



## **FIVE THESES FOR THE SEMINAR**

### **“IMAGEN E IDENTIDAD CULTURAL”**

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Harry Pross

1. The drive to master and the command of signs constitute identity. The Judgement function and reality-testing open up opportunities for subjective freedom.
2. Space, time and group affiliation regenerate the subject in permanent communication.
3. Formally, the state is a legal institution which, in content, serves the governmental control, administration and cultivation of the majority by a minority. Thus, the state has a responsibility to administer the lifetime of its members.
4. Political values are not only communicated by governmental authority but also by different groups that are constituted by means of mutually shared symbols. As a result of their differences they can cause societal fluctuations of minorities to majorities and vice versa.
5. The global effectiveness of political values is frustrated by the question of unadapted freedom (c.f. thesis 1). The symbol “human rights” cannot be rendered globally its universal claims are opposed by cultural identities.





## Thesis 1

The drive to master and the command of signs constitute identity. The Judgement function and reality-testing open up opportunities for subjective freedom.

### I

The human organism is a complicated system of composition and decomposition processes. There is life as long as they function. We refer to death when the fluctuations between the two poles of deficiency and satisfaction cease. To use a simple idiom: the sands of time have run out for someone. Or more colloquially: somebody's 'ticker' has stopped. Old pictures use the hourglass or sand-glass to symbolize death.

Bipolarity seems to be a natural law. The cosmic rhythm of day and night corresponds with the human rhythm of waking and sleeping. Warm and cold seasons of the year create different eating and behavioral habits. The ability to work is dependent on changing temperatures. In turn, the gain and loss of energy is dependent on the ability to work.

Bodily functions need time. Not all of them work at the same time with the same intensity. Saving energy (= the ability to work) and simultaneously expending it is only possible with a division of labor amongst the organs. They function together to produce a "psycho-physiological equilibrium"<sup>1</sup>. This "flowing equilibrium"<sup>2</sup> is a short-term state. We sense it subjectively as a feeling of well-being, ease, relaxation, happiness, in brief: the absence of movement.

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<sup>1</sup> F.J.J.: Buytendik: Prolegomena einer anthropologischen Physiologie. Salzburg 1967, 153.

<sup>2</sup> D. Wyss: Mitteilung und Antwort. Untersuchungen zur Biologie, Psychologie und Psychopathologie von Kommunikation. Göttingen 1976, 35.





But the “inner, biological clock” does not stand still. If there is no movement the clock has stopped. New tensions become apparent, stimulated either internally or by external signals. Hunger and thirst make themselves felt, noises, smells or tastes disturb us. The median between the poles of attraction and repulsion is not a special phenomenon, it is one of time. The human organism is incapable of complete inactivity except in death.

## II

In 1925, in one of his “metapsychological” papers, Sigmund Freud illustrated bipolarity with the example of “internal” and “external”: something shall be inside me or outside me. “The original pleasure-ego wants to introject into itself everything that is good and eject from itself everything that is bad”<sup>3</sup>. Everything on the outside is at first alien and bad. The polarities are the ego-subject with pleasure and the external world with unpleasure. According to Freud the “drive to master” or what he also calls “voraciousness” introduces change into this relationship. The organism demands what is lacking. Indifference turns into an urge to incorporate what was previously strange: I want that in me, or I want more of it. I desire it.

The connection between these feelings and the organic processes of composition and decomposition is clear. Vague sensations of lack turn into specific needs which, after having been compensated, generate new sensations and needs<sup>4</sup>. Greco-Roman mythology embodied the problem of insatiability in the blasphemous figure of Erysichthon. He felled the trees for his dining hall in the sacred grove of the goddess for fertility, Demeter. She punished him with such an insatiable hunger that he finally consumed his own body. The

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<sup>3</sup> S. Freud: *Sie Verneinung*. In Studienausgabe Bd III Psychologie des Unbewussten. Frankfurt/M 1975, 374.

<sup>4</sup> D. Wyss: *op.cit.*, 35 ff.





legend took a somewhat dubious turn in European politics. The Prussian minister-president, Otto von Bismarck, who favored a member of the House of Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne and whose diplomatic maneuvers resulted in a war between Germany and France in 1870, headed his memoirs with the motto: “I consume myself in the service of the Fatherland”. He was the Fatherland. Between 1870 and 1945 millions of little officials equated their subjective drive to master with the Fatherland until it was finally consumed. Four hundred years earlier Rabelais wrote in his critical contemporary heroic tale of the giant “Gargantua” and his son “Pantagruel”: “L’appétit vient en mangeant” (appetite comes with eating).

### III

Freud considers the Judgement function to be a “continuation, along lines of expediency, of the original process by which the ego took things into itself or expelled them from itself, according to the pleasure principle. The polarity of Judgement appears to correspond to the opposition of the two groups of instincts which we have supposed to exist. Affirmation – as a substitute for uniting – belongs to the Eros; negation – the successor to expulsion – belongs to the instinct of destruction”<sup>5</sup>. The Judgement function enables negation of affirmation.

Given the polarity between desire and aversion as well as the division of the human body from the outside world by the skin other polarities are conceivable: pleasure can be felt physiologically or simply imagined. The object toward which it is directed (“object of satisfaction”), can either be in the imagination or in the outside world. There, it can be tangibly close or inaccessibly far away. (I’d like to go to China again. Have you been to China? – No, but I wanted to go there once) (I didn’t imagine it would be like that, etc).

