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To Wolfgang Abendroth in gratitude

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Introduction

There is no good reason why *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, one of Habermas's most influential and widely translated works, should not have appeared in English sooner. That would likely have facilitated the reception of his thought among Anglo-American scholars by showing how the more abstract and theoretical concerns of his later work arose out of the concrete issues raised in this study. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is a historical-sociological account of the emergence, transformation, and disintegration of the bourgeois public sphere. It combines materials and methods from sociology and economics, law and political science, and social and cultural history in an effort to grasp the preconditions, structures, functions, and inner tensions of this central domain of modern society. As a sphere between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed, the liberal public sphere took shape in the specific historical circumstances of a developing market economy. In its clash with the arcane and bureaucratic practices of the absolutist state, the emergent bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler's power was merely represented *before* the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse *by* the people.

Habermas traces the interdependent development of the literary and political self-consciousness of this new class, weaving together accounts of the rise of the novel and of literary

and political journalism and the spread of reading societies, salons, and coffee houses into a *Bildungsroman* of this "child of the eighteenth century." He notes the contradiction between the liberal public sphere's constitutive catalogue of "basic rights of man" and their de facto restriction to a certain class of men. And he traces the tensions this occasioned as, with the further development of capitalism, the public body expanded beyond the bourgeoisie to include groups that were systematically disadvantaged by the workings of the free market and sought state regulation and compensation. The consequent intertwining of state and society in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries meant the end of the liberal public sphere. The public sphere of social-welfare-state democracies is rather a field of competition among conflicting interests, in which organizations representing diverse constituencies negotiate and compromise among themselves and with government officials, while excluding the public from their proceedings. Public opinion is, to be sure, taken into account, but not in the form of unrestricted public discussion. Its character and function are indicated rather by the terms in which it is addressed: "public opinion research," "publicity," "public relations work," and so forth. The press and broadcast media serve less as organs of public information and debate than as technologies for managing consensus and promoting consumer culture.

While the historical structures of the liberal public sphere reflected the particular constellation of interests that gave rise to it, the idea it claimed to embody—that of rationalizing public authority under the institutionalized influence of informed discussion and reasoned agreement—remains central to democratic theory. In a post-liberal era, when the classical model of the public sphere is no longer sociopolitically feasible, the question becomes: can the public sphere be effectively reconstituted under radically different socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions? In short, is democracy possible? One could do worse than to view Habermas's work in the twenty-five years since *Strukturwandel* through the lens of this question. That is not, however, the only or the best reason for publishing this English edition now. The contingencies of intellectual history

have placed us in a situation that is particularly well disposed to its appearance:

- Feminist social theorists, having identified institutional divisions between the public and the private as a thread running through the history of the subordination of women will find here a case study in the sociostructural transformation of a classic form of that division.
- Political theorists, having come to feel the lack of both large-scale social analysis and detailed empirical inquiry in the vast discussion centering around Rawls's normative theory of justice, will appreciate this empirical-theoretical account of the network of interdependencies that have defined and limited the democratic practice of justice.
- Literary critics and theorists who have grown dissatisfied with purely textual approaches will be interested in Habermas's cultural-sociological account of the emergence of the literary public sphere and its functioning within the broader society.
- Comparative-historical sociologists will see here an exemplary study that manages to combine a macroanalysis of large-scale structural changes with interpretive access to the shifting meanings by and to which actors are oriented.
- Political sociologists will discover that familiar problems of democratic political participation, the relation of economy to polity, and the meaning of public opinion are cast in a new light by Habermas's theoretical perspective and historical analysis.
- Communications and media researchers will profit not only from Habermas's account of the rise of literary journalism and the subsequent transformation of the press into one of several mass media of a consumer society, but also from the framework for future research that this account suggests.
- Legal theorists will discover here a way of critically analyzing the gaps between claim and reality which avoids the dead end of pure deconstruction.

In all of these areas, to be sure, significant work has been done since Habermas first published this study. But I think it fair to

say that no single work, or body of work, has succeeded in fusing these disparate lines of inquiry into a unified whole of comparable insight and power. In this respect it remains paradigmatic.

Thomas McCarthy
Northwestern University

Translator's Note

Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* contains a number of terms that present problems to the translator. One of these, *Öffentlichkeit*, which appears in the very title of the book, may be rendered variously as "(the) public," "public sphere," or "publicity." Whenever the context made more than one of these terms sensible, "public sphere" was chosen as the preferred version.

Habermas distinguishes several types of *Öffentlichkeit*:

politische Öffentlichkeit: "political public sphere" (or sometimes the more cumbersome "public sphere in the political realm")

literarische Öffentlichkeit: "literary public sphere" (or "public sphere in the world of letters")

repräsentative Öffentlichkeit: "representative publicness" (i.e., the display of inherent spiritual power or dignity before an audience)

Another troublesome term is *bürgerlich*, an adjective related to the noun *Bürger*, which may be translated as "bourgeois" or "citizen." *Bürgerlich* possesses both connotations. In expressions such as "civil code," "civil society," "civic duty," "bourgeois strata," and "bourgeois family" the German term for "civil," "civic," and "bourgeois" is *bürgerlich*. *Bürgerlich* also means "middle class" in contrast to "noble" or "peasant." *Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* thus is difficult to translate adequately. For better or worse, it is rendered here as "bourgeois public sphere."

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Translator's Note

Intimsphäre denotes the core of a person's private sphere which by law, tact, and convention is shielded from intrusion; it is translated here as "intimate sphere."

Thomas Burger

Author's Preface

This investigation endeavors to analyze the type "bourgeois public sphere" (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*). Its particular approach is required, to begin with, by the difficulties specific to an object whose complexity precludes exclusive reliance on the specialized methods of a single discipline. Rather, the category "public sphere" must be investigated within the broad field formerly reflected in the perspective of the traditional science of "politics."¹ When considered within the boundaries of a particular social-scientific discipline, this object disintegrates. The problems that result from fusing aspects of sociology and economics, of constitutional law and political science, and of social and intellectual history are obvious: given the present state of differentiation and specialization in the social sciences, scarcely anyone will be able to master several, let alone all, of these disciplines.

The other peculiarity of our method results from the necessity of having to proceed at once sociologically and historically. We conceive bourgeois public sphere as a category that is typical of an epoch. It cannot be abstracted from the unique developmental history of that "civil society" (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) originating in the European High Middle Ages; nor can it be transferred, idealtypically generalized, to any number of historical situations that represent formally similar constellations. Just as we try to show, for instance, that one can properly speak of public opinion in a precise sense only with regard to late-seventeenth-century Great Britain and eighteenth-century

France, we treat public sphere in general as a historical category. In this respect our procedure is distinguished *a limine* from the approach of formal sociology whose advanced state nowadays is represented by so-called structural-functional theory. The sociological investigation of historical trends proceeds on a level of generality at which unique processes and events can only be cited as examples—that is, as cases that can be interpreted as instances of a more general social development. This sociological procedure differs from the practice of historiography strictly speaking in that it seems less bound to the specifics of the historical material, yet it observes its own equally strict criteria for the structural analysis of the interdependencies at the level of society as a whole.

After these two methodological preliminaries, we would also like to record a reservation pertaining to the subject matter itself. Our investigation is limited to the structure and function of the *liberal* model of the bourgeois public sphere, to its emergence and transformation. Thus it refers to those features of a historical constellation that attained dominance and leaves aside the *plebeian* public sphere as a variant that in a sense was suppressed in the historical process. In the stage of the French Revolution associated with Robespierre, for just one moment, a public sphere stripped of its literary garb began to function—its subject was no longer the "educated strata" but the uneducated "people." Yet even this plebeian public sphere, whose continued but submerged existence manifested itself in the Chartist Movement and especially in the anarchist traditions of the workers' movement on the continent, remains oriented toward the intentions of the bourgeois public sphere. In the perspective of intellectual history it was, like the latter, a child of the eighteenth century. Precisely for this reason it must be strictly distinguished from the plebiscitary-acclamatory form of regimented public sphere characterizing dictatorships in highly developed industrial societies. Formally they have certain traits in common; but each differs in its own way from the literary character of a public sphere constituted by private people putting reason to use—one is illiterate, the other, after a fashion, post-literary. The similarity with certain aspects of plebiscitary form cannot conceal the fact that these two variants

Author's Préfacé

of the public sphere of bourgeois society (which in the context of the present investigation will be equally neglected) have also been charged with different political functions, each at a distinct stage of social development.

