the discursive ability to enter into processes of argumentation and to entertain the standpoint of others. Third, autonomy is no longer conceived of as self-legislation (Kant), self-actualization (Hegel and Marx), or reconciliation with otherness (Adorno and Horkheimer). It is viewed instead as the capacity to adopt a universalist standpoint and to act on this basis. Finally, normative legitimacy means the generation of norms under conditions of communicatively achieved, and rationally motivated, arguments.

At the same time that it brings these irreversible gains, the paradigm shift in critical theory runs the risk of certain losses. The attempt to avoid the historicism of Hegel and Marx has led to certain modes of argumentation that are considered sometimes "transcendental," sometimes "quasi-transcendental," sometimes "reconstructive." The project of Hegel's *Phenomenology* has also returned in the form of a "reconstruction" of the empirical history of the competencies of the species. Both strands of argumentation involve stronger claims than can be justified. Both obscure some of the essential insights that the paradigm shift to communicative reason and action bring with them, namely, the emphasis on human *plurality;* the *narrative* and *interpretive* structure of action; the utopian hopes of a communicative access to need interpretations, and the vision of a community of *justice* that fosters a community of *solidarity.*

Throughout this study my goal has been to point to essential tensions in the project of critical social theory. I have attempted to distinguish aspects of this project which rest on questionable philosophical and sociological assumptions from those of its insights which still have illuminating power. I have juxtaposed the concepts of plurality and the interpretive indeterminacy of action to the collective singular subject and to the work model of action. I shall not recapitulate these arguments here. Only, I would like to emphasize again the relation between such concepts of the subject and action, and various visions of ethical and political life.

The discourse of the philosophy of the subject, which nineteenth-century Marxism and twentieth-century critical theory share, is unacceptable today for two major reasons. In the first

place, insofar as this discourse focused on work as the primary activity in the constitution of self and society, it is deficient in an explanatory sense. Attempts have been made to expand the concept of work to mean social production and not merely instrumental action. Others have admitted that production relations could not be easily distinguished from relations of production, but insisted that they remained "determinant in the last instance." Most contemporary Marxist social theorists, however, have reached a similar conclusion: the fundamental categories of Marxian social theory are very much colored by the experience of nineteenth-century capitalism.[126] They cannot be utilized to explain the crises phenomena of our societies without fundamental revision.

The social theory of the Frankfurt School, despite the weaknesses it shares with classical Marxism, remains exemplary in one respect, namely, in its attempt to reformulate Marxian theory in view of the changed relations between politics, economics, and culture in our societies. Even in their aporetic formulations, critical theorists shared the view that the nature of social and political conflict in our societies, their manifestations and consequences, could not be explained in light of the wage-labor-capital conflict alone.

The second reason why the discourse of the philosophy of the subject has become unacceptable is normative. In classical Marxism, the emphasis on the economy went hand in hand with a political commitment that privileged class, especially the working class, as being representative of humanity. This view is to be rejected not only because it cannot explain the nature and causes of conflicts faced by late-capitalists societies, but for an additional reason as well. It leads to the politics of collective singularity. By this I mean a mode of politics where one group or organization acts in the name of the whole. As previously emphasized, this conception of politics, and its authoritarian implications, are not the only ones that can be drawn from classical Marxism. They have, however, played a dominant role in it.

My attempts to emphasize aspects of Marx's thinking that concern "sensuous finitude" and "lived crisis," or features of Adorno's theory of non-identity, aimed at revising the philosophical foundations of this tradition to make it more compatible

with a radical, participatory, and pluralist conception of politics. The neglect of such a theory of democracy and politics is one of the chief blind spots of the critical theory of the Frankfort School. With the exception of Franz Neumann and Otto Kirchheimer, who were political sociologists, other members of the Frankfurt School by and large retained the orthodox Marxist distrust toward questions of legitimacy and the normative dimension of political institutions. Again, it is one of the irreversible gains of the paradigm shift to communicative rationality and action to have refocused attention on this neglected dimension. The idea of a communicative ethic is intimately linked to the vision of a democratic public ethos in late-capitalist societies. To articulate the full implications of this position for a macro-theory of democratic institutions, it is important that the concept of "generalizable interests" be differentiated adequately from its Rawlsian and Rousseauian counterparts. In this task, it is also essential that the moments of norm and utopia, of a community of rights and entitlements and one of solidarity and empowerment, be brought together such as to reveal their essential tension as well as their mutual compatibility. Only then can we find an alternative beyond the "possessive individualist" or "disinterested rational agents" of classical and contemporary liberalism, while avoiding the unjustifiable neglect of democratic institutions in orthodox Marxism.