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<sup>5</sup> Freud: op.cit., 376





“What is unreal, merely a presentation and subjective, is only internal; what is real, is also there *outside*. Experience has shown the subject that it is not only important whether a thing (an object of satisfaction) possesses the “good” attribute and so deserves to be taken into the ego, but also whether it is present in the external world, so that he or she can get hold of it whenever he or she needs it. In order to understand this step forward we must recollect that all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them. Thus originally the mere existence of a presentation was guarantee of the reality of what was presented. The antithesis between subjective and objective does not exist from the first. It only comes into being from the fact that thinking possesses the capacity to bring before the mind once more something that has once been perceived, by reproducing it as a presentation without the external object having still to be there. The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there”<sup>6</sup>.

#### IV

6) Considered in categories of time it would appear pleasure and unpleasure, as factors permanently corresponding to the organic “flowing equilibrium”, are affiliated to chronobiology.

The Judgement function and reality-testing can be seen as repeated topicalities which lead from thought to action. Freud recognized a postponement due to thought which leads from thought to action, a type of experimental action, “a motor palpating, with small expenditure of energy. Let us consider where the ego has used a similar kind of palpating before, at what place it learnt the technique which it now applies in its processes of thought. It happened at the sensory end of the now applies in its processes

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<sup>6</sup> Freud: op.cit., 375





of thought. It happened at the sensory end of the mental apparatus, in connection with sense perceptions. For, on our hypothesis, perception is not purely passive process. The ego periodically sends out small amounts of mental energy (cathexes) into the perceptual system, by means of which it samples the external stimuli, and then after every such tentative advance it draws back again”<sup>7</sup>. The imagination feeds itself on earlier perceptions. “Experience teaches” for the present by drawing on what once was. Experience is historically conditioned.

The semantic gesture of “no and yes” leads directly from the organic limitation of the subject within his or her social conditions. The identification of the subject with itself is at the same time its social identity because it is based on earlier and acute perceptions. These perceptions are collectively determined. The subject is permanently transformed during the process of each organism coming to terms with its environment, for example by the change in the objects of pleasure.

## V

The opportunity for the subject to negate opens up within the determinants of its perceptual apparatus, structure of drives and social identity. Negation can immediately repel; but it can also affirm inner presentations by negating external signals.

This is where the opportunity for subjective freedom opens up. It becomes more difficult to realize when external signals exercise a more direct stimulus on latent organic functions by influencing the “psycho-physiological equilibrium”: the sense of smell via sexually arousing aromatic components (incense, perfume, deodorant); taste via smell (roasting meat) plus the presentation; hearing via beat and rhythm (dance and march music); vision (readiness to mate via visual interplay and touch).

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<sup>7</sup> Freud: op.cit., 376





The marketing of the psycho-physiological internal world by the external influence of religious, economic and political agencies results in reduced opportunities for subjective freedom. At the same time, frequent repetition of such experiences increases the dependence in signals. The senses tire. Judgement of the action becomes less precise. Something that has been seen a thousand times declines in intellectual quality. “No” and “yes” balance out into indifference because the frequently repeated signal dominates the imagination. Reality-testing no longer takes place. The image becomes the thing.

## Thesis 2

Space, time and group affiliation regenerate the subject in permanent communication.

### I

People live with contemporaries of different ages. The elderly, people of approximately the same age and younger people are different because of their experiences and their life expectancy. Subjectively, a lifetime is determined by the organic condition so that it differs even in people of the same age. Admittedly, each lifetime can be conceived as stretching from a beginning to an end, but the end is subjective. One can say: the subject assesses itself temporally with the end in mind, and this is the tenor of obituaries, abdications, etc.

Let it suffice here to say that the biological lifetime of all people is irreplaceable. The processes of composition and decomposition which maintain the organism by compensating its internal and external needs consume the individual's unrepeatable time. That is why older people try to bring back the past in the image of the “good old times” whilst younger people think “ahead of their time” in order to escape the limitations of the





present. The expression of such organically generated conceptions then leads to the much discussed disturbances in communication. People form groups and dissolve then.

The irreplaceable lifetime of the present 5.5 billion individuals fills the limited space of the earth with their lives. Meanwhile neither the lifetime nor the living space can be increased. An increasing number of people reduces living space in relationship to the quantity of the mobile population. There is no room for another person where someone else has already placed their foot. Objects collide in space like human beings too. The simultaneity of the subjects in space creates a reference to the special conditions<sup>8</sup>.

## II

Simultaneity constitutes itself in time as presence and absence caused by the lifetime of the individual organisms.

The power of people over people begins once this irreplaceable biological time is occupied by them: by its presence the newborn baby occupies the lifetime of its mother, its parents, the family. The young child uses up their lifetime for its upbringing. Then school occupies the lifetime of the children. The way to school takes time to overcome space. Social constraints take precedence at the expense of individual lifetimes. Power is possessed by those who occupy the lifetime of others. Dictatorships last as long as the subjugated are prepared to accept being told, prescribed and ordered how they should use their lifetime. Self-determination means being able to determine what one does with one's own irreplaceable lifetime; extraneous determination means allowing others to determine what is to be done with it. The space in which this determination takes place can be "outside" or inside the human being. External freedom is not equivalent to internal

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<sup>8</sup> D. Morris: The human Animal. London 1994, Chapter 3







freedom and vice versa. This is a consolation for those less capable of action, the dreamers and utopians, as we shall see<sup>9</sup>.

Because power is exercised by those who claim the lifetime of others for their own ends, the ruling groups in all cultures have installed their own time scales. They synchronize the individual times of the organisms. In other words, they create a foundation with the common text of their calendar. The pleasure principle, the judgement function and reality-testing, based on imagination and experience, are set into action by the social dictation of time. The constant glance at the watch that also shows the date illustrates how strongly the calendar influences the individual. This glance is a testing activity in the perceptual process, a reflex, to check whether the social process permits time for internal mental delay or not. The private clock is an instrument of the public time-hacker. The judgement function has to check whether the social dictation of time over the individual lifetime permits a long enough duration to decide whether he or she must be present or may be absent.