Our investigation presents a stylized picture of the liberal elements of the bourgeois public sphere and of their transformation in the social-welfare state.

I am grateful to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for generous support. This work, with the exception of sections 13 and 14, was presented to the Philosophical Faculty at Marburg as my *Habilitationsschrift*.

j. H.

Frankfurt, Autumn 1961

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

Introduction: Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere

1 The Initial Question

The usage of the words "public" and "public sphere" betrays a multiplicity of concurrent meanings. Their origins go back to various historical phases and, when applied synchronically to the conditions of a bourgeois society that is industrially advanced and constituted as a social-welfare state, they fuse into a clouded amalgam. Yet the very conditions that make the inherited language seem inappropriate appear to require these words, however confused their employment. Not just ordinary language (especially as it bears the imprint of bureaucratic and mass media jargon) but also the sciences—particularly jurisprudence, political science, and sociology—do not seem capable of replacing traditional categories like "public" and "private," "public sphere," and "public opinion," with more precise terms. Ironically, this dilemma has first of all bedeviled the very discipline that explicitly makes public opinion its subject matter. With the application of empirical techniques, the object that public-opinion research was to apprehend has dissolved into something elusive;¹ nevertheless sociology has refused to abandon altogether these categories; it continues to study public opinion.

We call events and occasions "public" when they are open to all, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs—as when we speak of public places or public houses. But as in the expression "public building," the term need not refer to general accessi-

bility; the building does not even have to be open to public traffic. "Public buildings" simply house state institutions and as such are "public." The state is the "public authority." It owes this attribute to its task of promoting the public or common welfare of its rightful members. The word has yet another meaning when one speaks of a "public (official] reception"; on such occasions a powerful display of representation is staged whose "publicity" contains an element of public recognition. There is a shift in meaning again when we say that someone has made a name for himself, has a public reputation. The notion of such personal prestige or renown originated in epochs other than that of "polite society."

None of these usages, however, have much affinity with the meaning most commonly associated with the category—expressions like "public opinion," an "outraged" or "informed public," "publicity," "publish," and "publicize." The subject of this publicity is the public as carrier of public opinion; its function as a critical judge is precisely what makes the public character of proceedings—in court, for instance—meaningful. In the realm of the mass media, of course, publicity has changed its meaning. Originally a function of public opinion, it has become an attribute of whatever attracts public opinion: public relations and efforts recently baptized "publicity work" are aimed at producing such publicity. The public sphere itself appears as a specific domain—the public domain versus the private. Sometimes the public appears simply as that sector of public opinion that happens to be opposed to the authorities. Depending on the circumstances, either the organs of the state or the media, like the press, which provide communication among members of the public, may be counted as "public organs."

A social-historical analysis of the syndrome of meanings possessed by "public" and "publicity" could uncover the essential sociological characteristics of the various historical language strata. The first etymological reference to the public sphere is quite revealing. In German the noun *Öffentlichkeit* was formed from the older adjective *öffentlich* during the eighteenth century,² in analogy to "*publicité*" and "publicity"; by the close of the century the word was still so little used that Heynatz could

consider it objectionable.³ If the public sphere did not require a name of its own before this period, we may assume that this sphere first emerged and took on its function only at that time, at least in Germany. It was specifically a part of "civil society," which at the same time established itself as the realm of commodity exchange and social labor governed by its own laws. Notions concerning what is "public" and what is not—that is, what is "private"—however, can be traced much further back into the past.

We are dealing here with categories of Greek origin transmitted to us bearing a Roman stamp. In the fully developed Greek city-state the sphere of the *polis*, which was common (*koine*) to the free citizens, was strictly separated from the sphere of the *oikos*; in the sphere of the *oikos*, each individual is in his own realm (*idia*). The public life, *bios politikos*, went on in the market place (*agora*), but of course this did not mean that it occurred necessarily only in this specific locale. The public sphere was constituted in discussion (*lexis*), which could also assume the forms of consultation and of sitting in the court of law, as well as in common action (*praxis*), be it the waging of war or competition in athletic games. (Strangers were often called upon to legislate, which was not properly one of the public tasks.) The political order, as is well known, rested on a patrimonial slave economy. The citizens were thus set free from productive labor; it was, however, their private autonomy "as masters of households on which their participation in public life depended. The private sphere was attached to the house not by its **Greek name** only. Movable wealth and control over labor power were no more substitutes for being the master of a household and of a family than, conversely, poverty and a lack of slaves would in themselves prevent admission to the *polis*. Exile, expropriation, and the destruction of the house amounted to one and the same thing. Status in the *polis* was therefore based upon status as the unlimited master of an *oikos*. The reproduction of life, the labor of the slaves, and the service of the women went on under the aegis of the master's domination; birth and death took place in its shadow; and the realm of necessity and transitoriness remained immersed in the obscurity of the private sphere. In contrast to it stood, in Greek

self-interpretation, the public sphere as a realm of freedom and permanence. Only in the light of the public sphere did that which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all. In the discussion among citizens issues were made topical and took on shape. In the competition among equals the best excelled and gained their essence—the immortality of fame. Just as the wants of life and the procurement of its necessities were shamefully hidden inside the *oikos*, so the *polis* provided an open field for honorable distinction: citizens indeed interacted as equals with equals (*homoioi*), but each did his best to excel (*aristoiein*). The virtues, whose catalogue was codified by Aristotle, were ones whose test lies in the public sphere and there alone receive recognition.

Since the Renaissance this model of the Hellenic public sphere, as handed down to us in the stylized form of Greek self-interpretation, has shared with everything else considered "classical" a peculiarly normative power? Not the social formation at its base but the ideological template itself has preserved continuity over the centuries—on the level of intellectual history. To begin with, throughout the Middle Ages the categories of the public and the private and of the public sphere understood as *res publico* were passed on in the definitions of Roman law. Of course, they found a renewed application meaningful in the technical, legal sense only with the rise of the modern state and of that sphere of civil society separated from it. They served the political self-interpretation as well as the legal institutionalization of a public sphere that was bourgeois in a specific sense. Meanwhile, however, for about a century the social foundations of this sphere have been caught up in a process of decomposition. Tendencies pointing to the collapse of the public sphere are unmistakable, for while its scope is expanding impressively, its function has become progressively insignificant. Still, publicity continues to be an organizational principle of our political order. It is apparently more and other than a mere scrap of liberal ideology that a social democracy could discard without harm. If we are successful in gaining a historical understanding of the structures of this complex that today, confusedly enough, we subsume under the heading "public sphere," we can hope to attain

thereby not only a sociological clarification of the concept but a systematic comprehension of our own society from the perspective of one of its central categories.

2 Remarks on the Type of Representative Publicness

During the Middle Ages in Europe the contrast drawn in Roman law between *publicus* and *privatus*⁵ was familiar but had no standard usage. The precarious attempt to apply it to the legal conditions of the feudal system of domination based on fiefs and manorial authority (*Grundherrschaft*) unintentionally provides evidence that an opposition between the public and private spheres on the ancient (or the modern) model did not exist. Here too an economic organization of social labor caused all relations of domination to be centered in the lord's household. Nevertheless, the feudal lord's position within the process of production was not comparable to the "private" authority of the *oikodespotes* or of the *pater familias*. While manorial authority (and its derivative, feudalism) as the quintessence of all lordly particular rights might be conceived of as *ajurisdictio*, it could not be fitted readily into the contrast between private dominion (*dominium*) and public autonomy (*imperium*). There were lower and higher "sovereignties," eminent and less eminent prerogatives; but there was no status that in terms of private law defined in some fashion the capacity in which private people could step forward into a public sphere. In Germany manorial authority, fully developed in the High Middle Ages, was transformed into private landed property only in the eighteenth century as part of the liberation of the peasants and the clearing of land holdings from feudal obligations. The domestic authority of the head of a household is not the same as private dominion, whether in the sense of classical law or in that of modern civil law. When the latter's categories were transferred to social conditions providing no basis for division between the public sphere and the private domain, difficulties arose:

