The Problematic of the Current Social Bond

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English Summary of the Dissertation
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English Summary

1 The Current Social Bond

The dissertation focuses on and seeks to highlight the strangely immaterial social bond that connects us in a number of ways. The aim is to disentangle the elements in this complex bond, to identify and articulate certain of its salient features, and then to suggest how it is that these influence ordinary social intercourse.

In the social bond, I seek that which ties us together into relations of obligation by virtue of its determining influence on our social interaction and on those actions and events that are to be deemed possible or permissible, as well as in relation to the extent to which these events and actions are able, as it were, to leave indelible traces or marks. The social bond connects us precisely because it determines what it is that can feature as a social *event*.

It would be a fundamental error to assume that the dissertation – in its examination of the social bond – renders or exposes a reality in the normal sense of the word. It does not concern itself with what we actually do, nor with what it is that actually happens, neither does it concern itself with what it is that *is happening;* and this because its object of orientation is quite another. I am not interested in reality, but a far more meaningful *antecedent* problem.

The objective is to delineate the coming into being (the emergence) – and the evolution of – a level which always seems already to have had an effect upon, and to have formed, a reality before it has emerged. The examination is thus concerned with the level of *prescription*. The dissertation articulates a level upon which guidelines for how we – in interaction with the surrounding world – establish guidelines for how it is we, together with our surrounding world, can become, can emerge and inscribe indelible traces, or leave a mark. This prescriptive level is given precedence over the real, insofar as the real is understood as that which is the case.

The prescriptive level is important, not only because it has a determining effect on what exists, but also on what we imagine possible, and also, therefore, on what *is*; on being in the broadest sense. Not only is the prescriptive given precedence over the actual, it is seen as more important than the existing. The

prescriptive has already played a guiding or piloting role as soon as the real can be known as an object of knowledge, as soon as one can imagine the possible as something that might happen, as soon as one can point out the potentially realisable as something one can hope for or act in order to bring about, and even – perhaps – as soon as one postulates a way of being for the being (a certain ontology), beyond the known, the projected and the initiated. At the same time, it prescribes how it is that all that is to come into being subsequently will have to emerge.

The current, overpowering social context does not appear to have the immediate character of a substantial community that could serve as a secure unifying foundation for social intercourse or interaction. There does not appear to be any unifying, localisable or articulable consensus that we can refer to as cornerstone. Instead, in the current situation, we appear to be intertwined and bound up in relationships of mutual interconnection in a range of various and quite different ways. The social bond that ties us together would seem to consist of a number of mutually overlapping threads of which none, considered in isolation, appears to be substantial or fundamental.

Individually, these threads seem to be derivatives of our own design, structures that we ourselves have put into effect and which we can, in principle, fashion at will. As relations, they are dynamic in character and are in a continual process of creation and renewal; they are endowed with plasticity, yielding and reshaping when exposed to pressure, ever changing and developing, able to incorporate the new as they restructure, reassociate, realign and reform in new ways.

Together, these threads constitute a complex social bond that cannot be evaded. They form an intercorrelation of untold complexity, which has an unceasing determining effect on individual social actions and events in a manifold of ways, of which we can never establish an overview, and which cannot be confronted en bloc.[i] In the final analysis, the threads that collectively constitute the social bond assume the network's overpowering, unavoidable and – at the same time – diffuse character. The bond takes on the character of a second 'manmade' nature which has freed itself from those who presume to be

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[i] As the effect here is the collective effect of a range of heterogeneous elements, the intercorrelation overdetermines any individual social stratagem and its result. This, however, does not mean that it completely determines the action or event. Overdetermination makes a new, limited, disengagement or emancipation from the particular determined factor possible.

its authors, and subjects them to a complex, inscrutable and insoluble alien structural coercion.

In its insubstantiality, social unity can thus be experienced as a diffuse extraneous order, which is in a state of on-going development and which has, therefore, only the status of a *provisional consensus*. This ephemeral unity may, however, appear as a random and precarious convergence, which is continually challenged and re-challenged, and seems to be on the verge of disintegration. In this sense, the social context appears to be a miraculous Münchhausen construct: a thin veneer we produce and maintain against all odds, through constant exertion and unremitting attempts to adjust, to balance and to harmonise the contradictions that continually threaten to rupture and explode the social order. We create and re-create our social unity inasmuch as we, like Baron von Münchhausen, attempt to save ourselves from the plummeting freefall toward the gaping quagmire that threatens to engulf us, by seizing ourselves by the hair in mid-flight.

In spite of its insubstantiality and intangibility, however, the social bond can seem invulnerable and enduring. We experience ourselves as being bound together into a manifold intertwinedness of which we always already are a part, out of which we cannot extricate ourselves, from which we cannot withdraw, even though we may desire to do so, and which has a determining effect on our actions and their consequences. We experience ourselves as participants in, and as subsisting in, an intangible yet unyielding fellowship of common destiny that we do not seem to be able to control; a fellowship that we can neither fathom nor escape. Today's Leviathan, our eternal worldly social idol, our *im*mortal worldly God, binds us all – even its opponents – with fibres of the kind that the Nordic demigods, the Aser, once spun to bind the brother of Hel, the Fenris Wolf – that shadowy threat to the societies of men and gods. Yet it is a thread of subtle tensile properties, spun out of the sound of the footfall of the cat, of women's beards and of the roots of the mountain. In spite of the fact that *community* in the traditional sense of the word, formulated in terms of a fundamental agreement on certain basic intrinsic values, cannot be presupposed, we do – as a matter of fact – experience a society in the shape of a tight-knit *sociality* into which all of us are inescapably interwoven.

