonisms. However, even if such psychoanalysis and psychotherapy succeeds in a private clinical situation, finally the patient has to return into the "normal life" of society, state, history, and culture. Here, however, the by now cured patient is exposed once more to the same collective antagonisms which made him ill in the first place. Thus sooner or later the individual returns again as patient to the clinic. Therefore, the 14 antagonisms can not only be attacked on the psychological level, but they must also - and most of all - be dealt with and overcome on the collective level of society, state, history, and culture. Only the right society, which has conquered its irrationalities, i.e. its contradictions, can also be a sane and healthy one. The critical theory of religion can help to fight through and resolve the 14 antagonisms on the individual as well as on the collective level.

### **Dialectic of Enlightenment**

In developing the critical sociology or theory of religion further we tried in Dubrovnik to deduct alternative futures of religion not only from the dialectic between the sacred and the profane, but also more specifically from the dialectic of enlightenment and the dialectic of religion. The present dialectic of enlightenment is the result from the fact that the enlighteners negated the religious mythology only abstractly. They forgot to preserve the semantic and semiotic materials and potentials from the depth of the mythos. Thus the enlightenment became positivistic and shallow. Thus, at the first opportunity it would turn over again into religious or secular mythology: e.g., the mythology of progress. In this sense, the deconstructionists, i.e., disgusted Marxists, can speak of our time as a post-enlightenment period. At present, the consequence of the dialectic of enlightenment is that the further rationalization of modern civil

and socialist society produces more and more irrationality. The further integration of modern bourgeois or socialist society produces more and more disintegration: e.g., the disintegration of marriage and family, neighborhood and religious associations, or of the economic, or of the political subsystems of modern civil or socialist society.

### **Dialectic of Religion**

We discovered not only a dialectic of enlightenment, the degeneration of enlightenment into positivistic enlightenment-ideology, but also a dialectic of religion, the degeneration of religion into an ideology. We saw the religion of truth turning into the ideology of slaveholders, feudal lords and owners of movable capital. We saw the religion of love turning into bloody crusades, into the killing of heretics and witches, into the religion of army chaplains as morale-officers, who for many centuries, blessed the deadly weapons of both hostile armies. In the 20th century, army chaplains blessed even the advanced murder weapons: the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Most recently in India, a Right-wing Hindu Party initiated the first nuclear explosions in Asia by Asians, thereby eliciting the development in and around Pakistan of an

Islamic bomb,

imitating the Western

Trinity-bomb.

Why can't religious people at least stay out of the bombing business and leave it to the profane people? Insofar as religion is obviously not able to do that, it is not amazing that it can no longer resolve the theodicy problem, of which it itself has become so much a substantial part.

### **Fundamentalism**

Taking into consideration the dialectic between the religious and the secular and the dialectic of enlightenment and the dialectic of religion, we identified as alternative Future I the retreat of people into Jewish, Christian or Islamic fundamentalism: the return to the religion of the fathers out of fear of or disgust for the project of modernity; more precisely the dialectic of an enlightenment turning against itself. There is, of course, a price to be paid for such fundamentalist future. The fundamentalist must cut himself off from modern history, or he becomes a hypocrite, who condemns modernity while at the same time he enjoys its fruits: complicated heart operations, cars, airplanes, hospitals, schools, sophisticated weaponry, etc.

### **The Entirely Secularized Society**

We identified as alternative Future II the totally secularized society. People turn to the entirely secularized society out of disgust for religion: more precisely the dialectic of a religion turning against itself. This alternative future of total secularization has many friends in the power elites of the capitalist and socialist societies. However, the modernists or secularists also have to pay a price. For a long time religion has contained in itself the limited and non-

renewable resource of unconditional meaning. It answered the questions concerning the where-from and particularly the where-to, and the center of individual and collective human life. The secularization process has consequentially lead to an endangerment and even actual depletion of the resource of meaning in modern industrial societies. According to Horkheimer, to try to rescue an unconditional meaning without reference to the Absolute is utter vanity. Likewise, it is also utter vanity to try to rescue fundamental validity claims - like truth, honesty, rightfulness, tastefulness, or understandability - without reference to an unconditional meaning, except maybe one that is rooted in speech acts as Habermas would assert. The secularization process has lead not only to the depletion of the resource of meaning but also to the weakening of the fundamental validity claims. As science undermined religious faith, it weakened its own truth claim and its own ability to contribute to the solution of ethical or socio-ethical problems of civil society. Science became itself an enormous ethical problem as it produced through the I.G. Farben Corporation the insecticide Cyclone B which murdered millions of Jews and the first atomic bombs which killed tens of thousand Japanese in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Up to the present, the positive natural or social sciences cannot tell us why it is better to love than to hate, except that it is maybe better for business. But sometimes, it may be better for business to hate: e.g., the Jews in Germany, or the Blacks in the American South. Thus, in terms of meaning, values and norms, the natural and social sciences leave modern society without any guidance whatsoever. The critical theory of religion cannot bypass such massive human problems.

### **Deficiency of Meaning**

In general, the deficiency of meaning leads to boredom, and boredom leads to massive consumption of drugs. The quantity of drugs allows us to conclude the amount of boredom. The amount of boredom tells us to what extent the resource of meaning has already been depleted. Drugs may not only be a supply-side problem. They may also be a demand-side problem. In any case, the modern positive sciences cannot create meaning, at least not yet. Thus, they cannot replace religion: at least not yet. Thus, while technology has replaced magic, religion and science are still living and operating side by side in modern civil and socialist societies.

### **Reconciliation**

As we further developed the dialectical theory of religion, we identified a third alternative Future: the reconciliation of religion and enlightenment. We invited to our discourse on the "Future of Religion" in the IUC, Dubrovnik, for over 25 years enlighteners from the Americas, Eastern and Western Europe, Near East and Africa, who were not only aware of the dialectic of enlightenment, but had also overcome the enlightenment ideology. We also invited believers from different positive religions in different parts of the world, who were not only aware of the dialectic of religion, but who had also overcome the religious ideology. As our Dubrovnik discourse continues into its 26th year, we are developing the critical theory of religion in the direction of a reconciliation between enlighteners, who are conquering the dialectic of enlightenment, and believers who are overcoming the dialectic of religion.