If we think of the land as the public sphere, then the house and the authority exercised by its master must simply be considered a public

authority of the second order: it is certainly private in relation to that of the land to which it is subordinated, but surely in a sense very different from how the term is understood in modern private law. Thus it seems quite intelligible to me that "private" and "public" powers are so fused together into an indivisible unity that both are emanations from a single unified authority, that they are inseparable from the land and can be treated like legitimate private rights.⁶

It should be noted, however, that the tradition of ancient Germanic law, through the categories "*gemeinlich*" and "*sunderlich*," "common" and "particular," did generate a contrast that corresponded somewhat to the classical one between "*publicus*" and "*privatus*." That contrast referred to communal elements to the extent to which they survived under the feudal conditions of production. The commons was public, *publica*-, for common use there was public access to the fountain and market square—*loci communes, loci publici*. The "particular" stood opposed to this "common," which etymologically is related to the common or public welfare (common wealth, public wealth). This specific meaning of "private" as "particular" reverberates in today's equation of special interests with private interests. Yet one should note that within the framework of feudalism the particular *also* included those who possessed special rights, that is, those with immunities and privileges. In this respect the particular (i.e., what stood apart), the exception through every sort of exemption, was the core of the feudal regime and hence of the realm that was "public." The original parallelism of Germanic and Roman legal categories was reversed as soon as they were absorbed by feudalism—the common man became the private man. A linguistic reminder of this relationship is the use of "private" in the sense of "common" soldier—the ordinary man without rank and without the particularity of a special power to command interpreted as "public." In medieval documents "lordly" and "*publicus*" were used synonymously; *publicare* meant to claim for the lord.⁷ The ambivalence in the meaning of "*gemein*" (common) as "communal," that is, (publicly) accessible to all and "ordinary," that is, without special right (namely, lordly prerogative) and without official rank in general still reflects the integration of elements of communal (*genossenschaftlich*) organization into a social structure based on manorial authority.⁸

Sociologically, that is to say by reference to institutional criteria, a public sphere in the sense of a separate realm distinguished from the private sphere cannot be shown to have existed in the feudal society of the High Middle Ages. Nevertheless it was no accident that the attributes of lordship, such as the ducal seal, were called "public"; not by accident did the English king enjoy "publicness"⁹—for lordship was something publicly represented. This *publicness* (or *publicity*) of *representation* was not constituted as a social realm, that is, as a public sphere; rather, it was something like a status attribute, if this term may be permitted. In itself the status of manorial lord, on whatever level, was neutral in relation to the criteria of "public" and "private"; but its incumbent represented it publicly. He displayed himself, presented himself as an embodiment of some sort of "higher" power¹⁰ The concept of representation in this sense has been preserved down to the most recent constitutional doctrine, according to which representation can "occur only in public . . . there is no representation that would be a 'private' matter."¹¹ For representation pretended to make something invisible visible through the public presence of the person of the lord: ". . . something that has no life, that is inferior, worthless, or mean, is not representable. It lacks the exalted sort of being suitable to be elevated into public status, that is, into existence. Words like excellence, highness, majesty, fame, dignity, and honor seek to characterize this peculiarity of a being that is capable of representation." Representation in the sense in which the members of a national assembly represent a nation or a lawyer represents his clients had nothing to do with this publicity of representation inseparable from the lord's concrete existence, that, as an "aura," surrounded and endowed his authority. When the territorial ruler convened about him ecclesiastical and worldly lords, knights, prelates, and cities (or as in the German Empire until 1806 when the Emperor invited the princes and bishops, Imperial counts, Imperial towns, and abbots to the Imperial Diet), this was not a matter of an assembly of delegates that was someone else's representative. As long as the prince and the estates of his realm "were" the country and not just its repre-

sentatives, they could represent it in a specific sense. They represented their lordship not for but "before" the people.

The staging of the publicity involved in representation was wedded to personal attributes such as insignia (badges and arms), dress (clothing and coiffure), demeanor (form of greeting and poise) and rhetoric (form of address and formal discourse in general)¹²—in a word, to a strict code of "noble" conduct. The latter crystallized during the High Middle Ages into the system of courtly virtues, a Christianized form of the Aristotelian cardinal virtues, which subdued the heroic to form the chivalrous and courteous. Characteristically, in none of these virtues did the physical aspect entirely lose its significance, for virtue must be embodied, it had to be capable of public representation.¹³ Especially in the joust, the replica of the cavalry battle, this representation came into its own. To be sure, the public sphere of the Greek *polis* was no stranger to a competitive display of *arete*, but the publicity of courtly-knightly representation which, appropriately enough, was fully displayed on feast days, the "high holy days," rather than on court days was completely unlike a sphere of political communication. Rather, as the aura of feudal authority, it indicated social status. This is why it had no particular "location": the knightly code of conduct was common as a norm to all nobles, from the king down to the lowliest knight standing just above the peasants. It provided orientation not merely on definite occasions at definite locales (say, "in" a public sphere) but constantly and everywhere, as representative of their lordly rights.

Only the ecclesiastical lords had, in addition to the occasions that were part of the affairs of the world, a specific locale for their representation: the church. In church ritual, liturgy, mass, and processions, the publicity that characterized representation has survived into our time. According to a well-known saying the British House of Lords, the Prussian General Staff, the French Academy, and the Vatican in Rome were the last pillars of representation; finally only the Church was left, "so utterly alone that those who see in it no more than an external form cannot suppress the epigrammatic joke that it no longer represents anything except representation itself."¹⁴ For all that, the relationship of the laity to the priesthood

illustrates how the "surroundings" were part and parcel of the publicity of representation (from which they were nevertheless excluded)—those surroundings were private in the sense in which the private soldier was excluded from representation and from military honor, even though he had to be "part." The complement of this exclusion was a secret at the inner core of publicity: the latter was based on an *arcanum*—, mass and the Bible were read in Latin rather than in the language of the people.

The representation of courtly-knightly publicity attained its ultimate pure form at the French and Burgundian courts in the fifteenth century.¹⁵ The famous Spanish ceremonial was the petrified version of this late flowering and in this form survived for several centuries at the courts of the Hapsburgs. A new form of the representative publicness, whose source was the culture of the nobility of early capitalist northern Italy, emerged first in Florence and then in Paris and London. It demonstrated its vigor, however, in its assimilation of bourgeois culture, whose early manifestation was humanism; the culture of humanism became a component of courtly life.¹⁶ However, following the activities of the first tutors to princes (i.e., as early as around 1400) humanism—which developed the art of philological criticism only in the course of the sixteenth century—became the vehicle for reshaping the style of courtly life itself. Under the influence of the *Cortegiano* the humanistically cultivated courtier replaced the Christian knight. The slightly later notions of the gentleman in Great Britain and of the *honnête homme* in France described similar types. Their serene and eloquent sociability was characteristic of the new "society" centered in the court.¹⁷ The independent provincial nobility based in the feudal rights attached to the land lost its power to represent; publicity of representation was concentrated at the prince's court. The upshot of this was the baroque festivity in which all of its elements were united one more time, sensationally and magnificently.

In comparison to the secular festivities of the Middle Ages and even of the Renaissance the baroque festival had already lost its public character in the literal sense. Joust, dance, and theater retreated from the public places into the enclosures of

the park, from the streets into the rooms of the palace. The castle park made its first appearance in the middle of the seventeenth century but then spread rapidly over Europe along with the architecture of the French Century. Like the baroque palace itself, which was built around the grand hall in which the festivities were staged, the castle park permitted a courtly life sealed off from the outside world. However, the basic pattern of the representative publicness not only survived but became more prominent. Mademoiselle de Scudéry reported in her *Conversations* the stress of the grand festivities; these served not so much the pleasure of the participants as the demonstration of grandeur, that is, the grandeur of the host and guests. The common people, content to look on, had the most fun.¹⁸ Thus even here the people were not completely excluded; they were ever present in the streets. Representation was still dependent on the presence of people before whom it was displayed.¹⁹ Only the banquets of bourgeois notables became exclusive, taking place behind closed doors:

The bourgeois is distinguished from the courtly mentality by the fact that in the bourgeois home even the ballroom is still homey, whereas in the palace even the living quarters are still festive. And actually, beginning with Versailles, the royal bedroom develops into the palace's second center. If one finds here the bed set up like a stage, placed on a platform, a throne for lying down, separated by a barrier from the area for the spectator, this is so because in fact this room is the scene of the daily ceremonies of *lever* and *coucher*, where what is most intimate is raised to public importance.²⁰

In the etiquette of Louis XIV concentration of the publicity of representation at the court attained the high point of refinement.