This alternative generates interest in the mathematical measurement of time: the duration. Subjectively speaking: I may stay here, with me, with you, with you (plural); or I ought to be somewhere else because of the advanced time. Time as a function of space and the overcoming of it.

Acceleration and competition of lifetimes already occurred in Homer's Iliad (6,208): "Always to be the first and to get ahead of others". "To every thing there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3, 1-15) is attributed to the preacher Solomon. The whole of life as a race for happiness, as with Thomas Hobbes, who gambled away both his inner freedom and the "race of life" on tennis courts, in the Privy Council and in scholarly circles. His

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<sup>9</sup> H. Pross: La violencia de los símbolos sociales. Barcelona 1989.





interpreter, Leo Strauss, called Hobbes' political science the foundation of the present<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, the present electronic control of the masses is inconceivable without the image of competitions. The 17<sup>th</sup> century tennis player may well have been pleased by the present-day presentation of victory and defeat in the clearly defined spaces of the arenas. Hobbes regarded violence and deception as two of the highest virtues in war. Today he would be able to recognize them within the rectangular frame of every domestic television set.

### III

The keyword is the temporal-spacial concept of "progression", gaining distance from the present by overcoming space. In German, the "present" (*Gegenwart*) originally meant "being opposite" in the sense of facing or vis-à-vis (*gegenüber*); In the Romance languages this special dimension is equivalent to the prefix "con" as in "concret" and "controle" or, in English, "contemporary". This real reference is left behind in "progress" (*Fortschreiten*) because progress can only advance in one direction, but not in all directions simultaneously.

Consequently, progressiveness, which has been accelerating since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has left things as they were in some places whilst in other places the images raced ahead of the imaginable. "we never adhere to the present", noted one of the pioneers of modern physics, Blaise Pascal, in his "Pensées" (1670). We anticipate the future as if it approaches too slowly, as if we want to accelerate its pace, or we recall the past as if to delay it because it vanishes too quickly... In this way we never live but hope to live, and so it is inevitable that, in being prepared to be happy we never are"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> L. Strauss: Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft. Neuwied/Berlin, 1965. See Thomas Hobbes: A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England. Ed. Joseph Cropsey. Chicago 1971, 17 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Ed. L. Brunschvigg Edition Lutetia, Paris, n° 172. Dt. Ed. E. Wasmuth, Heidelberg 1946, n° 172.





#### IV

The concepts of Hobbes and Pascal led on to the 18th Enlightenment in Europe. Economic and technical innovations and religious reformations gradually changed external influences on Europeans. New groups identified with the poles of old and new powers who succeeded in assembling lifetime.

The principles of assembly is a temporal-spatial phenomenon. It functions according to the economic law of reduced signal expense: whoever is able to assemble saves themselves and their supporters the work of conveying their message to each individual by arduous means.

After the invention of the letterpress and its subsequent technical improvement accessible space increased via the print media. Small groups of readers and observers throughout the country were assembled by the print media. The new technology promoted fluctuations both in society and in the internal world of the imagination. External reality cannot survive intact when the internal images of millions change. At that particular time it was the pulpit monopoly of the churches that broke. "The present is never the goal, the past and present are means, the future alone is our goal" according to Pascal, the physicist who was concerned about Christianity. That was a century before Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations" gave fundamental directions for the journey through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It should be noted here that not only "progress" and "commonwealth" denote movement but that almost all our temporal concepts belong to the semantic of space: a long time, a short time, and in German "spät" from the Latin "spatium" = "space" etc. It seems that the basic animate feeling underlying this also has something to do with the desire for a change of place over the greatest distances, as soon as a person "has time". An economic factor of particular spaces through the creation of images, the expression of cultural identity in the electrified industrial society.





## V

Presence in a space at a particular time also determines group affiliation. Everyone is born into a group with its won sign world and each subject is changed through the acquisition of the signs which keep this group together and make its existence possible. The works of such psychologists as René Sptiz and Jean Piaget help in understanding this. Complete adaptation enables sociological self-presentation in everyday life<sup>12</sup>. Signs are things. They imply physically what they mean psychically.

The cultural content that they introduce to perception and render reproducible for the mind is the entirety of the forms and the things. They present themselves to the judgement function for reality-testing because they are present in space.

Memory is bound up with the reality of space. Thought feeds on the “Mémoire collective” according to Maurice Halbwachs who was murdered in Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945. *Saxa loquntur*: the stones of the city quarter speak. Field cultures speaks. Religions are present because a society of believers is urged “to disseminate throughout different areas of space the greatest number of ideas and images which nourish their thinking. There are holy places and others which conjure up religious memories; there are profane places – some are populated by the enemies of God – where eyes and ears have to be shut, and there are places that are cursed. Nowadays we walk through absentmindedly over the flagstones which denote the position of the graves, not even trying to decipher the letters engraved in the stone, on the floor or in the walls of this sanctuary. Such inscriptions permanently presented themselves to the gaze of those who shut themselves into this monastery, those who lingered form many hours in this church...

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<sup>12</sup> E. Goffman: the Presentation of Self in Everyday life. New York 1959. B. Kienzle / H. Pape (Ed): Dimension des Selbst. Frankfurt 1991.





Thus, there is no collective memory which does not operate within a spacial framework. Space, however, is a reality which continues, our impressions chase one another, nothing sticks in our mind, and our recollection of the past would be incomprehensible if it were not really preserved in the material milieu that surrounds us”<sup>13</sup>.