## **Model I**

We have discovered two models of how this reconciliation could come about. There is the older Model I, which we found in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust I and II, and in Ludwig van Beethoven's Missa Solemnis. According to this older model, the secular enlightenment, which had moved away from and against religion, will return and will reunite itself again with it in such a way that neither the absolute content of religious faith is violated, nor dialectical reason. Only analytical understanding has to subordinate itself to both, i.e., dialectical reason and faith in the Absolute and Infinite.

## **Model II**

There is a newer Model II, which we found in Scholem's studies on Jewish mysticism, in Brecht's Marxist poetry, and in Benjamin's and Adorno's attempt to combine Jewish mysticism and historical materialism. According to this newer model, the religious contents must be inverted and must migrate into the discourses of the modern expert cultures and non-Machiavellian and non-social-Darwinistic political action toward global Future III. This future is of a society determined by the friendly and helpful and solidary rather than competitive living together of human beings. Beyond this, global Future III purposefully longs for and moves toward the horizon of the totally Other as the radical but nevertheless determinate negation of the historical continuum of force and counterforce; of crime and punishment; of guilt and atonement; of murderers being murdered for their murdering; of bombers being bombed for their bombing; of the continual mythical sameness, identity and repetitiveness of human fate, even in that, which seems to be modern and new; shortly of the law of the talion. The totally Other is the radical yet determinate negation of all the very personal human perils of loneliness, abandonment, alienation, meaninglessness, illness, aging, dying and death. We can speak of an inverse theology or an inversion model. This inversion paradigm contains a test for the religious contents. Only those religious meanings in the depth of the myths that are able to migrate into the secular discourses and political actions will be able to survive into the future. The dialectical sociologists of religion consider the semantic and semiotic materials and potentials in the depth of the myths to be limited and therefore an endangered resource. They are precisely therefore in need of being rescued as expressions of the non-temporaneous in the contemporaneous for the sake of the humanity of man: e.g., elements from the Bagavagita, from the Babylonian or Hebrew Genesis, from the Book Exodus, from the Decalogue, from the Book of Job, from the Psalms, from the Five Pillars, from the Sermon on the Mount, from the Story of the Good Samaritan, from the Book of Revelation, etc.

## **Three Global Futures**

We learned from the critical theorist and futurologist Ossip Flechtheim to see the future of religion in the wider context of three global futures. We discovered economic, scientific and technological trends in modern civil society, which point toward global Future I: the totally administered or bureaucratic society in a positivistic, socialistic, or fascist form. We identified militaristic trends in modern political states which aim at global Future II - conventional wars and civil wars, NBC wars, ecological catastrophes connected or not connected with wars. Finally, we discovered in the life world of modern societies, including families, neighborhoods,

schools, artistic and religious associations, tendencies toward global Future III - the reconciliation of personal sovereignty and universal solidarity.

### **Probability, Possibility, Desirability**

While global Future I - the totally bureaucratized and computerized, signal society - may in many ways be more just than the present liberal democratic or socialist societies, it may also be more alienated. In this global Future I, religion may be able to continue to exist, but only as contingency-experience-management-subsystem, without any mystical or prophetic aspects. In global Future II, religion will be destroyed together with other social and cultural elements or reduced to the most primitive form. In global Future II, religion could possibly survive in a new communicative form, which would function as corrective against regressive tendencies. While global Futures I and II are not very desirable, they are nevertheless very probable and possible. Global Future II had become less probable and possible after the Soviet Union refused to continue the nuclear armament race with the United States and Western Europe, and disintegrated together with Yugoslavia in the late 1980's and early 1990's. However, global Future II has become more probable and possible again after the Hindu Right-wing party took power in New Delhi, and ignited five nuclear devices, and after a Muslim government in Pakistan reciprocated and followed its bad example, supposedly in self-defense, and exploded five nuclear devices of its own. Also the recent NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, which cost the lives of 10,000 of non-combatants has further increased again the possibility and probability of the nuclear version of global Future II. Since the most recent explosions of 10 nuclear devices in India and Pakistan and the NATO attack on Yugoslavia with all its repercussions in the Slavic population of Eastern Europe, the nuclear clock in New York has moved closer toward 12 o'clock again. While global Future III is very desirable, it is under the present circumstances in liberal democratic and socialist societies unfortunately not very probable or possible.

### **The Tasks**

During its evolution in Dubrovnik and elsewhere, the dialectical sociology of religion has established for itself a variety of tasks. It has to clarify religious phenomena. It has to promote emancipation inside and outside the religious dimension. It has to broaden the positivistically limited and restrained and even crippled human experience: particularly religious sensitivities. It has to overcome the inhuman aspects of the positivistic attitude in the different expert cultures, particularly those dealing with religion. It is to call for revolutionary resistance in the case of acute religiously or secularly motivated, supported and justified fascism. Under more peaceful liberal-democratic conditions in modern civil society, the critical theory of religion has to be engaged in the rescue of semantic and semiotic materials and potentials from the depth of the myths in a religious or secular form for the secular world in its struggle against regression into mythology and barbarism. It has thus to work for the reconciliation of the religious and the secular in terms of Model II. It thereby has also to contribute to the reconciliation of the dichotomies between the genders, the generations, the races, the nations, the individual and the collective, and between the social classes. It must look for religious and ethical motivations to mitigate at least as much as possible global Future I, to resist as much as possible global Future II, and to promote as passionately as possible global Future III.



## **The Dialectical Method**

In our critical theory of religion, we have applied the dialectical method from the very start. It is rooted in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind and Science of Logic. The critical theorist does not impose the dialectical method on the history of religions, but rather tries to discover it inside of its movement. According to the dialectical method, one positive religion negates the previous one: the Syrian Religion or Islam negates Zoroastrianism; Protestantism negates Catholicism; etc. But this negation is not indeterminate but rather determinate; not general, but specific; not abstract, but concrete. As each religion negates the previous one, it also preserves and elevates some of its semantic and semiotic elements. Each new religion combines in itself old and new structures and patterns. Each new religion is more concrete than the previous one concerning its truth claim. The process of the concrete supersession of one religion by the other is not without inner necessity or directionality. It has a goal, which may or may not be known. For Hegel's mostly idealistic dialectic, the goal was known: Christianity, not only as religion of freedom, but also as absolute religion. For the critical theory the mostly materialistically understood dialectical process of the history of religions is open-ended: there is a goal, but it cannot be determined by autonomous reason. For Hegel's mostly idealistic dialectic, the truth was the whole also in relation to the history of religions. No particular positive religion was or had the absolute truth. Each following religion was the truth of the previous one. Only the totality of the history of religions was absolutely true: and was as such a real theodicy. For the critical theorist's mostly materialistic dialectic the whole is still the untruth up to the present: also in relation to the history of religions. It has not yet been established. It is still in the process of becoming.