The aristocratic "society" that emerged from that Renaissance society no longer had to represent its own lordliness (i.e., its manorial authority), or at least no longer primarily; it served as a vehicle for the representation of the monarch. Only after national and territorial power states had arisen on the basis of the early capitalist commercial economy and shattered the feudal foundations of power could this court nobility develop the framework of a sociability—highly individuated, in spite of its comprehensive etiquette—into that peculiarly free-floating

but clearly demarcated sphere of "good society" in the eighteenth century.²¹ The final form of the representative publicness, reduced to the monarch's court and at the same time receiving greater emphasis, was already an enclave within a society separating itself from the state. Now for the first time private and public spheres became separate in a specifically modern sense.

Thus the German word *privat*, which was borrowed from the Latin *privatus*, can be found only after the middle of the sixteenth century,²² having the same meaning as was assumed by the English "private" and the French *privé*. It meant as much as "not holding public office or official position,"²³ *ohne öffentliches Amt*,²⁴ or *jam emploi que l'engage dans les affaires publiques*,²⁵ "Private" designated the exclusion from the sphere of the state apparatus; for "public" referred to the state that in the meantime had developed, under absolutism, into an entity having an objective existence over against the person of the ruler. The public [*das Publikum, le public*], was the "public authority" (*öffentliche Gewalt*) in contrast to everything "private" (*Privatwesen*). The servants of the state were *öffentliche Personen*, public persons, or *personnes publiques*; they were incumbent in some official position, their official business was "public" (*öffentliches Amt, service public*), and government buildings and institutions were called "public." On the other hand, there were private individuals, private offices, private business, and private homes; Gottlieb speaks of the *Privatmann* (private person). The authorities were contrasted with the subjects excluded from them; the former served, so it was said, the public welfare, while the latter pursued their private interests.

The major tendencies that prevailed by the end of the eighteenth century are well-known. The feudal powers, the Church, the prince, and the nobility, who were the carriers of the representative publicness, disintegrated in a process of polarization; in the end they split into private elements, on the one hand, and public ones, on the other. The status of the Church changed as a result of the Reformation; the anchoring in divine authority that it represented—that is, religion—became a private matter. The so-called freedom of religion historically secured the first sphere of private autonomy; the

Church itself continued to exist as one corporate body among others under public law. The first visible mark of the analogous polarization of princely authority was the separation of the public budget from the territorial ruler's private holdings. The bureaucracy, the military (and to some extent also the administration of justice) became independent institutions of public authority separate from the progressively privatized sphere of the court. Out of the estates, finally, the elements of political prerogative developed into organs of public authority: partly into a parliament, and partly into judicial organs. Elements of occupational status group organization, to the degree that they were already involved in the urban corporations and in certain differentiations within the estates of the land, developed into the sphere of "civil society" that as the genuine domain of private autonomy stood opposed to the state.

Excursus: The Demise of the Representative Publicness
Illustrated by the Case of Wilhelm Meister

Forms of the representative publicness, to be sure, remained very much in force up to the beginning of the nineteenth century; this held true especially for economically and politically backward Germany, in which Goethe wrote the second version of his *Wilhelm Meister*. This novel contains a letter²⁶ in which Wilhelm renounces the world of bourgeois activity embodied by his brother-in-law Werner. Wilhelm explains why it is that the stage means all the world to him. Namely, it meant the world of the nobility, of good society—the public sphere as publicity of representation—as he states in the following passage:

A burgher may acquire merit; by excessive efforts he may even educate his mind; but his *personl qualities* are lost, or worse than lost, let him struggle as he will. Since the nobleman frequenting the society of the most polished, is compelled to give himself a polished manner; since this manner, neither door nor gate being shut against him, grows at last an unconstrained one; since, in court or camp, his *figure*, his *person*, are a part of his possessions, and it may be, the most necessary part,—he has reason enough to put some value on them, and to show that he puts some.

The nobleman was authority inasmuch as he made it present. He displayed it, embodied it in his cultivated personality; thus "He is a *public person*-, and the more cultivated his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the more staid and measured his whole being is, the more perfect is he; . . . and whatever else there may be in him or about him, capacities, talents, wealth, all seem gifts of supererogation." Goethe one last time caught the reflection of the representative publicness whose light, of course, was refracted in the French rococo court and refracted yet again in its imitation by the petty German princes. The different hues emerged all the more preciously: the appearance of the "lord," who was "public" by virtue of representation, was stylized into the embodiment of gracefulness, and in this publicity he ceremoniously fashioned an aura around himself. Goethe again used "public person" in the traditional sense of public representation, although in the language of his age it had already taken on the more recent meaning of a servant of public authority or of a servant of the state. The "person," however, was immediately modified into the "cultured personality." Strictly speaking, the nobleman in the context of this letter served as something of a pretext for the thoroughly bourgeois idea of the freely self-actualizing personality that already showed the imprint of the neohumanism of the German classical period. In our context Goethe's observation that the bourgeoisie could no longer represent, that by its very nature it could no longer create for itself a representative publicness, is significant. The nobleman was what he represented; the bourgeois, what he produced: "If the nobleman, merely by his personal carriage, offers all that can be asked of him, the burgher by his personal carriage offers nothing, and can offer nothing. The former has a right to *seem*: the latter is compelled to *be*, and what he aims at seeming becomes ludicrous and tasteless." The representative bearing that the nouveau riche wanted to assume turned into a comical make-believe. Hence, Goethe advised not to ask him "'What art thou?' but only: 'What hast thou? What discernment, knowledge, talent, wealth?'" This is a statement which Nietzsche's later aristocratic pretensions adopted: a man proved himself not by what he could do, but by who he was.

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

Wilhelm confesses to his brother-in-law the need "to become a public person and to please and influence in a larger circle." Yet since he is no nobleman and as a bourgeois also does not want to make the vain effort merely to appear to be one, he seeks out the stage as a substitute, so to speak, for publicity. Here lies the secret of his theatrical mission: "On the boards a polished man appears in his splendor with personal accomplishments, just as he does so in the upper classes of society." It may well be that it was the secret equivocation of the "cultured personality" ("the necessity I feel to cultivate my mental faculties and tastes"), the bourgeois intention in the figure projected as a nobleman, that permitted the equation of theatrical performance with public representation. But in turn the perception of the disintegration of the representative publicness in bourgeois society was so much on the mark and the inclination to belong to it nevertheless so strong that there must be more to the matter than a simple equivocation. Wilhelm came before his public as Hamlet, successfully at first. The public, however, was already the carrier of a different public sphere, one that no longer had anything in common with that of representation. In this sense Wilhelm Meister's theatrical mission had to fail. It was out of step, as it were, with the bourgeois public sphere whose platform the theatre had meanwhile become. Beaumarchais's Figaro had already entered the stage and along with him, according to Napoleon's famous words, the revolution.

3 On the Genesis of the Bourgeois Public Sphere

With the emergence of early finance and trade capitalism, the elements of a new social order were taking shape. From the thirteenth century on they spread from the northern Italian city-states to western and northern Europe and caused the rise first of Dutch centers for staple goods (Bruges, Liittich, Brussels, Ghent, etc.) and then of the great trade fairs at the crossroads of long-distance trade. Initially, to be sure, they were integrated without much trouble by the old power structure. That initial assimilation of bourgeois humanism to a noble courtly culture, as we observe it paradigmatically during the

rise of Florentine Renaissance society, must also be seen against this background. Early capitalism was conservative not only as regards the economic mentality so vividly described by Sombart (a characteristic way of doing business typified by "honorable" gain²⁷) but also as regards politics. As long as it lived from the fruits of the old mode of production (the feudal organization of agricultural production involving an enserviced peasantry and the petty commodity production of the corporatively organized urban craftsmen) without transforming it,²⁸ it retained ambivalent characteristics. On the one hand this capitalism stabilized the power structure of a society organized in estates, and on the other hand it unleashed the very elements within which this power structure would one day dissolve. We are speaking of the elements of the new commercial relationships: the *traffic in commodities and news* created by early capitalist long-distance trade.