## VI

The individual subject that takes the opportunity opened up by the judgement function and the reality-testing can pass through various spaces in its time.

In so doing the external signals of the spaces change the subject. It is compelled to communicate with things and with people. Its original identity changes into a new one. In a society with immensely facilitated means of communication transformation of the subject is more the rule than the exception<sup>14</sup>.

It can be maintained: the cultural identity of the present-day European is determined by his or her mobility<sup>15</sup>.

## Thesis 3

Formally, the state is a legal institution which, in content, serves the governmental control, administration and cultivation of the majority by a minority. Thus, the state has a responsibility to administer the lifetime of its members.

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<sup>13</sup> H. Pross: La violencia de los símbolos sociales. Barcelona 1989.

<sup>14</sup> M. Halbwachs: Das kollektive Gedächtnis. Frankfurt/M 1985, 141 f.

<sup>15</sup> S. Tabboni: La rappresentazione socieale del Tempo, Milano 1984, 147.





I

The subject described in thesis 2 regenerates itself for the duration of organic life through mobility. This mobility depends on the subject's psycho-physiological condition, desire and aversion, and the physical conditions of the environment.

The mobile subject is able to cross local and regional borders inside or outside the state to which it belongs. Political borders are not flexible, in contrast to the boundary created by the human skin between inside and outside. Skin breathes, borders are rigid. Physical actions are necessary if they are to be crossed or changed. Nature monitors the inviolability of the skin, the power of culture guards the social limitations of human violence. An agglomeration of signs drafts out order as envisaged by the mental presentations of those in power. This order separates authorized people from the unauthorized by employing the judgement function of its supporters.

The subject's identity card is just the tip of the perceptual apparatus with which he or she can "savour" the limits of power – again using one of Freud's metaphors. The policeman, the customs officer, the border guard inspecting the passport or identity card; the railway staff glancing at the ticket or the island revenue official checking the signature on the tax return all illustrate that in the final instance the symbolic power<sup>16</sup> of the state depends on the original functions of psycho-physiological perception when wishing to identify<sup>17</sup> a living human being. That is why people of clearly different cultural origins are generally scrutinized more closely than members of the same culture: the controller automatically sets more senses to work than just a fleeting glance. This can result in comical misunderstandings if, contrary to expectation, people with a different colored skin happen to show the "right" papers.

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<sup>16</sup> H. Pross: La violencia de los símbolos sociales. Barcelona 1989.

<sup>17</sup> M. Mauss: Les techniques du Corps (1936). In: C. Lévi-Strauss ed. Sociologie et Anthropologie par Marcel Mauss. Paris 1950.





## II

Ethnologists trace the origin of the state back to xenophobia in small family groups<sup>18</sup>. Religious variations of this can be found in the Bible and the Koran. The cultural historian, Jakob Bruckhardt, traced the modern concept of the state back to the Italian “Lo Stato”, the powerful “status” of the Renaissance rulers and their supporters. The concept was then extended to include the territorial area of their power<sup>19</sup>.

Territorial expansions has two sociological prerequisites: first, the original rulers must possess the technical signals to prove their presence to other people. These have to be assembled to create obedience. Greater mobility, speech and denotation competence occupy the lifetime of other subjects. Acts of symbolic power and brachial violence operate together to semantically superimpose themselves on other groups. The historical significance of interpreters and translators, their possible influence on cultural change and power elites is evident. Power extends as far as its signs. It declines when these are no longer respected<sup>20</sup>.

By means of semantic superimposition a group can occupy lifetime belonging to others. Formally, the state develops as a legal institution. From the point of view of content, it enables a minority to govern, administrate and cultivate a minority. That is to say: the minority organizes the exchange of labour and goods in such a way that they acquires the output of the majority with as little expense to themselves and for as long as possible<sup>21</sup>. The minorities may be ethnically homogeneous (“big families”) or

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<sup>18</sup> A. K. Flohr: Biosoziale Grundlagen von Ethnozentrismus. Opladen/Wiesbaden 1994.

<sup>19</sup> F. Oppenheimer: Der Staat. Frankfurt/M 1912

<sup>20</sup> H. Pross: Signalökonomie und Kulturwandel. In: Cursos de Verano el Escorial, 1989 (Universidad Complutense de Madrid Informacion, politica y cultura).

<sup>21</sup> F. Oppenheimer: op. cit., 51: “Im Anfang war die Grundrente”. See E. U.v. Weizsäcker: Erdpolitik. Darmstadt 1994.





heterogeneous (upper classes). They may reside inside the state or be anonymously organized abroad (big business, multinational concerns), they may be controllable or uncontrollable.

### III

The two sociological precondition of the state = viewed formally as a legal institution and, in content, as an institution of governmental control, administration and cultivation – form a combination that continuously generates new polarizations between the governing minority and the governed majority. Their summing-up in the democratic principles “All power comes from the people” is a juridical postulate.

Democracy is a legal form characterized by an election ritual and the fluctuation of juridical parties. Its postulated basic rights offer the members of the state symbolic opportunities to change the legal institution. However, democracy cannot cancel out the purpose of governmental control, administration and cultivation in content, it can only modulate it by “redistributing” work and output in favor of other groups.

In 1883 the Polish-Austrian sociologist, Ludwik Gumplowicz, pointed out that the state knows no ethnic homogeneity as a result of its development in the struggle between heterogeneous groups<sup>22</sup>. The people of state is always heterogeneous and, in recognizing the prescribed legal order by exercising group interests in the general exchange of religious, moral, regional, local and material interests, it is always plural.