## **Proper and Genus Names**

While, indeed contrary to the traditional, positivistic social sciences, the critical theory of religion does not impose its dialectical method - determinate negation - from outside on its material - the history of religions - but rather tries to discover it in its movement, in its and regularities, there remains nevertheless the question: how does that happen in detail? Here is a short explanation via the examples of Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The critical theorist remembers that the nominalistic bourgeois enlightenment stopped short of the proper name: the nomen, the punctual notion without circumference. For the dialectical sociologists it is questionable whether the proper names were originally also genus names. However, the critical theorists are certain that the proper names have so far not yet suffered the fate of the genus names. The positivists David Hume and Ernst Mach have denied the ego-substance: the ego could not be rescued. However, for the dialectical sociologists the ego-substance, which has been denied by the positivists, is not the same as the name.

## **Jewish Religion**

In the perspective of the critical theory, the idea of the patriarchy escalated into the liquidation of the mythos in the Jewish religion of sublimity. However, in the Jewish religion the bond between the name and being remains recognized through the third commandment of the Mosaic Law: through the prohibition against the expressing of the name of God. The demythologized and disenchanting world of Judaism has reconciled the magic and the fetishism

through their negation in the idea of God. The Jewish religion does not tolerate any word that would grant consolation to the desperation of everything mortal. In Judaism, hope is connected alone with the prohibition against the invocation of the false as God: of the finite as the Infinite; of the lie as the truth. The guarantee of the rescue lies alone in the turning away from all faith, which would like to take its place and to substitute itself for it. Genuine knowledge is found in the denunciation of the illusion and the delusion. In Judaism this negation has not been abstract, but rather concrete, or specific, or determinate. The dialectical sociologist of religion traces such concrete negation not only through the history of Judaism and its particular paradigms, but also through the history of other world religions before and after it as well.

### **Hinduism and Buddhism**

In the view of the dialectical sociology of religion, Buddhism, the religion of inwardness, denied in a most undifferentiated way everything positive on this earth. Buddhism applied the stereotypical formula of invalidity, triviality, and vanity to all things. For the Buddhist, the world is simply nothing. According to the critical theorist, Buddhism thereby violates the prohibition against naming the Absolute as much as does its opposite: traditional pantheism, as it is intrinsic to Hinduism, the religion of imagination; or modern pantheism, e.g., that of Baruch Spinoza; or its grimace, the modern bourgeois skepticism, which knows nothing else than a general or abstract negation, for which the good and the bad are likewise a matter of vanity; or bourgeois cynicism as the general negation of the true as well as of the untrue. For all forms of pantheism the world is all there is. In this context, as the critical theorist sees it, religion - as the longing and the hope that the murderer shall not at least ultimately triumph over his innocent victim - makes no sense whatsoever. The critical theory of religion presupposes for its definition of religion Judaism and Christianity and Islam, not as religions of nothing or being but rather as religions of becoming.

### **The Right of the Image**

For the critical theorist of religion, the explanation of the world as nothing, as we find it in Buddhism, or as all and everything, as it appears in traditional and modern pantheism and in its distortion, bourgeois skepticism, or cynicism, are all mythologies. Their guaranteed paths to redemption are sublimated magical and fetishistic practices. The pantheistic contentment with knowing everything already ahead of time and the Buddhist transfiguration of the negative itself into redemption are untrue forms of resistance against fraud. The right of the image is rescued only in the faithful execution of the second commandment of the Decalogue: the prohibition against making images of God. Such faithful execution is, to be sure, not an abstract but a determinate negation of the image. Such concrete negation of the image is at work not only in the head of the dialectical sociologist, but also in the history of religions itself, as well as in the history of art and of philosophy. The critical theorist must admit that such specific negation of the image is not safe from the seductive perception of the abstract notion, as is bourgeois skepticism or cynicism on the basis of the vanity of the false as well as of the true. The bourgeois skeptic asks ironically with the mass murderer Pontius Pilate:

What is truth?

Dialectic or determinate negation does not reject the incomplete representations of the Absolute, the idols, as idealistic rigorism by opposing to them the idea, which they can never satisfy. The dialectic or concrete negation rather reveals every image as a script. Dialectic teaches the reader to read out of the traits of the image its admission of its falseness, which tears away from its power and attributes it to the truth. Thereby, for the dialectical sociologist of religion, language becomes more than a mere system of signs, which it is already for the many forms of contemporary positivism.

## **Enlightenment**

In the view of the critical theorist of religion, with the notion of dialectic or determinate negation, Hegel, one of the great prototypical thinkers of the dialectical sociology, has emphasized an element in his *Phenomenology of Mind* and *Science of Logic*, which has differentiated sharply bourgeois enlightenment from its positivistic decay, to which he sometimes attributed the former, calling it a shallow enlightenment. However, so the critical theorist must criticize, in so far as Hegel made known the result of the whole process of determinate negation, the totality in system and history including the history of religions, into the Absolute after all, also he himself violated the second and third commandment of the Decalogue, the prohibition against making images of God and against naming him, and thus closed up and arrested his own dialectic, and thereby fell back into mythology, in spite of the fact, that he knew better. Hegel fell victim to the dialectic of enlightenment, which he himself had - following Kant - discovered and formulated. However, Hegel's gravestone in the Dorothean Cemetery in Berlin, Germany, is an altar, which does not only indicate the mythical sacrifice of nature to spirit in world history, particularly in the history of religions, but also man's post-mythical liberation and redemption. In any case, the at least partial regression into mythology did not only happen to Hegel's dialectical philosophy as an alleged apotheosis of the progressing thought, but also to all three modern enlightenment movements as well: the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment. Not only Hegel, but also Marx and Freud became victims of the dialectic of enlightenment. The same is true for Nietzsche. The at least partial regression to mythology happened to the modern enlightenment in spite of the fact that it understood itself as the soberness, through which it believed to differentiate itself from Hegel and from all mythology, theology and metaphysics once and for all.