I see the concepts of human plurality and that of the narrative and interpretive structure of action as essential to such a project. By "plurality" I do not mean that we are distinct bodies in space and time, but that our embodied identity and the narrative history that constitutes our selfhood give us each a perspective on the world, which can only be revealed in a community of interaction with others. Such community and commonality arise and develop between us not, as Marx thought, because we are thrust into objectively similar life-conditions. A common, shared perspective is one that we create insofar as in acting with others we discover our difference and identity, our distinctiveness from, and unity with, others. The emergence of such unity-in-difference comes through a process of self-transformation and collective action. It cannot be preempted either by a dis-

course that defines the identity of struggling subjects for them or by methods of organizing which eliminate normative processes of consensus formation and self-transformation.

Through such processes we learn to exercise moral and political judgment. We develop the ability to see the world as it appears from perspectives different than ours. Such judgment is not merely applying a given rule to a given content. In the first place it means learning to recognize a content and identifying it properly. This can only be achieved insofar as we respect the dignity of the generalized other, who is our equal, by combining it with our awareness of his or her concrete otherness. What we call content and context in human affairs is constituted by the perspectives of those engaged in it. Human situations are perspectival, and to appreciate such perspectives involves empathy, imagination, and solidarity.

Differences in perspective result from the different narrative histories in which selves are embedded. At any point in time, we are one whose identity is constituted by a tale. This tale is never complete: the past is always reformulated and renarrated in the light of the present and in anticipation of a future. Yet this tale is not one of which we alone are the authors. Others not only play a role in our tale but often tell our stories for us and make us aware of their real meaning. The self's identity is revealed only in such a community of interaction; who we are is how we reveal ourselves to others and to ourselves in such processes. The interpretive indeterminacy of action arises from the interpretive indeterminacy of a life-history.

Nevertheless, such a phenomenological perspective must be complemented through an analysis of those *social constraints* under which action takes place and self-identities are constituted. A critical social theory cannot remain satisfied with an ahistorical analysis of the constitution of our lifeworld through the agents' perspectives. It is also necessary to place this lifeworld within a larger picture of the social whole, its limits and possibilities. Such social constraints are not formed by tales but by the logic of those unintended consequences that escape the lifeworld perspective of social agents. In this sense, the perspectives of systemic and lived crises, of the structural contradic-

tions of the whole and the felt experience of individuals, is fundamental. The task ahead is to think their unity, not to emphasize one at the expense of the other.

Following this principle of mediating the perspective of social actors with that of the social theorist, the experience of lived crisis with the knowledge of the systemic problems of society, I have stressed the central tension between the vision of a community of rights and entitlements and that of a community of needs and solidarity. These are not abstract moral imperatives but concrete options of action and interaction in our societies. One of the central problems of late-capitalist societies lies in their viewing public life from a legalistic-juridical perspective alone, while the vision of a community of needs and solidarity is ignored and rendered irrelevant.[127] As explained in chapter 7, a fundamental dynamic of such societies is the ever-rapid expansion of systems of economic and administrative action into the lifeworld. But such expansion can be accomplished only by subjecting life contexts to monetarized, bureaucratic, and juridical norms of action. This in turn means that the extension of the logic of rights and entitlements is endemic to such social structures. Welfare-state or social-democratic reformisms always increase those spheres of life subjected to public regulation, administration, and policy decisions.

Such developments of extended normatization and juridification are ambivalent: on the one hand, the juridification of everyday life contexts can redress inequalities and injustices endemic to them; on the other hand, it may impoverish the lifeworld further, by limiting rather than enhancing the possibilities for autonomous action of individuals. The ideal of a communicative ethic needs to be seen against this background. Communicative ethics advocates a participatory rather than bureaucratic model of collective decision-making, and encourages increased public debate on decisions that are usually reached at the expense of those on whose behalf they are carried out. Thus the juridification of everyday life can result in an increased demand for participation and self-government, just as it can foster an attitude of dependence, passivity, and clientilism. The ideals of a community of rights and entitlements and those of needs and solidarity are articulated with these trends in mind. They formulate

visions of human togetherness, out of whose interaction new modes may emerge in the future.