A dictatorship can suppress group identities associated with democracy, but it can never eradicate them completely. Each group identity has its collective place. This is why resistance movements feed on group struggles and “instate” a new type of rule. When

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<sup>22</sup> L. Gumplowicz: Der Rassenkampf. In: L.G. Ausgewählte Werke Bd III. Vorwort Gottfried Salomon. Innsbruck 1928, 183, über Amalgamierung 250 ff. See: Philip Schlesinger: “Europeans” – A new cultural battlefield? In: Innovation, Vol. 5, n° 1, 1992.







faced with the responsibility of governing, administering and cultivating the state a “dictatorship of the proletariat” also develops into the interest of a ruling minority over a subjected majority. The hierarchy of values is changed. Different symbols predominate. The thing itself cannot change<sup>23</sup>. Here lies the fundamental contradiction of all defenders of the state, including communists on the one hand and anarchists as opponents of every form of rule on the other.

#### IV

Both the legal institution as a formal means of rule and the task of governing, administering and cultivating are subject to lapses of time. Their duration is based on the lifetime of their subjects on the one hand and on the level of respect for their calendrical orders on the other.

The legal institution of the state undertakes to synchronize both of these with varying amounts of success by specifying the calendar. New states generally identify themselves as youth movements – armed young people needed to establish the new symbolic order. Old states employ young uniformed people as representatives of their duration, sometimes they are dressed in historical costume. Cultural expansion follows a similar trend with fashion in clothing, sports accessories and novel instruments which are marked with young people. The image of culture depends on its legitimation by evidence of a great past, conservation of tradition and the presentation of young people at the same time.

Subjective participation identifies with the particular culture whilst stabilizing the political order as well. The synchronized dating of religious and political holidays clearly illustrates the connection here. The governed majority works on these seemingly work-

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<sup>23</sup> M. Abélès/W.Rossade Ed. *Politique Symbolique en Europe/Symbolische Politik in Europa*. Berlin 1993, 35-134.





free days for the dynastic and political interests of the rulers as well as to the glory of the prevailing religion within the borders of the particular space. The collective feeling needs spacial conditions to be able to compress itself within the limits of this restricted area (festival square, festival hall, procession route, etc.). The working majority contributes the unsatisfied ambition of its subjects within the festive conditions. A hundred thousand vanities compensate everyday deficiencies which derive from thoroughly egocentric needs of the drive to master.

Fixing such festivals in the calendrical ritual saves the governing minority from continually assembling the majority in every occasion. They come of their own accord and afterwards, having been animated by the break in their work rhythm, they immediately prepare themselves for the next repetition. Ritual is an irreplaceable factor in signal economy. Whilst minimalizing the expense of the servicing minority and the political representatives, ritual uses anticipatory faculties and combines them with the illusion of the majority that they are exercising their opportunity for subjective freedom (e.g. commercial fairs and markets, public festivals and holidays).

However, as a rule, it usually means tagging along with a smaller group (family, friends, colleagues) on a collective occasion. This is attributable to group-specific concepts of what is the “right thing to do” and “what just isn’t done”: “What will people think about us?” At carnival time you are supposed to laugh and be merry; on 1<sup>st</sup> May you are supposed to be class conscious; on state holidays you are supposed to be “patriotic minded” and on holidays you are supposed to be sun-tanned and sexy.

This is where Gumpłowicz’ differentiation between the legal codes of the state and group morals becomes evident, whereby the latter develop from characteristics of origin and activities of the group<sup>24</sup>. The differences between the groups are of relevance in

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<sup>24</sup> L. Gumpłowicz: Grundries der Soziologia. In: L.G. Ausgewählte Werke Bd II. Vorwort F. Oppenheimer. Innsbruck 1926, 189 ff. See P. Schlesinger: Wishful Thinking: Cultural Politics, Media, and Collective Identities in Europe. In: Journal of Communication, Spring 1979, Vol 43, n° 2.





image development. However, the purpose of controlling, administering and cultivating and the juridical form of the state would be of no substance without the calendrical synchronization of the majority by management.

#### **Thesis 4**

Political values are not only communicated by governmental authority but also by different groups that are constituted by means of mutually shared symbols. As a result of their differences they can cause societal fluctuations of minorities to majorities and vice versa.

I

The mobile subject is identified by others according to his or her origin as a “product” of a group. On sensual perception the judgement function draws upon mental images of the subject’s group affiliation. Such images recall experiences of a person’s own group with the other, strange group. They may be personal experiences, experiences passed on verbally, clichés or negative or positive generalizations attributed ad hoc. They always identify the subject, positively or negatively, with a group image. This image exists in the mind even though the object itself may not be present in reality.

As real groups become aware of the other on account of differences and as differences are characterized by single things and spaces, these in turn become a *pars pro toto*: the “Wild West” stands for the USA, Montmartre for Paris, snow-covered mountains and dairy cattle for Switzerland, the Kremlin for Russia, Tiananmen Square (“The Square of heavenly Peace”) for China, the Ganges for India and the beach of Rio for the whole of Brazil. In this case the human brain is carrying out its function of not doing more work than the economy of perception demands.





## II

Thirty years ago the American historian, Boorstin, reproached his fellow American for betraying the “American Dream” through the vanity of favourable models<sup>25</sup>. Meanwhile, professional “image makers” are reducing the perceptual process by presenting the judgement function with pictures as contents of meaning. “Picture post cards” are accepted as valid reality-testing.