## **Open Dialectic**

The critical theory of religion concretely negates in itself German idealism from Kant to Hegel, as well as the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment movements in terms of an open dialectic, being at work in world history in general and in the history of religions in particular. Thus, for the dialectical sociologist of religion, Christianity can no longer be - as it had been for Hegel - the absolute religion, which contains in itself, as religion of concrete freedom, all the essential aspects of the previous positive religions - measure, imagination, inwardness, light and darkness, good and evil, pain, riddle, sublimity, beauty, fate and utility - and thus constitutes the end of the history of religions. However, it is nevertheless still for him, as it had been for Hegel, the most progressed religion of becoming and of concrete freedom. Likewise, dialectical sociology concretely supersedes in itself the world humanisms as religions in inheritance.

## **The Comparative Method**

In our dialectical sociology of religion we have applied not only the dialectical, but also the comparative method from its very start. We have compared the semantic and semiotic materials and potentials in the different world religions as each newer one determinately negates the previous one: resurrection, angels, spirit, redemption etc. As we have compared the meaning- and sign-material in different religious mythologies, we always remained aware of the time factor. We also remained conscious of the fact that not all mythologies, as they follow each other in time, operate on the same qualitative level. The Germanic mythologies are simply not on the same level with the Greek mythologies in terms of the power of thought contained in them. More concretely, we have traced comparatively, e.g., the iconoclasm from China to Eastern and Western Europe; the Trinitarian motif from different forms of Taoism and Hinduism through Neo-Platonism to different forms of Christianity; the political-theological motif of domination and liberation from the Far East through the Near East to the West as important elements in the humanization process of man. Of course, in such comparative, dialectic sociology of religion the question of religious and human progress cannot be avoided. It seems to be the destiny of man on his long progressive march from animality to freedom also to liberate himself from the mythos, which totalizes his life world, and which interprets away the negative without negating it in the natural or social reality, and precisely thereby keeps him chained to nature and to his fate. Genuine human progress must move beyond the mythos, but without losing its limited, irreplaceable and unrenewable semantic and semiotic material and potential.

## **The Essential Organ**

It is one essential organ of the critical theory of society in general and of the dialectical sociology of religion in particular to comprehend things that present themselves as being immediately existing and at hand and thereby as given by nature, in their being mediated and having come about historically. This organ of the critical theory of society and of religion can receive the simple form, that only what has come about historically presents itself from the very start in such a way, that its possible future transformation also comes into view. The historically constituted contradiction between the notion of religion on one hand, and what becomes of it in history and in different social contexts on the other, is an essential organ of the dialectical sociology of religion. If one abstracts from the social and historical aspects of religion, then a critical theory of religion is not possible at all any longer. The medium of the dialectical theory of society and of religion, from which the dominant, traditional social sciences abstract to a large extent, is precisely and essentially to be looked for in the constitutive character of history in its most genuine and emphatic sense for society and religion. In the dominant, positivistic social sciences there exists indeed a strong tendency to cut off more or less completely the historical dimension.

## **Anti-Historical Attitude**

For the dialectical sociologist of religion, the sharpest expression for this anti-historical attitude of the traditional social sciences is the famous phrase of Henry Ford:

History is bunk!

The same anti-historical formulation was in principle anticipated already in the last great speech of Mephistopheles at the end of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust II*, at the occasion of Faust's death, in a dialogue about him with the Chorus:

Mephistopheles: No joy could sate him, no bliss satisfy.  
He chased his changeful vision to the last;  
This final moment, paltry, void, and dry,  
The poor wretch wants to hold it fast.  
Time masters him who could withstand  
My power, the old man lies here on the sand.  
The clock has stopped -

Chorus: Has stopped. As death-still as the midnight.

Mephistopheles: It falls. And "it is finished" (John 19:30).

Chorus: And all is over.

Mephistopheles: Over! Stupid word!  
Does it make sense?  
Over, and sheerest naught, total indifference!  
All this creating comes to what? To make things as if they were not.  
"A thing is over now!" What does that mean?  
The same as if the thing had never been,  
yet circles round and round as if it were.  
Eternal emptiness I still prefer!

Today of course, Mephistopheles and Ford have both become history. But are they therefore simply bunk? Hardly so!

### **Anamnestic Solidarity**

Contrary to Goethe's Mephistopheles, or Fordism, or Taylorism, or scientific management, or behaviorism, or the structural-functional system theories, or cognitivism, etc., the critical theory of religion resists the compulsive amnesia of industrial society and thus, does not consider history to be bunk, and does not repress it, but remembers it continually and lets it migrate into the presently lived moment in order to enlighten it by letting it understand itself as the result of the past experiences and events. For example, it does not want to forget the innocent victims of the crash of Flight 800 near New York simply in order to renew or increase the profitability of TWA. The dialectical sociology of religion is characterized by the anamnestic solidarity with the innocent victims of history. Certainly the critical theory is part of the modern enlightenment and thus negates the world religions. Enlightenment, de-mythologization, disenchantment, de-ritualization, de-authorization must happen on man's long march from animality to freedom, collectively and individually. The critical theorist must ask if Transcendence without countermovement is really possible? However, this negation of religion is not abstract,

but rather determinate. The dialectical sociology of religion seeks not only to critically negate religious mythology, but also to preserve its relevant semantic and semiotic material and to elevate it and to fulfill it by letting it migrate into the secular discourses of the everyday life world as well as of the scientific expert cultures, and into communicative action in support of a profane world, which is desperately struggling against the return of barbarism, indicated e.g., by an increase in death penalty, torture, genocide, civil wars, undeclared conventional wars, bombardments of civilian populations, hate crimes, abortion, suicide etc.: shortly a massive outbreak of necrophilous behavior. As once the myths stood between culture and barbarism, e.g., more specifically between marriage and prostitution, so in the future a communicative or discourse ethics may separate them, which contains in itself the dreams and the meanings that have been rescued from the depth of the Old World religions.