The towns, of course, had local markets from the beginning. In the hands of the guilds and the corporations, however, these remained strictly regulated, serving more as instruments for the domination of the surrounding areas than for free commodity exchange between town and country.²⁹ With the rise of long-distance trade, for which—according to Pirenne's observations—the town was only a base of operations, markets of a different sort arose. They became consolidated into periodic trade fairs and, with the development of techniques of capitalist financing (it is known that letters of credit and promissory notes were in use at the trade fairs of the Champagne as early as the thirteenth century), were established as stock exchanges. In 1531 Antwerp became a "permanent trade fair."³⁰ This commercial exchange developed according to rules which certainly were manipulated by political power; yet a far-reaching network of horizontal economic dependencies emerged that in principle could no longer be accommodated by the vertical relationships of dependence characterizing the organization of domination in an estate system based upon a self-contained household economy. Of course, the political order remained unthreatened by the new processes which, as such, had no place in the existing framework, as long as the members of the old ruling stratum participated in them only as consumers.

When they earmarked an increasing portion of what was produced on their lands for the acquisition of luxury goods made available through long-distance trade, this by itself did not bring traditional production—and hence the basis of their rule—into dependence on the new capital.

The traffic in news that developed alongside the traffic in commodities showed a similar pattern. With the expansion of trade, merchants' market-oriented calculations required more frequent and more exact information about distant events. From the fourteenth century on, the traditional letter carrying by merchants was for this reason organized into a kind of guild-based system of correspondence for their purposes. The merchants organized the first mail routes, the so-called ordinary mail, departing on assigned days. The great trade cities became at the same time centers for the traffic in news;³¹ the organization of this traffic on a *continuous* basis became imperative to the degree to which the exchange of commodities and of securities became continuous. Almost simultaneously with the origin of stock markets, postal services and the press institutionalized regular contacts and regular communication. To be sure, the merchants were satisfied with a system that limited information to insiders; the urban and court chanceries preferred one that served only the needs of administration. Neither had a stake in information that was public. What corresponded to their interests, rather, were "news letters," the private correspondences commercially organized by newsdealers.³² The new sector of communications, with its institutions for a traffic in news, fitted in with the existing forms of communication without difficulty as long as the decisive element—publicness—was lacking. Just as, according to Sombart's definition, one could speak of "mail" only when the regular opportunity for letter dispatch became accessible to the general public,³³ so there existed a press in the strict sense only once the regular supply of news became public, that is, again, accessible to the general public. But this occurred only at the end of the seventeenth century.³⁴ Until then the traditional domain of communication in which publicity of representation held sway was not fundamentally threatened by the new domain of a public sphere whose decisive mark was the published word.

There was as yet no publication of commercially distributed news; the irregularly published reports of recent events were not comparable to the routine production of news.³⁵

These elements of early capitalist commercial relations, that is, the traffic in commodities and news, manifested their revolutionary power only in the mercantilist phase in which, simultaneously with the modern state, the national and territorial economies assumed their shapes.³⁶ When in 1597 the German Hanse was definitively expelled from London, and when a few years later the Company of Merchant Adventurers established itself in Hamburg, this signified not merely the economic and political ascendancy of Great Britain but an altogether new stage of capitalism. From the sixteenth century on merchant companies were organized on an expanded capital basis; unlike the old traders in staple goods, they were no longer satisfied with limited markets. By means of grand expeditions they opened up new markets for their products.³⁷ In order to meet the rising need for capital and to distribute the growing risks, these companies soon assumed the form of stock companies. Beyond this, however, they needed strong political guarantees. The markets for foreign trade were now justly considered "institutional products"; they resulted from political efforts and military force. The old home towns were thus replaced as bases of operations by the state territory. The process that Heckscher describes as the nationalization of the town-based economy began.³⁸ Of course, within this process was constituted what has since been called the "nation"—the modern state with its bureaucracies and its increasing financial needs. This development in turn triggered a feedback that accelerated mercantilist policy. Neither private loans made to the prince by financiers nor public borrowing were sufficient to cover these needs; only an efficient system of taxation met the demand for capital. The modern state was basically a state based on taxation, the bureaucracy of the treasury the true core of its administration. The separation precipitated thereby between the prince's personal holdings and what belonged to the state³⁹ was paradigmatic of the objectification of personal relations of domination. Local administrations were brought under the control of the state, in Great Britain through the

institution of the Justice of the Peace, on the continent, after the French model, with the help of superintendents.

The reduction in the kind of publicity involved in representation that went hand in hand with the elimination of the estate-based authorities by those of the territorial ruler created room for another sphere known as the public sphere in the modern sense of the term: the sphere of public authority. The latter assumed objective existence in a *permanent* administration and a *standing* army. Now continuous state activity corresponded to the continuity of contact among those trafficking in commodities and news (stock market, press). Public authority was consolidated into a palpable object confronting those who were merely subject to it and who at first were only negatively defined by it. For they were the private people who, because they held no office, were excluded from any share in public authority. "Public" in this narrower sense was synonymous with "state-related"; the attribute no longer referred to the representative "court" of a person endowed with authority but instead to the functioning of an apparatus with regulated spheres of jurisdiction and endowed with a monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion. The manorial lord's feudal authority was transformed into the authority to "police"; the private people under it, as the addressees of public authority, formed the public.

The relation between authorities and subjects took on a peculiar character as a result of mercantilist policies, policies formally oriented to the maintenance of an active balance of trade. It is a familiar story how the opening up and expansion of markets for foreign trade, in which the privileged companies managed to attain monopolistic control through political pressure—in a word, the new colonialism—step by step began to serve the development of a commercial economy at home. In parallel fashion the interests of capitalists engaged in manufacture prevailed over those engaged in trade. In this way one element of the early capitalist commercial system, the trade in commodities, brought about a revolution, this time in the structure of production as well. The exchange of imported raw materials for finished and semi-finished domestic goods must be viewed as a function of the process in which the old mode

of production was transformed into a capitalist one. Dobb remarks on how this shift was reflected in the mercantilist literature of the seventeenth century. Foreign trade no longer counted per se as the source of wealth, but only insofar as it aided the employment of the country's population—employment created by trade.⁴⁰ Administrative action was increasingly oriented to this goal of the capitalist mode of production. The privileges granted to occupation-based corporations characterizing the estate regime were replaced by royal grants of personal privileges and were aimed at transforming extant manufacture into capitalist production or at creating new manufacturing enterprises altogether. Hand in hand with this went the regulation of the process of production itself, down to the last detail.⁴¹

Civil society came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority. Activities and dependencies hitherto relegated to the framework of the household economy emerged from this confinement into the public sphere. Schumpeter's observation "that the old forms that harnessed the whole person into systems of supra-individual purpose had died and that each family's individual economy had become the center of its existence, that therewith a private sphere was born as a distinguishable entity in contrast to the public"⁴² only captures one side of the process—the privatization of the process of economic reproduction. It glances over the latter's new "public" relevance. The economic activity that had become private had to be oriented toward a commodity market that had expanded under public direction and supervision; the economic conditions under which this activity now took place lay outside the confines of the single household; for the first time they were of general interest. Hannah Arendt refers to this *private sphere of society that has become publicly relevant* when she characterizes the modern (in contrast to the ancient) relationship of the public sphere to the private in terms of the rise of the "social": "Society is the form in which the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance, and where the activities connected with sheer survival are permitted to appear in public."⁴³ <

The changed conditions of the times were reflected in the

transformation of the economics handed down from antiquity into political economy. Indeed the term "economic" itself, which until the seventeenth century was limited to the sphere of tasks proper to the *oikodespotes*, the *paterfamilias*, the head of the household, now, in the context of a practice of running a business in accord with principles of profitability, took on its modern meaning. The duties of the household head were narrowed and "economizing" became more closely associated with thriftiness.⁴⁴ Modern economics was no longer oriented to the *oikos*; the market had replaced the household, and it became "commercial economics" (*Kommerzienwirtschaft*). Significantly, in eighteenth-century cameralism (whose name derives from *camera*, the territorial ruler's treasure chamber) this forerunner of political economy was part of "police-science," that is, of administrative science proper, together with the science of finance on the one hand and with agricultural technology on the other (which was becoming differentiated from traditional economics). This shows how closely connected the private sphere of civil society was to the organs of the public authority.