The images of such “public relations” culture be divided into two groups: first, the progressive group of images of linear developments in technology, especially the means of transport for human beings, objects and symbols. This group can be expressed in exact numbers between units of measure such as large or small, many or few, fast or slow. Numbers have the great advantage that they count and everyone can think what they like when they occur. But letters are always open to controversial interpretation patterns. At the moment the inhabitants of two small towns in the German federal state of Thuringia are arguing about the combination of letters to be used for a mutual car registration mark. The people of Arnstadt want “ARN” whereas the people of Ilmenau want “IK”. A fairly common case of aggressive “local patriotism” similar to the kind that can erupt after any football match when “fans” who identify themselves with their “club flag” start fighting each other armed with knives<sup>26</sup>. It is a question of preserving collective memory in its particular space; without anchorage in space it would disappear.

Thus it follows that, secondly, in European colonial history, the victors always have to appear to have been attacked by some barbarian tribes such as Celts, Teutons, Huns,

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<sup>25</sup> D.J. Boorstin: *The Image or What happens to the American Dream?* New York 1962.

<sup>26</sup> T.R. Burns: *Post-Parliamentary Democracy, Sacralities, Contradiction, and Transition of Modernity*. In: C. Mongardini/ M. Ruini Ed.: *Religio. Ruolo del Sacro, Coesione Sociale e Nuove Forme di Solidarietà nella Società Contemporanea*. Roma 1994 = *Incontri Europei di Amalfi* 3.





Turks or Indians if their historical image is to be transmitted to posterity in a positive light: the image of the cultural conveyor, not the cultural suppressor.

Negative images of the intruders in the home space are a proven means of mobilizing the working power of the majority for defense purposes. In 1870 the Prussian minister-president, Otto von Bismarck, used some editorial tricks in a telegram to force the French Emperor Napoleon III to declare war on Prussia. (A German prince candidating for the Spanish throne). Hitler opened up the war against Poland in 1939 by stimulating a Polish attack on the German radio transmitter in Gleiwitz. However, subsequent German aggression contradicted the propagandistic efforts of both these politicians.

The Germans are still burdened with the negative image of conqueror and oppressor even though they have acted in a non-belligerent way since<sup>27</sup> the heads of people who belong different groups and so evaluate differently.

### III

As a legal institution the state ritualizes its citizens by compelling them to abide by its laws. To do this it needs civil servants, the judicature and the police. This stratum of “state servants” is always threatened by corruption from the administering agencies if the legal system of advantage-taking open the members of the civil service is not, or is only badly, controlled. Both internal and external controls fail when the economic interest of administering agencies become stronger than the identification with the legal institution “state”. In this case the drive to master of individuals and small groups violate the form. The created split widens until the very last servant of the state has consumed his drop of the escaping content.

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<sup>27</sup> G. Schweger: Die Auswirkungen von Kriegen auf das Image der Nationen. In: Werbeforschung & Praxis 2/92.





Corruption has become a pardonable offence in the present condition of Euro-American culture where the minority responsible for economic services is sending its capital on nomadic expeditions and evading state control. Because of its addiction to investment capital is acquiring the labor output of various majorities worldwide wherever they are cheapest. These are not the state with compensatory systems of law which guarantee the people they are serving with the benefit of their own output. These states are societies that exploit cheap, starvation labor.

The morals of the state have to be legitimized on the basis of its history in order to formally secure the legal institution. This had nothing to do with the morals of capital's supranational interests. These morals are a question of group ethics deriving from the origins and customs of the owners. These group ethics are private in nature and tend to privatize the legal institution. The image of the state as an ordering power disintegrates in cases where leadership favors its own interests, for instance by privatizing areas of public responsibility.

Citizens on the inside sense the loss of protection that previously preserved them from the superior strength of the administering minority. The social foundations of democracy are rendered obsolete<sup>28</sup>. Democracy becomes a marketable product instead of policing the market.

On the outside, state representatives appear purely under aspects of trade and commerce; the citizens appear as vulnerable tourists or corruptible business people.

Also doomed to failure is the attempt of the now fifty-year old United Nations to realize the ideal of a just world order and thus to regain a little prestige where power has been lost. "Prestige" originally meant "(dazzling) illusion", "deception", a connotation it still has today. This clearly illustrated by the acts of ethnocentric violence against UN soldiers in former Yugoslavia and in other places. Symbolic acts of world civilization have

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<sup>28</sup> J-M. Guéhenno: La fin de la démocratie. Paris 1993 Chap. 2.





no real chance where tribal morals prevail and borders are “drawn in blood” – as the Serbian general Mladic told the magazine “Der Spiegel”<sup>29</sup>. Chances are even more slender when the international arms trade is earning in the conflict.

#### IV

Secret networks of global capital interests have been writing state histories throughout the century. In so doing the symbolism and moral values of high finance have overridden political identities<sup>30</sup>. When the American army liberated the oldest German concentration camp at Dachau near Munich in April 1945, national rivalries immediately broke out amongst the former inmates. Liberated French prisoners refused to obey the liberators because they wanted to hoist the French tricolor as the flag of liberation; but no French tricolor was available<sup>31</sup>.

In reality, the decision as to who should be responsible for governing, administering and cultivating the various spaces (zones of influence) had already been taken by the “Big Three” and France had not been included. The American liberators brought symbols of “the American way of life” for the people who were to be administered (e.g. Virginia cigarettes, light-roasted coffee, Coca-Cola, jeeps, their slang, their pin-up girls). The “image makers” who were later criticized by American historians laid the foundation to the permanent servicing of European people by America. Admittedly, identification possibilities had already been prepared by Hollywood films ,

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<sup>29</sup> L. Gumplowicz: Rassenkampf op. cit. 236: “Denn schließlich ist Herrschaft nichts anderes, als seine durch Übermacht geregelte Teilung der Arbeit, bei der die Beherrschten die niedrigeren und schwereren, den Herrschenden die höheren und leichteren (oft nur das Befehlen und Verwalten) zufällt. Wie aber ohne Teilung der Arbeit keine Klutter denkbar ist. So ist ohne Herrschaft keine gedeihliche Teilung der Arbeit möglich, weil sich, wie gesagt, frei willig niemand zur Leistung der niedrigeren und schwereren Arbeiten hergeben wird”.