### **Conscious-making and Rescuing Critique**

The critical theory is conscious making critique of religion. It is ideology and mythology critique. However, the dialectical sociology is also a saving critique of religion. Only as such critique, which saves some of the important contents of mythology, the critical theory of religion understands itself also as ideology critique of the world religions, as well as of the dominant, traditional, positive sciences of religion, which reflect upon them: psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, theology of religions. For the dialectical sociology of religion, truth results from the concrete negation of ideology as untruth. Certainly the critical theory of religion is not willing, first to critically negate the traditional religious mythologies, in order then to fall victim to the modern, secular mythology of scientific and technological progress as the solution to all human problems, be they medical or social. The critical theorist is not willing to commit the idiocy of hypostatizing positive science into a new religion, no matter how great the temptation may be to do so in a secularized, science and technology based civil or socialist society. He will not allow such loss of nerve.

### **Social Law**

For the critical theory of society and religion, the constitutive meaning of history shows itself most radically in the notion of the social law. From the perspective of the dialectical theory of society and religion the famous differentiation between the nomothetical and the ideographical approach, or between the natural sciences that search for generalizing laws, and the social sciences that research the value of a singular phenomenon, in which a social or cultural good realizes itself, is so problematic precisely because there are of course obviously and self-evidently not only natural but also social regularities. However, these social laws differentiate themselves constitutively from the laws of the natural sciences precisely through the form of their own historicity. The form of the natural-scientific law is in general:

always when, then...

Whenever this or that is given in nature, when this or that natural condition is fulfilled, then this or that effect comes about. Contrary to this, the fundamental form of the social law is:

after this or that has happened in the social world, after the society has unfolded itself in this and no other direction, then this or that social event shall come about with high probability.

This high probability of the arrival of a social event can be defined through the notion of  
objective tendency....

Thus, the form according to which the social laws direct themselves is not

always when, then...,  
but rather the form  
after ... then.  
In this  
After

is present of course constitutively the element of social and historical time, and thereby the whole historical dimension. In the perspective of the dialectical sociology, social laws and tendencies are at work not only in society, but also in culture, and particularly in religion.

### **The Notion of Fact**

The notion of fact, which is - together with method - the idol of the present traditional social sciences, including the positive sciences of religion, is among other things characterized by being presented as something timeless: as punctual presence. That is one very exact reason for the fact, that the empiricism in the positive social sciences, including the traditional sciences of religion, cuts off - paradoxically enough - experience. This is so, insofar as this punctuality of presence, this

that is the case

which abstracts from the immanent historicity of the fact and from its historical implications, absolutizes and reifies that which in reality has come about as something, into being simply the way it is and which cannot be otherwise. Anti-metaphysical positivism is nevertheless the metaphysics of

what is the case.

However, that absolutization of what is the case has an enormous consequence, because as the fact is absolutized and as the genesis of the social or religious datum disappears, it appears as something entirely given and natural, and therefore also as something which in principle can no longer be changed. Anti-mythical positivism nevertheless shares the mythical belief, that Chronos, the god of time, who gives birth to his children and then kills them again, can indeed be castrated. Precisely therefore, the positivist's elimination of the historical dimension is an essential instrument to sanction and to justify ideologically what is at hand, the status quo of industrial society. To the contrary, the critical theory of religion emphasizes this connection as a

correction against the danger that it itself degenerates into a merely deductive system. In any case, for the dialectical sociologist of religion with the elimination of the genesis of the social and religious phenomena, from which the traditional social sciences abstract, disappears also the perspective toward that, which could possibly become of those facts, data, and phenomena in the future.

### **The Reification of Consciousness**

For the dialectical sociology of religion there exists a connection between the reification of consciousness and the established traditional social sciences including the positivistic sciences of religion. The reified consciousness lets the object coagulate into something solid and hard, while at the same time it makes it into a punctual moment, in terms of something in itself thingified, i.e., in terms of a system of notions, which is constructed according to the model of a functioning machine. That what is nothing else than the

here and now,

namely the fact, coagulates and becomes hard precisely through its establishment into that very moment without past or future. The merely momentary and the thing-like character of the social or religious datum, these extreme opposites coincide nevertheless insofar as they both abstract from the constitutively historical sphere. This stands in absolute contradiction to the very object of the social sciences, the society, including culture and particularly religion, which is a functional life process. This life process is a descriptive concept of human beings living at a certain point in time, and cannot at all be comprehended in any other way than historically. This is so, because the functional, living and dynamic character of society, including culture and specifically religion, cannot present itself at all except in the dimension of time. As the traditional social sciences, including the positivistic sciences of religion, abstract from this dimension of time, their scientific methods falsify and distort the thing, i.e., the society, the religion, once more, by arresting and bringing to a false standstill in their momentary state and condition the social, and cultural, and particularly religious phenomena, which as such are - in terms of their regularity and lawfulness - necessarily on the move and in motion.

### **Status Quo**

The critical theorist of religion is aware of the fact that the status quo is a main category of the present-day ideology in civil society. In the perspective of dialectical sociology, this category constitutes the blindness of the anti-historical traditional social sciences, including the positivistic sciences of religion, against the immanent, developmental tendencies in society and religion, and thereby against what is really decisive in these objects: namely, that these sciences really have to recognize where this antagonistic social totality wants to move tendentially, and to deduct from this if and how one may intervene positively or negatively into this tendency. The traditional social sciences, including the sciences of religion, which are directed toward what is momentary and which call themselves empirical, are without experience in the emphatic sense precisely by neglecting in principle the time dimension: social facts or religious data have come about in time. In general, the subjective weakness of the memory of the individual, which hangs together with the category of the ego-weakness, that was discovered by psychoanalysts in the



1920s and which has intensified in recent decades, is one of the decisive traits of the civil and socialist societies' newly arising heteronomy. In the view of the dialectical sociology of religion, all reification is a falling into oblivion. For the critical theory of religion, critique really means remembrance and the rescue of memories, often in the form of narratives. Critique means to mobilize in the social or religious phenomena precisely that dynamic through which they became what they are now, and thereby to become aware of the possibility that they could also have become something other. Critique thereby also means to become conscious that such phenomena can still become something other than what they are factually right at this time. In any case, for the dialectical sociology of religion critique is precisely a rescuing of remembrance. The critical theorist of religion agrees with Baal Shem Tov, an early master of Hasidism, that

Forgetfulness leads to exile,  
while remembrance is the secret of redemption.