Within this political and social order transformed during the mercantilist phase of capitalism (and whose new structure found its expression precisely in the differentiation of its political and social aspects) the second element of the early capitalist commercial system, the press, in turn developed a unique explosive power. The first journals in the strict sense, ironically called "political journals", appeared weekly at first, and daily as early as the middle of the seventeenth century. In those days private correspondence contained detailed and current news about Imperial Diets, wars, harvests, taxes, transports of precious metals, and, of course, reports on foreign trade.⁴⁵ Only a trickle of this stream of reports passed through the filter of these "news letters" into printed journals. The recipients of private correspondence had no interest in their contents becoming public. On the one hand, therefore, the political journals responded to a need on the part of the merchants; on the other hand, the merchants themselves were indispensable to the journals. They were called *custodes novellarum* among their contemporaries precisely because of this dependence of public

reporting upon their private exchange of news.⁴¹ It was essentially news from abroad, of the court, and of the less important commercial events that passed through the sieve of the merchants' unofficial information control and the state administrations' official censorship. Certain categories of traditional "news" items from the repertoire of the broadsheets were also perpetuated—the miracle cures and thunderstorms, the murders, pestilences, and burnings.⁴⁷ Thus, the information that became public was constituted of residual elements of what was actually available; nevertheless, it requires explanation why at this particular time they were distributed and made generally accessible, made public at all. It is questionable whether the interests of those who made a living by writing news pamphlets would have provided a sufficiently strong impetus; still, they *did* have an interest in publication. For the traffic in news developed not only in connection with the needs of commerce; the news itself became a commodity. Commercial news reporting was therefore subject to the laws of the same market to whose rise it owed its existence in the first place. It is no accident that the printed journals often developed out of the same bureaus of correspondence that already handled handwritten newsletters. Each item of information contained in a letter had its price; it was therefore natural to increase the profits by selling to more people. This in itself was already sufficient reason periodically to print a portion of the available news material and to sell it anonymously, thus giving it publicity.

The interest of the new (state) authorities (which before long began to use the press for the purposes of the state administration), however, was of far greater import. Inasmuch as they made use of this instrument to promulgate instructions and ordinances, the addressees of the authorities' announcements genuinely became "the public" in the proper sense. From the very beginning, the political journals had reported on the journeys and returns of the princes, on the arrival of foreign dignitaries, on balls, "special events" (*Solennitäten*) at court, appointments, etc.; in the context of this news from the Court, which can be thought of as a kind of transposition of the publicity of representation into the new form of public sphere,

there also appeared "sovereign ordinances in the subjects' best interest." Very soon the press was systematically made to serve the interests of the state administration. As late as March 1769 a press ordinance of the Vienna government witnessed the style of this practice: "In order that the writer of the journal might know what sort of domestic decrees, arrangements, and other matters are suitable for the public, such are to be compiled weekly by the authorities and are to be forwarded to the editor of the journal."^{4H} As we know from the letters of Hugo Grotius, then Swedish emissary in Paris, Richelieu already possessed a lively sense of the usefulness of the new instrument.⁴⁹ He was a patron of the *Gazette* established in 1631 by Renaudot, which served as the model for the *Gazette of London* that appeared from 1665 on under Charles II. Two years earlier the officially authorized *Intelligencer* had appeared in London, itself preceded by the *Daily Intelligencer of Court, City, and County* that sporadically appeared as early as 1643.⁵⁰ Everywhere these advertisers, which first arose in France as aids to address agencies or intelligence agencies, became the preferred instruments of governments.⁵¹ Many times the intelligence agencies were taken over by governments, and the advertisers changed into official gazettes. According to an order of 1727 by the Prussian cabinet, this institution was intended "to be useful for the public" and to "facilitate communication." Besides the decrees and proclamations "in police, commerce, and manufacture" there appeared the quotations of the produce markets, of the taxes on food items, and generally of the most important prices of domestic and imported products; in addition, stock market quotations and trade reports and reports on water levels were published. Accordingly, the Palatine-Bavarian government could announce to the "commercial public" an advertiser "in the service of trade and the common man, so that he can inform himself both about the decrees that from time to time are issued by the King and about the prices of various commodities so that he can sell his merchandise at a better price."⁵²

The authorities addressed their promulgations to "the" public, that is, in principle to all subjects. Usually they did not reach the "common man" in this way, but at best the "educated classes." Along with the apparatus of the modern state, a new

stratum of "bourgeois" people arose which occupied a central position within the "public." The officials of the rulers' administrations were its core—mostly jurists (at least on the continent, where the technique of the received Roman law was adopted as an instrument for the rationalization of social organization). Added to them were doctors, pastors, officers, professors, and "scholars," who were at the top of a hierarchy reaching down through schoolteachers and scribes to the "people."^{r,s}

For in the meantime the genuine "burghers," the old occupational orders of craftsmen and shopkeepers, suffered downward social mobility; they lost their importance along with the very towns upon whose citizens' rights their status was based. At the same time, the great merchants outgrew the confining framework of the towns and in the form of companies linked themselves directly with the state. Thus, the "capitalists," the merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers (at least where, unlike in Hamburg, the towns could not maintain their independence from the territorial rulers) belonged to that group of the "bourgeois" who, like the new category of scholars, were not really "burghers" in the traditional sense.⁵⁴ This stratum of "bourgeois" was the real carrier of the public, which from the outset was a reading public. Unlike the great urban merchants and officials who, in former days, could be assimilated by the cultivated nobility of the Italian Renaissance courts, they could no longer be integrated *in toto* into the noble culture at the close of the Baroque period. Their commanding status in the new sphere of civil society led instead to a tension between "town" and "court," whose typical form in different nations will concern us later.⁵⁵

In this stratum, which more than any other was affected *and* called upon by mercantilist policies, the state authorities evoked a resonance leading the *publicum*, the abstract counterpart of public authority, into an awareness of itself as the latter's opponent, that is, as the public of the now emerging *public sphere of civil society*. For the latter developed to the extent to which the public concern regarding the private sphere of civil society was no longer confined to the authorities but was considered by the subjects as one that was properly theirs. Besides the carriers of commercial and finance capitalism, a growing group

of entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and factory owners became dependent upon measures taken by the state administration whose intent certainly was not merely that of controlling commercial-entrepreneurial activity but also of encouraging initiative through regulation. Mercantilism did not at all, as widespread prejudice would have it, favor state enterprise; rather, its commercial policy, albeit in a bureaucratic fashion, promoted the establishment and dissolution of private businesses run in a capitalist manner.⁵⁶ The relationship between the authorities and the subjects thereby assumed the peculiar ambivalence of public regulation and private initiative. In this way the zone in which public authority, by way of continuous administrative acts, maintained contact with private people, was rendered problematic. This in fact involved a wider circle of persons than those participating directly in capitalist production. To the degree to which the latter became pervasive, the number of self-sufficient economic units shrank and the dependence of local markets upon regional and national ones grew. Accordingly, broad strata of the population, especially in the towns, were affected in their daily existence as consumers by the regulations of mercantilist policy. Not the notorious dress codes but taxes and duties and, generally, official interventions into the privatized household finally came to constitute the target of a developing critical sphere. When there was a scarcity of wheat, bread consumption on Friday evenings was prohibited by official decree.⁵⁷ Because, on the one hand, the society now confronting the state clearly separated a private domain from public authority and because, on the other hand, it turned the reproduction of life into something transcending the confines of private domestic authority and becoming a subject of public interest, that zone of continuous administrative contact became "critical" also in the sense that it provoked the critical judgment of a public making use of its reason. The public could take on this challenge all the better as it required merely a change in the function of the instrument with whose help the state administration had already turned society into a public affair in a specific sense—the press.