<sup>30</sup> Felix Somary: Erinnerungen eines politischen Meteorologen. Frankfurt/M 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Dachauer Hefte. Studien und Dokumente zur Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. L. Jg. 1985 (1): Die Befreiung, 49 ff.





jazz, swing and the big bands. Germany's propaganda minister, Goebbels, purchased Hollywood films right up to 1945 in order to demonstrate their dramatic techniques to his film producers.

## V

Within this framework, new groups of symbolic personnel, scholars, journalists, artists, writers, advertisers were constituted in the zones of influence, both east and west. For four decades the confrontation between "East" and "West" was conducted through the psychological warfare of the "Cold War" with the utmost effort to conserve mutual interests and avoid military conflict on questions of controversial material and labor resources. This "war" ended in the Russian-communist defeat and a rearguard victory for American capitalism. Where this will lead depends on which political power is able to capture and convince the present disinhibited groups with their particular moral values to engage in mutually superior activities. This means establishing a legal institution which ensures the continued social fluctuation of minorities to majorities and vice versa among the various groups with different values and interests.

Cultural identity and political image are of mutual influence. They tend towards equilibrium. The element that tips the scales still seems to be the collective feeling of the administered majority in their heterogeneous groups. Manipulating these groups would then appear to be government's major problem<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> M. Sazbo: Nationalism, Nation State and Prospects of Democratization in Eastern Europa. In: J. Iivonen: Future of the Nation State in Europe. Aldershot/England 1993.







## Thesis 5

I

The Australian-British-American media entrepreneur, Rupert Murdoch, is reportedly worried about cultural identity. In a talk he expressed concern about the influence of television on the north Africa Tuaregs. For centuries they had moved their caravan of camels at a specific time, but now they had postponed their departure to avoid missing an episode of “Dallas”.

Murdoch is rated the biggest magnate in the media business. The number of such media magnates is now so small that they can be counted on one hand. They are a tiny minority. The Italian, Berlusconi, is also one of them. A short time ago he came up against political limitations. Murdoch has similar problems. He threatens the “dictators of this world” with “the completely free market of ideas and goods for the benefit of people and the whole world”. At the same time he is offering the Chinese government a “subscription management system” for his satellite programme. This would permit them to censor the Murdoch programmes and so release only what they consider fit for their millions of subjects. Secular censorship would increase to gigantic proportions. Similar censorship was agreed between the prince bishop of Mainz and the free imperial city of Frankfurt am Main after Gutenberg's invention of the letterpress. The Chinese state (as a legal institution) and Murdoch (the private person) would combine to decide which world economic groups would reach the space to be supplied in China with their signals and which groups would not<sup>33</sup>.

The government in fundamentalist Muslim Iran has just ordered all satellite receivers to be dismantled. Only a few government institutions will have access to

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<sup>33</sup> J. Krönig: Die globale Hirnwäche. In: Die Zeit, 17/2/1995, 67.





monitor this goal network. The most aggressive agent of western civilization will lose the possibility of introducing its macro-sociological interests into the hearts and minds of the Iranians<sup>34</sup>. Cultural identity orients itself with the help of images that are accessible to subjective perception within its particular space. Cultural identity changes when influenced by other images (c.f. thesis2). This is why all fundamentalists try to limit the intellectual scope in the space they govern exclusively to their own symbols: one example is the ban issued by the Nazis in during the war on listening to foreign radio broadcasts. Listening in groups and talking about such broadcasts was punishable by death because it changed the conceptual images of the participants. The secret consumption of television programmes by children in families is another example.

## II

This type of defensive reaction misses the reason for developments in signal economics<sup>35</sup>. The example of Murdoch is more understood in the context of the recent trade conflict between the USA and China<sup>36</sup>. The Chinese have copied large quantities of American videos disregarding copyright and have sold them at a huge profit far below the price of the originals. Nothing better could happen according to the American ideology of the “free flow of information” because even the illegal copies spread the American image of the world. But, the fact that this image is a function of the market forced the American government to protect to China in order to secure the interests of its servicing groups. The role of the state as an executive organ of economic interests is a constitutional principle

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<sup>34</sup> E. Di Nallo: Il Consumo come religione. In: Mongardini /Ruini: op. cit, 77ff.

<sup>35</sup> H. Pross: Economia de Senyals I Atrofia del Significat. In: Analisi. Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura, 1981/3, 83ff.

<sup>36</sup> P.V. Brinkemper/B.V. Dadelsen/T.Seng (Ed.): World Media Park; Globale Kulturvermarktung heute. Berlin 1994.





that was already quite strictly postulated in the “Federal Papers” of 1787/88<sup>37</sup>. It developed from the independence movement against the British Crown.

As far as present-day image development is concerned this leads to the identification of the state institution with the American concept of democracy and, at the same time, to the americans majority of the world population. The division of Europe after the Second World War was based on the “Marshall Plan” in countries which “earned” economic aid on account of good political behavior; the others had to finance their war damage and losses by themselves.