### **Between Religion and Positivism**

The critical theory of religion moves between the extremes of the religious and the secular: revelation and autonomous reason, monotheism and radical enlightenment, theology and genuine science. Therefore as a form of autonomous philosophy and reason, it must differentiate itself clearly from religion on one hand and from positivism on the other. Already half a century ago, the positivists Sidney Hook, John Dewey, and Ernest Nagel differentiated sharply between scientific and unscientific statements. According to the positivists - who presented the standpoint most opposed to the one proposed here in the form of the dialectical theory of religion, on one hand the validity of unscientific, e.g., religious statements, was decided by personal feelings. On the other hand, the validity of scientific judgments was established by methods of public verification open to all who submitted themselves to its disciplines. The term discipline denoted the rules codified in the most advanced manuals and successfully used by scientists in laboratories.

### **Procedures**

Certainly, so the critical theorist of religion must admit, these procedures are typical of contemporary ideas about scientific objectivity. However, in the perspective of the dialectical sociology of religion, the positivists seem to confuse such procedures with truth itself. Science should expect philosophical thought, as put forward by either philosophers, e.g., the critical theorists of society, or by scientists, to account for the very nature of truth rather than simply to boost scientific methodology as the ultimate definition of truth. Positivism dodges the issue by contending, that philosophy, e.g., the critical theory, was merely the classification and formalization of scientific methods. The positivists present as such formalization the postulates of semantic criticism as, e.g., the postulate of relatedness, or the principle of the reduction of complicated statements to elementary propositions as they supposedly occur, e.g., in the critical theory of society or of religion. By denying an autonomous philosophy, e.g., an autonomous critical theory, and a philosophical concept of truth, the positivists hand science over to the hazards of the historical development of civil or socialist society. Because science is an element of the social process, its investiture as arbiter veritatis would make truth itself subject to changing social standards. Civil or socialist society would be deprived of any intellectual means

of resistance to a bond that social critics have always denounced: the connection between truth and procedures, truth and methodologies, truth and classification and formalization, truth and historical and social development, or truth and particular, always changing social norms and values. Of course, also the authoritarian, dogmatic and positivistic language-regulation against the use of words like truth or meaning, does not really resolve the positivistic dilemma.

### **The Organization and the Spirit of Science**

The critical theorists of religion must admit that even in fascist Germany the notion of Nordic mathematics, physics, biology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, e.g., the scientific measurements of racially different Germanic roundheads and Semitic peakheads, domed skulls framing a noble and worthy mind and peaked skulls concealing a crafty mind and similar nonsense, played a greater role in political propaganda than in the universities. But this, so the dialectical sociologist of religion must insist, was due to the momentum of science itself and to the requirements of German armament rather than to any attitude of positivist philosophy. It after all reflects the character of science at a given historical stage of civil or socialist society. If in fascist Germany organized science had yielded completely to the Nordic requirements, and had accordingly crystallized a consistent methodology, the positivists would eventually have had to accept it. This would have happened in fascist Germany just as elsewhere where positivism has accepted the patterns of empirical sociology shaped by administrative needs and conventional restrictions - and most of all by the powerful trend toward alternative Future I - the totally bureaucratized, computerized, robotized signal society. Certainly those enemies of human kind, like Hitler and Dr. Joseph Goebbels, had the greatest confidence in scientific methods no matter if they were used in Penemünde or in the Berlin ministry of propaganda. The German fascist ministry of propaganda consistently used controlled experimentation, testing all values by their causes and consequences, as any positivist would do. Like any existing religious or political creed, science can be used to serve the most diabolical social forces, e.g., through developing Cyclone B, or the atomic or hydrogen bomb and the corresponding delivery systems. Scientism is no less narrow-minded than militant positive religion. Certainly, if Hitler and Goebbels had won World War II, they would have been praised as the greatest positivists of the age. By compliantly making science the theory of philosophy, positivism disavows the spirit of science itself. Great German scientists, like Werner von Heisenberg and his students, e.g., Ivan Supec, were and are consistently opposed to positivism in all its forms. While the critical theory of religion must surely differentiate itself sharply from all forms of positivism, it must nevertheless negate positivism not abstractly but rather determinately and concretely, i.e., it must not only criticize it, but also preserve and elevate some of its great accomplishments: e.g. the method of sampling, which the positivists have developed to perfection in the positive social sciences.

### **No Relapse into Mythology**

Already half a century ago positivists had admitted that positivistic philosophy did not rule out on a priori grounds the existence of supernatural entities, forces, agents or agencies. If the critical theorist of religion takes this positivistic admission seriously, he may expect under certain social and historical circumstances, the resurrection of exactly the same entities, spirits, angels, devils, all kinds of divine agents and agencies, whose exorcism was the very core of

scientific thinking and enlightenment as a whole during the past 400 years of modernity: a relapse into mythology. As a matter of fact, already long before the Hellenistic and modern enlightenment movements each new religion denounced as superstitious non-entities the divine agents and agencies of the previous one: e.g., Judaism in relation to the Persian, Syrian and Egyptian religions, or Christianity in relation to the Greek, Roman and Germanic religions, or Islam in relation to the matriarchal religions on the Arabic Peninsula. Contrary to all this, under the present conditions of globalizing late capitalist society certain forms of positivism, e.g., cognitivism, seem - at least in some of their quarters - to consent to such a relapse into mythology as they speak once more of divine agents and agencies. They have become victims of the dialectic of enlightenment. Since these forms of positivism still oppose at the same time theology, we may assume that they do not want to give back again to those divine agents and agencies the reality which they had once been deprived of by their positivistic predecessors, but that they rather want to explore them not ontologically but rather psychologically simply because they are still existing and being the case in some parts of humanity. They try to find the roots of these constant divine agencies and agents not in the external reality or in the personal unconscious of the individual and not even in the collective unconscious of the human species, but rather in the human mind-brain. However that may be, the critical sociology of religion opposes any relapse into mythology, no matter in which form it may happen, in a religious or secular form.