As early as in the last third of the seventeenth century journals were complemented by periodicals containing not primar-

ily information but pedagogical instructions and even criticism and reviews. At first there were scholarly periodicals speaking to the circle of educated laymen: Denys de Sallo's *Journal des Savants* of 1665, Otto Mencken's *Acta Eniditorum* of 1682, and finally the famous *Monatsgesprache* of 1688 by Thomasius; these forged the model for an entire genre of periodicals. In the course of the first half of the eighteenth century, in the guise of the so-called learned article, critical reasoning made its way into the daily press. When, from 1729 on, the *Hallenser Intelligenzblatt*, besides the usual material contained in advertisers also published learned articles, book reviews, and occasionally "a historical report sketched by a professor and relevant to current events," the Prussian King was moved to take the development into his own hands. Even the use of one's own reason as such was subjected to regulation. All chaired professors of the faculties of law, medicine, and philosophy were to take turns in "submitting to the editor of the gazette, expeditiously and no later than Thursday, a special note, composed in a pure and clear style of writing."⁵⁸ In general "the scholars were to inform the public of useful truths." In this instance bourgeois writers still made use of their reason at the behest of the territorial ruler; soon they were to think their own thoughts, directed against the authorities. In a rescript of Frederick II from 1784 one reads: "A private person has no right to pass *public* and perhaps even disapproving judgment on the actions, procedures, laws, regulations, and ordinances of sovereigns and courts, their officials, assemblies, and courts of law, or to promulgate or publish in print pertinent reports that he manages to obtain. For a private person is not at all capable of making such judgment, because he lacks complete knowledge of circumstances and motives."⁵⁹ A few years before the French Revolution, the conditions in Prussia looked like a static model of a situation that in France and especially in Great Britain had become fluid at the beginning of the century. The inhibited judgments were called "public" in view of a public sphere that without question had counted as a sphere of public authority, but was now casting itself loose as a forum in which the private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opin-

ion. The *publicum* developed into the public, the *subjedum* into the [reasoning] subject, the receiver of regulations from above into the ruling authorities' adversary.

The history of words preserved traces of this momentous shift. In Great Britain, from the middle of the seventeenth century on, there was talk of "public," whereas until then "world" or "mankind" was usual. Similarly, in France *le public* began to denote what in the eighteenth century, according to Grimm's *Wörterbuch*, also gained currency throughout Germany as *Publikum* (its use spreading from Berlin). Until then one spoke of the "world of readers" (*Lesewelt*), or simply of the "world" (*Welt*) in the sense still used today: all the world, *tout le monde*. Adelung draws a distinction between the public that gathered as a crowd around a speaker or actor in a public place, and the *Lesewelt* (world of readers).⁶⁰ Both, however, were instances of a "critical (*richtend*) public." Whatever was submitted to the judgment of the public gained *Publizität* (publicity). At the end of the seventeenth century the English "publicity" was borrowed from the French *publicité* in Germany the word surfaced in the eighteenth century. Criticism itself was presented in the form of *öffentliche Meinung*, a word formed in the second half of the eighteenth century in analogy to *opinion publique*. In Great Britain "public opinion" arose at about the same time; the expression "general opinion," however, had been in use long before.

Notes

Preface

1. Cf. W. Hennis, "Bemerkungen zur wissenschaftsgeschichtlichen Situation der politischen Wissenschaft," *Staat, Gesellschaft, Erziehung* 5:203ff.; *Htm. Politik und praktische Philosophie* (Neuwied, 1963); regarding the latter, see my essay, "The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy," *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston, 1973), 41-81.

1 Introduction: Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere

1. See below, 23ff.
2. *Deutsches Wörterbuch der Brüder Grimm* (Leipzig, 1889), 7:1183, art. "Öffentlichkeit."
3. *Weigand's Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 5th ed. (Glessen, 1910), 2:232.
4. Most recently H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958).
5. See J. Kirchner, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Begriffs "öffentlich" und "öffentliches Recht"* Ph.D. diss. (Göttingen, 1919). 2. The *res publica* is public property that is universally accessible to the *populus*, i.e. the *res extra commercium*, which is exempted from the law that applies to the *privati* and their property; e.g., *fiumen publicum*, *via publica*, etc. *Ibid.*, 10ff.
6. Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft* (Brünn, 1943), 386f.
7. Kirchner, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Begriffs*, 22.
8. We leave aside the problem of late medieval town sovereignty. On the level of the "territory" we encounter the towns (which usually belonged to the prince's crown land) as an integral component of feudalism. In early capitalism, however, the free towns assumed a decisive role in the evolution of the bourgeois public sphere. See below, section 3. 25ff.

9. *The Oxford Dictionary* (1909), 7:2.

10. On the history of the concept of "representation," see the remarks in H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1975), p.125, n. 53 (on 513-14): "The history of this word is very informative. The Romans used it, but in the light of the Christian idea of the incarnation and the mystical body it acquired a completely new meaning. Representation now no longer means 'copy' or 'representation in a picture' . . . but 'replacement.' The word can obviously have this meaning because what is represented is present in the copy. *Repraesentare* means 'to make present.' . . . The important thing about the legal idea of representation is that the *persona repraesentata* is only the person represented, and yet the representative, who is exercising the former's right, is dependent on him." See also the supplementary observation on p.514: "*Repraesentatio* in the sense of 'representation' on the stage—which in the middle ages can only mean in a religious play—can be found already in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. . . . this does not mean that *repraesentatio* signifies performance' but signifies, until the seventeenth century, the represented presence of the divine itself."

11. C. Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre*, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1957), 208ff.; on the localization of this medieval concept of public ity in the context of intellectual history, see A. Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium* (Darmstadt, 1954), esp. ch. 2, pp. 21ff., on the "Forms of Publicity."

12. Carl Schmitt observes that the rhetorical formula is as intimately connected to representative publicity as discussion is linked to the bourgeois version: "It is not speech in the form of discussion and argumentation but, if the expression be permitted, representative speech [that is] decisive. . . . Slipping neither into discourse, nor dictate, nor dialectic, it moves along in its architecture. Its grand diction is more than music: it is human dignity become visible in the rationality of speech as it assumes form. All this presupposes a hierarchy, for the spiritual resonance of grand rhetoric comes from faith in the representation to which the orator lays claim." *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (München, 1925), 32f.

13. Arnold Hauser. *The Social History of AH* (New York, 1951) 1:209-10.

14. Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form*, 26.

15. J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Garden City, NY, 1952).

16. For a view that differs from Jacob Burchkhardt's famous interpretation, see the exposition by O. Brunner, *Adeliges iMndleben* (Salzburg, 1949), 108ff.

17. On the plane of intellectual history Gadamer develops the connection between this early tradition of educational humanism and those formulae of *sensxis communis* and of "taste" (a category in moral philosophy) whose sociological implications reveal the significance of courtly humanism for the formation of the "public sphere." With regard to Gracian's educational ideal, he comments: "It is remarkable within the history of Western ideals of Bildung for being independent of class. It is the ideal of a society based on Bildung. . . . Taste is not only the ideal created by a new society, but we see this ideal of 'good taste' producing what was subsequently called 'good society.' Its criteria are no longer birth and rank but simply the shared nature of its judgments or, rather, its capacity to rise above the narrowness of interests and private predilections to the title of judgment. The concept of taste undoubtedly includes a mode of knowing. It is through good taste that we are capable of standing back from ourselves and our private preferences. Thus taste, in its essential nature, is not private, but a social phenomenon of the first order. It can even counter the private inclinations of the individual like a court of law, in the name of a universality that it represents." Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 34.

18. R. Alewyn, *Das grosse WeUhraler. Die Epoche der höfischen Frsu* (Hamburg, 19&9). K -

19. "On ail public occasions, victory celebrations, and peace treaties, illuminanc»r« nt-rl fireworks are merely the finale of a day that started at dawn with rounds o' aw » fire and the blowing of the (own pipers from every tower, a day on which v:lnv f, the fountains of the city and entire oxen were publicly roasted on a spit, a d nj'tlii * was given over, until late into the night, to the dancing and games and rnerr.meiv a crowd lhat had flocked together from far and wide. In the baroqueperiod tlvs no different than in ages past, and only the era of the bourgeoisie wrought j .j I change." Alewyn, *Das grosse Welttheater*, 43.

20. Ibid.

21. See P. Joachimsen, "Zur historischen Psychologie des deutschen Staatsgedankensr' *Die Dioskuren. Jahrbuch für Criluxuiofnuckaftm*, vol. I (1921).

22. *Weigands Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 475.

23. *Deutsches Wörterbuch der Brüder Grimm*. 21371.

24. *The Oxford Dictionary*, 1 388f.