It will still take a long time for the consequences to be remedied because the opportunity for freedom (c.f. thesis 1) requires relatively equal starting positions if they are to mean the same. The fact that people can buy themselves jeans or drink Coca-Cola does not mean they identify themselves with the values of “the West” because of this. Homogenization through the media which are dominated by America dramatic techniques may well superimpose itself on the Tuaregs, the Chinese, the Spanish and the Eskimos, but symbolic superimposition does not make the world into a “global village”.

### III

This brilliant expression coined by the two professors McLuhan/Fiore (1968) has caused great confusion. Their departing thesis is correct in stating that media extend sensual perception; but – on account of this in particular – a village still remains a village, i.e. a restricted area of settlement with elementary contacts, strong social controls and a collective memory. All these attributes cannot be realized by technical media. Technically superimposed group identities are similar to subjugated groups; but they remain in their particular space just as subjects remain in their own skin. According to the title of the

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<sup>37</sup> See “Federalist Papers” 1787/88, Nr. 11,12, f. (Publius=Hamilton).





work in question, “War and Peace in the Global Village”<sup>38</sup> do not proceed in keeping with village rules, not even when the villagers are “fed up” with the presented patterns of violence, of high and low, of inside and outside, which they already possess in their psycho-physiological drive to master. Television series such as “Kung Fu” or “Dallas” do not transform Andalusian villagers into Japanese or Tutsi into Texans. Such series do however globally spread the message of brute force, but the rituals of power still coincide with the regional and local contents of government, administration and cultivation. They belong to the real world, not to illusory world of television.

The error of the “global village” stems from the American conception of their “common sense” as universal religion, everyone should think of the ideal of “Jeffersonian Democracy”<sup>39</sup> as something worth achieving. But other people have other ideals and democracy such as in Switzerland or England took centuries to develop. The aggressive contents of the media business have an antidemocratic effect, especially on viewers who come from places with decades or centuries of unfree traditions and then see their own aggressions multiplied in the western “suspense industry”<sup>40</sup>. Military dictatorship as a form of development and in the art of governing corresponds exactly with Jakob Burckhardts observations on the development of the state in the European Renaissance from “Lo stato”, the status of a small group that brings others into subjection<sup>41</sup>. This is

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<sup>38</sup> E.M. Stearn (ed): McLuhan hot and cool. New York 1967 leitete die international Diskussion des “McLuhanism” ein, die N. Postman um die ökonomischen Ursachen herum weiter führt.

<sup>39</sup> M. Hofmann: Uncommon Sense. Zur Kritik von Öffentlichkeit als demokratisches Idol. Mainz 1988. See: Symposium E Bülow: Der Wandel der Kommunikationsgemeinschaft durch die neuen Kommunikationstechniken. In: Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften. Streitform f. Erwägungskultue, 1994/4.

<sup>40</sup> H. Broch: Zur politischen Situation unserer Zeit. In: Gesammelte Werke Bd9, Zürich 1956, 383. W. König/M. Landsch (Ed: Kultur und Technique. Zu ihrer Theorie und Praxis in der modernen Lebenswelt. Frankfurt/M 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Sam Keen: Faces of the Enemy. Reflections of the Hostile Imagination. San Francisco 1986, Chap. 2.





why super-powers have a tendency to support military dictatorships or to economically dry out plebiscitary independence movements (Palestine).

#### IV

If this analysis of power factors is correct then the postulate of human rights that originates from the Christian-Manichean philosophy of law cannot gain validity on a global level; it does not correspond with the governmental, administrative, cultural and legal practices of the other world religions, nor with their local and regional differentiations. It cannot legitimize the fluctuation of minorities and vice versa. The communication of political values transformed from human conceptions into perceivable symbols<sup>42</sup> has to be derived from other “highest values”. The hierarchies of value are occupied by other gods and the interpreting clergy is existentially dependent on them. This problem is apparent in the current difficulties confronting democratic legal postulates in religiously homogeneous states.

But what happens when the rapidly increasing networking of small groups reaches global dimensions? When the owners of “Cyberspace” capture science, economy and state in a global net? They then cheapen labour by reducing wage costs in the home enterprises and employing computer-dependent workers in countries with lower living standards. The aim of every ruling minority to acquire the labour output of the majority with as little expense to themselves and for as long as possible seems better secured by the high costs of investment in technology.

In spite of this, the Indian in Bangladesh who becomes the colleague of the woman from Seville will only identify her as a person exploited by the same firm. They are bound together by the image of the firm, not by their cultural identity.

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<sup>42</sup> H. Pross: Political Values and their Communication. In: Int. Pol.Sc.Rev. Vol 3/2, 1982.





“Internet”, the worldwide computer network, also modifies the legal institution of government, administration and cultivation: the state. It is incapable of controlling the servicing minorities as it is in the case of the owners of satellite channels. These gain their yield from the conversion of the unpaid mental labour of their viewers into profitable advertising transactions.

The networking of paid labour invalidates state laws in the protection of labour because it is no longer controllable by state agencies. As the Swiss journalist, Werner Vontobel, wrote recently after a visit to the “Sun” computer plant in Palo Alto, California “The village becomes a jungle”<sup>43</sup>. What is actually happening is that the middle class, which until now saw itself as “civil”, and the following working class are threatened with a loss of cultural identity and a further loss of self-determination in their work and its usefulness; as a firm’s director told a reporter, “The greatest waste are people who don’t work profitably, who do useless work”. As always, it is the owners of the means of production who make decision on usefulness or uselessness.

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<sup>43</sup> W.Vontobel: Die Herren des Cyberspace ändern das Programm. In: Die Weltwoche, 2/2/1995, 17. Protest für Human rights see: H. Pross: Protestgesellschaft. Von der Wirksamkeit des Widerspruchs. Zürich 1992, 240 ff.