### **The Promises of Science**

In the perspective of the critical theory of religion, in the present period of civil or socialist society, the progressive ideas of the bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment can be rescued only when they are determinately negated: i.e., criticized as well as preserved, elevated and fulfilled. In late capitalist society the antagonism between religion and secular positive science as well as their functions have changed completely. Within the total positivistic mobilization of man and nature which is taking place in present civil society in direction of alternative Future I, positive science has become one of the most destructive instruments. This is true not only in relation to the implication of positive science in the construction of the most advanced murder weapons in two world wars and in the following period of global class struggle. Positive science has also become destructive in terms of its original promise of enlightenment, understood as a process in which man would be freed from his fears and would be made master of his fate. Instead, positive science has produced new and even greater fears and has even strengthened the enslavement to fate. As this enlightenment promise of science evaporated into an abstract utopia in civil and socialist society, the name "scientific" became almost identical with the denunciation of alternative global Future III - a society in which personal autonomy and universal solidarity would be reconciled. For quite some time now, the scientific attitude has ceased to be the militant antagonist of religion, or mythology, or superstition. A positivistic sociologist may try to make peace with religion by saying that it is good, i.e., eufunctional for the survival of civil society, in spite of the fact that it is not true: true in the sense of correctness of scientific statements.

## **The Promise of Religion**

On its part, religion has also effectively and successfully discarded its own promises: its own explosive elements, its own apocalyptic thorn in the flesh, its own eschatological reservation. Often religion has accustomed its believers to a good conscience in the face of enormous suffering and guilt in the surrounding antagonistic civil society. In Western civilization, the functions of positive religion and positive science, which since the beginning of modernity have been contradictory, have in many ways become complementary in the interest of the survival of bourgeois society. Through their present usage in industrial society, religion as well as science deny the longings and the hopes which they once aroused. They now teach men and women to appreciate the facts and what is the case in a world of extreme commodification, reification and alienation and the consequent most cruel amnesia. In this sense, religion is no longer the illusion which it once was for the bourgeois, Marxist and Freudian enlighteners and for the whole history of positivism up to recently. Even the academic promotion of positive religion falls often very much in line with the still predominant positivistic trend in civil society. However, so the critical theorist of religion argues, where religion still preserves in itself the uncompromised aspirations for peace and happiness, its so-called illusions have still a higher truth-value than a positive science that works for their elimination. In the perspective of the dialectical theory of religion, the repressed and transfigured content of religion certainly cannot be liberated by surrendering it to the positivistic attitude, particularly not when positivism falls victim to the dialectic of enlightenment and regresses into mythology. To the contrary, it is the task of the dialectical sociology of religion to liberate the semantic and semiotic potential in the depth of the mythos precisely by letting it migrate and be inverted into the secular discourse among the expert cultures and into communicative and political praxis directed against alternative Future I and II and toward alternative Future III.

## **Reductionism**

Contrary to the positivists, theologians wonder if the critical theory of religion protects itself sufficiently against the theological accusation of reductionism. The theologians question whether there is not something the Christian faith has to offer to which the Frankfurt School has been blind so far. There is in Christianity the issue of repentance and forgiveness. Forgiveness is the indispensable condition for starting out anew. According to the Christian standpoint, there is the gift - or grace - dimension in human life and history. The project of universal freedom and solidarity is not a Promethean undertaking. Since Christians are - in terms of the original sin - broken and fallible, they can dare to commit themselves to the struggle for emancipation only because they believe that a transcending liberating Power is operative in the movement of history. Finally, there is for the Christians the extraordinary conviction that justice and freedom are values for the sake of which a person may even sacrifice his or her own life. Christians believe that secular persons may very well participate in these spiritual currents without articulating their convictions. Christians, nevertheless have a language for the mystery of redemption that is actually operative everywhere. Of course, that Christians have the discourse and the liturgy does not necessarily mean that this mystery of redemption is more powerful in them than in others. According to the Christian theologians, a critical theory of religion must show that even the supernatural aspects of religion have, or can have, an emancipatory impact and that their absence endangers the movement of liberation and redemption.

## **Revelation or Autonomous Reason**

While the critical theory of religion may be open for the development of a critical political theology, it is itself not a theology. It does not rest in a specific religious faith or revelation, but rather in autonomous reason. Of course, the originally mostly Jewish Frankfurt School had not at all been blind to repentance, forgiveness, new beginnings, the original sin, the brokenness and fallibility of man, the gift dimension, the liberating Transcendence, and the sacrifice of life for freedom and justice, or redemption. How otherwise could Horkheimer, the initiator of the critical theory of society and the Frankfurt School, have possibly asked that the second verse of Psalm 91 would be written on his gravestone in the cemetery of Bern, Switzerland:

In you, Eternal One, alone I trust!

But even if the original Frankfurt School would have been blind to such religious issues, that would not mean that the new critical theory of religion, which derived from it, and which is developed here would, or could, or should not be concerned with or appreciate all these theological contents and concerns. Furthermore, since the dialectical theory of religion is also comparative, it discovers and appreciates similar semantic and semiotic material in other world religions and world humanisms as well. There is no reason why the dialectical theory of religion should not try to allow all such semantic and semiotic potentials to migrate into secular discourse and praxis.

## **No Defeatism of Reason and no Hubris**

While the critical theorist of religion opposes any defeatism of reason, he is fully aware of the fact that autonomous reason must continually be checked and protected against all forms of hubris and arrogance. Here religious faith may very well play an important critical role. In the perspective and in the interest of alternative global Future III, it is true that the critical theorist of religion is closer to, what Carl Schmitt has called, the Prometheus-Christians than to the Epimetheus-Christians. Finally, in spite of the fact that the critical theory of religion is only too willing to rescue and include biophilous elements from the depth of the mythos it must nevertheless also be reductionistic in terms of necrophilous theological material: such material cannot and should not migrate from the depth of the mythos into the secular discourse among the expert cultures and into communicative and political action against all forms of re-barbarization. There are negative elements - violence, curses, murder, fraud, regressions, reactionary and counterrevolutionary tendencies, betrayals, aggressiveness, stupidity etc., - present in all world-religions, which should be forgotten and should not be taught any longer to a new generation, and thus should not and must not have a future. There should be no *lex talionis* i.e., bloody revenge, retaliation, retribution, and no crusade, inquisition, or jihad, any longer. Thus, there is not only a bad, positivistic or scientistic reductionism, the abstract negation of religion, but also a critical and good reductionism directed against necrophilous elements in the world religion and toward alternative global Future III - a biophilous society.