25. *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* (1875), vol. 3, art. "privé."

26. In his contribution, "Der soziale Gehalt von Goethes Roman Wilhelm Mei;i*r s Lehtjahre," *Erinnerungsgabe für Max Weber*, ed. Melchior Palyi (München und L-eipg;:, ISIS*. 2:279ff., Werner Witiich has drawn attention to this letter from a socioljicesil perspective. [Translator's note: For the passages from Goethe cited in the text I have used Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship (Wilhelm Aleüirs Lehrjahre)*, trans. Thomas Carlyle (Boston, 1901), vol. 2. bk. 5, ch. 3, pp.13-15.)

27. W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 3rd ed. (München und Leipzig. 1913). «i'i'. bk.1, p.33.

28. M. Dobb, *Studies in the DielupmetU of Capitalism* (London, 1954), I 60f.: "Atairy rate, it is clear that a mature development of merchant and financial capital is nwof itselfa guarantee that capitalist production will develop under its wirçç."

29. Ibid., 83ff.

30. H. Sée, *Modern Capitalism: Its Origin and Evolution* (New York, 1 968)-

31. In Germany especially Strassburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Frankfurt, C* Jo 1,rr< Hamburg, Lübeck, and Leipzig.

32. This occurred quite early on in Venice through the writers of news letters, *scnun- i d'avisì*, in Rome they were called *gaiettani*, in Paris *nouvellistes*, in London *witei*. letters, and in Germany *Zeitunger* or *Novellisten*. In the course of the sixteenth cenur-y they became suppliers of formal weekly reports, the newsletters, of which the so-called *Fvggeneitungen* were typical in Germany. (The approximately 40,000 reportifrotnilif years between 1565 and 1605, however, originated not only in such news offices bitt also among employees and business friends of the House of Fugger.)

33. W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 2:369.

34. For a long lime ihereporls ofiheStrassburg printer and merchantjohann Carta s

were held to be the oldest newspaper; see, however, the investigation by Helmut Fischer, *Die ältesten Zeitungen und ihre Verleger* (Augsburg, 1936).

35. The traditional form of authority included as one of its elements the right to represent and interpret whatever was held to be "the ancient truth." Communications concerning actual events remained anchored in this knowledge of the tradition. Anything novel appeared under the aspect of a more or less marvelous event. "New facts," if only they were sufficiently unusual, were transformed in the court of the "ancient truth" into something "extraordinary"—into signs and miracles. Facts were transfigured into ciphers. Since they could only be representations of knowledge vouched for by tradition, the novel and the surprising assumed an enigmatic structure. In this respect no distinction was made between events in the world or nature and in human history; natural catastrophes and historical incidents were considered equally suitable for miraculous stories. The fifteenth-century broadsheets and sixteenth-century single-sheet prints called *New Journals* still bore witness to the strength with which an unbroken traditional knowledge was able to assimilate communications whose rising stream, to be sure, already pointed to a new form of public sphere. Such sheets indiscriminately spread the news of religious wars, campaigns against the Turks, and Papal decrees as well as news of rains of blood and fire, freaks, locust plagues, earthquakes, thunderstorms, and heavenly phenomena; of Papal Bulls, electoral agreements, and discoveries of new continents as well as of baptisms of Jews, punishments by the devil, divine judgments, and resurrections of the dead. Often the *New Journals*, like the broadsheets before them, were written in the form of songs or dialogues, i.e., were meant to be declaimed or sung, alone or with others. In this process, the novelty moved out of the historical sphere of "news" and, as sign and miracle, was reintegrated into that sphere of representation in which a ritualized and ceremonialized participation of the people in the public sphere permitted a merely passive acceptance incapable of independent interpretation. Characteristically, even songs were published as *New Journals*, e.g., the so-called historical folk songs that at once transported the political events of the day into the sphere of the heroic epic. See E. Everth, *Die Öffentlichkeit in der Außenpolitik* (Jena, 1931), 114. In general, cf. Karl Bücher, "Die Grundlagen des Zeitungswesens," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Zeitungskunde* (Tübingen, 1926), 1ff. The content of some broadsheets has survived until today in the form of nursery rhymes.

36. G. Schmoller, *Umriss und Untersuchungen* (Leipzig, 1898), 37.

37. In the founding charter of 1553 the "Adventurers" called themselves a "mystery and Company of the Marchants Adventurers for the Discovery of regions, dominions, islands, and places unknown." Cf. Sie, *Modern Capitalism*, 55f.

38. See E. F. Heckscher, *Merkantilismus* (Jena, 1932), 1:108ff. [English version: *Mercantilism* (New York: Macmillan, 1935).]

39. In the areas where Roman Law was adopted, the fiction of the *fiscus* became the legal expression for a state household independent from the prince's person; at the same time it furnished subjects with the advantage of being able to raise private legal claims against the state.

40. "Greater export meant greater opportunity for the employment of labour in home manufacture; and increased employment of labour represented a widened scope for investments of capital in industry." Dobb, *Studies in The Development of Capitalism*, 218.

41. The classic expression were Colbert's regulations for the industrial techniques of textile manufacturing. But even in Great Britain regulations regarding raw materials, the manner of their processing, and the quality of the finished products existed until

the second half of the eighteenth century. See Heckscher, *Merkantilismus*, 1:118ff. and 20 Iff.

42. J. Schumpeter, *Die Krise des Steuerstaates* (Leipzig, 1918), 16.

43. H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46: "Civil society," *Zwischenstaat, société civile*, in the eighteenth-century usage of the words, often still betray the older tradition of political theory, which does not yet differentiate "civil society" from the "state." On this, see M. Riedel, "Aristoteles-tradition am Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Alteuropa und die moderne Gesellschaft Festschrift für Otto Brunner*, ed. Alexander Bergengruen and Ludwig Deike (Göllingen, 1963), 276ff.; Riedel, "Hegels Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und das Problem ihres Ursprungs," *ARS Bei* 48 (1962): 39ff. Much earlier the new sphere of the social received its apt apolitical conceptualization in modern natural law. See my essay referred to above in note 1 to the Preface

44. O. Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben*, 244ff.

45. See K. Kempters, *Die wirtschaftliche Berichterstattung in den sog. Fuggerulungen* (München, 1936).

46. Hermann Bode, *Anfänge der wirtschaftlichen Berichterstattung* (Heidelberg, 1908), 25: "The newspaper was a secondary news organ compared to the Jener, which in the seventeenth century was quite generally considered the faster and more reliable news source." See also Heinrich Goitsch, *Entwicklung und Strukturwandlung des Wirtschaftsteils der deutschen Tageszeitung*. Ph. D. diss. (Frankfurt, 1939).

* 47. O. Groth, *Die Zeitung* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1928), 1:580.

48. Cited later Groth, *Die Zeitung*, 1:585.

49. E. Everth, *Die Öffentlichkeit in der Aussenpolitik*, 202.

50. Stanley Morrison, *The English Newspaper* (Cambridge, 1932).

51. W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 2:406ff.; also K. Bücher *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Zeitungskunde*, 87. As in the first intelligence sheets so too in eighteenth-century advertisements the advertisements still referred to the commodities and deadlines outside the usual business routines, to special offers, books, medicine, travel companionships, domestic servants, etc. Commercial advertising in the proper sense was rare: the local market for goods and services was still a matter of face-to-face contact.

52. Groth, *Die Zeitung*, 1:598.

53. R. Stadelmann and W. Fischer, *Die Bildungswelt des deutschen Handwerks* (Berlin, 1955), 40. Compare also Br. Kuske, "Der Einfluss des Staates auf die geschichtliche Entwicklung der sozialen Gruppen in Deutschland," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 2 (1949): 193ff

54. Percy Ernst Schramm, *Hamburg, Deutschland und die Welt* (München, 1943), 37, stresses this difference precisely in comparing the social development of Hamburg with that of the rest of the Reich: "The feature that constituted the authentic townsman (*Bürger*) is precisely what they (i.e., the bourgeois) lacked, namely, membership in a town community confirmed by an oath of citizenship. . . . These others, who were not 'citizens' but 'bourgeois,' served their masters, their church, and their employers or were 'free' as members of a liberal profession; but they had nothing more in common among themselves than that they belonged to the 'bourgeoisie'—which did not mean

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