If, however, these normative ideals are offered as genuine options in the present one correction is necessary. It is more correct to speak of a "polity" of rights and entitlements and an "association" of needs and solidarity. By a "polity" I understand a democratic, pluralistic unity, composed of many communities, but held together by a common legal, administrative and political organization. Polities may be nation-states, multi-national states, or a federation of distinct national and ethnic groups. An association of needs and solidarity, by contrast, is a community in action, formed by a set of shared values and ideals, which uphold the concreteness of the other on the basis of acknowledging his or her human dignity and equality. The perspective of the generalized other urges us to respect the equality, dignity and rationality of all humans qua humans, while the perspective of the concrete other enjoins us to respect differences, individual life-histories and concrete needs. Such communities, in my view, are not pregiven; they are formed out of the action of the oppressed, the exploited, and the humiliated, and must be committed to universalist, egalitarian, and consensual ideals. Traditional ethnic, racial, and religious communities are neither necessarily nor primarily such communities of needs and solidarity. They become so only insofar as they uphold the ideal of action in a universalist, egalitarian, consensual framework.

The demise of the philosophy of the subject changes the meaning of utopia in our societies. Marx proceeded from the model of a demiurge-like humanity externalizing itself through its own activity in history and yet facing its own externalized capacities as "capital," as the sum total of those alien forces that oppress individuals. Emancipation signified that this alienated potential would be reappropriated by individuals themselves. Here Marx committed a distributive fallacy. He assumed that since humanity as an empirical subject was *one*, humanity qua normative subject could be represented by *one* particular group. This distributive fallacy, along with the primacy of the work model of activity, led away from the politics of intersubjectivity to the politics of collective singularity. For critical theorists like

Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, in the aftermath of World War II the vacuum left by the disappearance of hopes in the revolutionary working class was filled by absolute spirit—art, religion, and philosophy—or by subjective spirit—the rebelling psyche. It was assumed that objective spirit was hopelessly rationalized and contained no emancipatory potential.

The moment of communicative utopia rests on assumptions different from both. It is no longer assumed that there is a priv- ileged standpoint in the social structure which bestows upon its occupiers a special vision of the social totality. Nor is it presup- posed that the utopian sources of objective spirit have dried up. The community of needs and solidarity is created in the inter- stices of society by those new social movements, which on the one hand fight to extend the universalist promise of objective spirit—justice and entitlements—and on the other seek to com- bine the logic of justice with that of friendship. These new social movements do not share the hubris of the nineteenth century that one particularity can represent universality as such. They are aware of "difference" and regard this as a positive moment. Beyond the philosophy of the subject lies a politics of empower- ment that extends both rights and entitlements while creating friendship and solidarity.

The traditional politics of the subject assumes that there is one group of humans whose strategic position uniquely entitles them to represent the plurality. The philosophy of the subject always searches for a particular group—be it the proletariat, women, the avant-garde, Third World revolutionaries, or the Party—whose particularity represents universality as such. The politics of empowerment, by contrast, proceeds from the assumption that there is no single spot in the social structure that privileges those who occupy it with a vision of the social totality. This is so not only because late-capitalist societies and their grievances generate a *pluralization* of social victims, their objectives, and their modes of struggle, but also so because the experience of difference that cannot be co-opted in imposed identity is liberatory. Genuine collectivities are formed out of struggle, not out of the logic of substitution that preempts the experience of one social group with categories derived from the language of another. In late-capitalist socieites, emancipation

does not mean alone "the democratization of administrative decision-making processes," but the formation of communities of need and solidarity in the interstices of our societies. Such utopia is no longer utopian, for it is not a mere beyond. It is the negation of the existent in the name of a future that bursts open the possibilities of the present. Such utopia is not antagonistic to norm; it complements it. In the words of Ernst Bloch:

> The question of the legacy of classical natural right is in its own way just as urgent as the question of the legacy of social utopias had been. Social utopias and natural right had a mutually supporting task in the same human space; marching separately, unfortunately without fighting jointly. . . . Social utopia concerned human happiness; natural right, human dignity. Social utopias painted images of human relations in which the *weary* and the *downtrodden* no longer had a place; natural right constructed relations in which there were no *humiliated, demeaned* ones.[128]