## **Necrophilous Elements**

The critical theory of religion must question the necrophilous elements in religious traditions with a practical intent. How can one possibly fight against the barbarous death penalty in modern civil, or socialist, or fascist societies on the basis of a mythos which sentences to death the first parents and all following generations of the human species? How can one possibly resist the brutality and criminality of modern security organizations, services, and forces like the KGB, the Gestapo, the Stasi, the CIA, etc., against the background of centuries of Holy Inquisition? Hitler compared Himmler with Ignatius of Loyola. Tillich compared the SS with the Jesuits. Would the history of the 20th century maybe not look less murderous, if the world religions had made as great a contribution to the biophilous aspects of the socialist revolutions as indeed they did make to the necrophilous tendencies in the liberal and fascist counterrevolutions all around the globe throughout the 20th century up to the present? How can one prevent concentration camps in the future against the background of a mythos which asserts the prescience of God: he knew that the fascist concentration camps would happen from the very start of creation, but he created a world nevertheless in which almost everybody eats everybody and maintains it and does not interrupt its horrible historical continuum of force and counterforce, of crime and punishment, of guilt and atonement, shortly of the talion as moral reflection of the equivalence principle of society as an economic exchange process? Thus, in this understanding, God made possible, let happen, and willed Auschwitz and Treblinka and Buchenwald and all the horror of the 20th century for which these names stand. Contrary to theology, the dialectical sociology of religion cannot of course avoid asking the most painful question: has there ever been, or is there now, or will there ever be any divine countermovement whatsoever responding to man's transcendence in the form of prayers and sacrifices; responding to the miserable outcry of the oppressed creatures in a heartless world. The critical theorist of religion, who is driven, inspired, motivated and guided not only by alternative Future III but also and even much more so by the longing and the hope for the totally Other than what is the case in the present unredeemed society, must continually struggle for the unconditional truth and meaning, which no positive science can offer and provide.

## **Transcendence**

Following the critical theorists of society from Horkheimer and Adorno to Habermas, the dialectical theorist of religion emphasizes what connects monotheism and radical enlightenment: the moment of unreified Transcendence. Such Transcendence grants first of all to the ego, which is held captive in its external and internal environments, a certain distance to the world as a whole and to itself. Thereby, the moment of Transcendence opens up a perspective without which personal autonomy and universal solidarity, rooted in the human potentials of language and memory, love and mutual recognition, cannot be required. However, the element of Transcendence which monotheism and radical enlightenment have in common does not in any way touch upon or change the fundamental conviction of the critical theorist of religion inherited from Benjamin, Adorno and Habermas that nothing of theological content can and will continue unchanged. Every theological content will have to stand the test of migrating into life-friendly secular discourse and praxis. However, this secularizing integration of theological contents into the universe of argumentative discourse and solidary and friendly and helpful living together is the very opposite of the neo-pagan regression into mythology and magic rituals which is

spreading in present civil society. The migration of theological content into the secular cannot and must not fall behind that self understanding of personal sovereignty and universal solidarity, that entered world-history for the first time with the teachings of the Jewish and Christian and Islamic prophets.

### **Division, Discourse and Potentials**

This work on *The Longing for the Totally Other: Rescue of the Hopeless* is divided up into four volumes. Each volume differentiates itself into discourse periods, which have taken place in a particular year: from 1797 to 2001. We understand discourse as argumentative dialogue. Furthermore we comprehend discourse as future oriented remembrance of human suffering with the practical intent to diminish it. Discourse is rooted in what Hegel called the human potentials of language and memory and of the struggle for recognition. Hegel had developed his dialectical philosophy out of five human potentials: language and memory, work and tool, sexuality and eroticism, the struggle for recognition and nationhood. Throughout the last three generations of critical theorists of society moved from the human potential of work and tool through the evolutionary universal of language and memory to the principle of the struggle for recognition. The new critical theory of religion takes - like Hegel before in his philosophy of religion - all five human potentials into consideration: language, work, love, recognition, and nation.

### **From Idealism to Materialism**

In this work *The Longing for the totally Other: The Rescue of the Hopeless* to each discourse period several chapters are devoted. Each chapter is divided up into paragraphs. The titles of the chapters as well as the subtitles of the paragraphs are supposed to make reading, understanding, and comprehension of the comprehensive work in its totality easier. The work begins with a reflection on the idealistic background of the materialistic theory of society. In spite of the fact that Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud have played a most important role in the development of the critical theory of society, Hegel's dialectical philosophy - particularly the Early Writings, "The Oldest System program of German Idealism", *The Jena System Designs I and II*, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, *The Science of Logic*, *The Philosophy of Law*, *The Philosophy of History*, *The Aesthetics*, *The Philosophy of Religion* and *The History of Philosophy* - constitute the real idealistic prototype of the materialistic critical theory of society of the Frankfurt School: particularly of Horkheimer's, Adorno's, Benjamin's, Marcuse's, Fromm's and Habermas's version. The critical theory of society is essentially the determinate negation of Hegel's dialectical philosophy, in which the bourgeois consciousness has reached its climax. Without Hegel there would not have been the possibility of nine decades of critical theory development in European and American civil society: not to speak of the survival of the fascist period and persecution.

### **Religious Dimension**

This work traces particularly the religious and theological dimension not only of Hegel's dialectical philosophy from the discourse periods of 1779 to 1833, but mainly of the critical theory of society from the discourse period of 1914 to 2001. This work follows the development

of the critical theory of society on the basis of a content analysis of Horkheimer's early poetical works, of his correspondence with Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Marcuse and other critical theorists and other philosophers and social scientists, and of his and other critical theorists essays and books. These content analyses serve this work as prolegomena for the development of a new dialectical theory of religion as well as - on its foundation - a new critical political theology adequate for the 21st century. The new critical theory of religion and the new dialectical political theology will be adequate in so far as they will be able to help - in case the parousia delay will continue, but without ever giving up the eschatological-apocalyptic reservation - to mitigate at least global alternative global Future I - the totally administered society; to prevent completely global alternative global Future II - a militaristic society continually preparing and arming for conventional wars and civil wars as well as for ABC wars and thus risking ecological disasters; and to promote passionately global alternative global Future III - a society, in which personal autonomy and universal solidarity would be reconciled. While the new dialectical theory of religion and critical political theology will be as materialistic as the critical theory of society, it will continue as it has done to try not only to negate but also to preserve and to fulfill in itself and in its praxis fundamental ideas and postulates of German idealism from Kant to Hegel and to their many disciples in Europe and America and elsewhere.