When we attempt to come to terms with and to comprehend this sociality as such, we have an unavoidable tendency to conceive of it within a conceptual framework adapted to the explication of traditional value-based communities; a frame of reference which is inadequate when it comes to the articulation of our

sociality's uniquely characteristic social bond. Because our ideas of community have not kept apace, our articulation of the present social context tends to oversimplification; we assume far too undifferentiated a stance towards it. If we take the traditional idea of community as our point of departure, the current social context appears to be a disintegration of a community that seemed to have been. When seen in relation to a former idea of common fellowship and the security and straightforward transparency that an integrated membership of an actual community based on this idea might have provided, a disintegration of this kind allows only of a negative determination as decadence or decay. This disintegration can, however, be given a positive determination if the absence of a unifying sense of community with its implicit ties is accentuated, creating the possibility of a new freedom, openness and independence.

The problem in hand does not appear to be that of the foundering of communities having opened a path to pure chaos or realms of freedom. The current problem is rather that of another form of social context (and indeed the prescription of this social context) already having supplanted its alleged predecessor *prior* to our discovering that the notion of the community as such fails to function as a fundamental social bond – indeed, prior to our discovering that it may never have thus functioned – and that the community seems to be in a state of disintegration, precisely because it has become apparent that it has already been succeeded by something that has reduced it to the merely residual. The problem in which we are embroiled here and now, and which demands closer examination and analysis, is that we feel ourselves to be inexorably bound up in ways hitherto unknown and – with the help of obsolete conceptions of society alone – in ways unknowable. This itself makes any positive determination problematical. In so far as the generic nature of the general social context is so diffuse, it is difficult to understand precisely the difficulties posed and the routes opened by the kinds of ambiguity sketched here, *before* they assume their manifest and critical form.

In the dissertation I attempt a more differentiated articulation of the complex web that actually binds us than that made possible on the basis of traditional categories alone; an articulation that is able to distinguish between and identify the critical and salient components of this web. This differentiated articulation takes the form of a protracted historical exposition. In the account, I specify the character of the social bond's most general components, showing how – over a longer period of time – these have separated and divided, leading up to the point where they have assumed their current shape. In the course of this historical

analysis I also work out, clarify and expand on a new historico- and socioanalytic categorical framework, necessary if we are to capture and render the unique and complex character of the contemporary social context, while avoiding any misconceptions that might arise as a result of a regressive, backward looking employment of traditional categories. I demonstrate how it is that the current context's separate components can be described as *dispositional* installations (or compounds of a range of primarily heterogeneous components) which have a prescriptive effect on, and which themselves are constantly determined by, that which happens, and this without restlessly fixing – or being fixed by – what it is that happens as such. Concurrent with the explication of this historical process of differentiation and the specification of how we are to understand the divided elements, I illustrate how, through a long process of historical displacement, the components identified form a social bond of an entirely different character, which nevertheless ties us into relations of obligation.

With an articulation of the current, complex social bond and its networklike character as a springboard, it is possible to establish a context out of – or a series of connections between – a whole gamut of thought provoking ambiguities experienced in the current, complex, inscrutable and ever changing social state; experienced ambiguities that seemingly make this state point in distinct, but quite different directions. It becomes possible to illustrate why it is that the individual experiences a personal autonomy, while at the same time he has to confront a personal heteronomy and feeling of powerlessness; why it is that everything in the sociality as such appears contingent and alterable, while – at one and the same time – one grows familiar with society's abject surrender to an inherent, inexorable logic of development which it seems beyond one's power to change; how it is that a feeling of the present's weightlessness and rootlessness jars against an experience of the present caving in under the infinite, crushing weight of the past; why it is that an existence supersaturated with reflection stumbles upon the impotence of reflection; why all that is solid seems to melt into air, while everything anyway seems to remain the same. With a new articulation, we can establish a set of conditions that enable us to assume a more differentiated and distantiated stance to these ambiguities. At the same time, the dissertation illustrates how the societal surfaces as an overpowering and unfathomable problem.

2 The Historical Differentiation

Any chance prescription initiated by random participants who happen to make this prescription apply to others in social intercourse is not central here. What is of prime importance is the prescriptive level that asserts itself in the reciprocal prescription that takes place in social intercourse and interaction as *unavoidably binding* for this intercourse. The dissertation elaborates the level upon which the social bond *generates sociality*. The current situation exists on the basis of a quantum of history that can make its presence felt implicitly or in 'sublated' form.

The route that I have chosen in order to gain a certain internal distantiation from the social bond and which facilitates a certain overview of it is, therefore, the path of *historical inquiry*. Through the untimeliness of the long perspective of the past, I attempt to create an untimely distance to the unsurveyability of the present, so that certain significant features of the present can be placed at the fore and less significant features can be allowed to pale into the background.

With my point of departure in the central and significant events of the past – researched partly through primary and partly through secondary sources – I articulate a protracted perspective of the past that consists of gradual displacements and dislocations. The perspective spans from Ancient and Germanic accusative justice to the present day.

The examination in question covers a past that appears as a boundless succession of *events*. It concentrates on the constant upheavals of the past and the departures that each of these implies, together with the minor, at times almost imperceptible, dislocations that they cause when they alloy themselves to the antecedent sum of actions and events from which they themselves have emerged. The inquiry presents a past that bears the character of a continual addition, or a *re-accretion,* the common mode of being (or 'historicity') of which has been a *microtransformativity*.

The inquiry further aims to establish how, in retrospect, we can expose a systematism in this continual transformativity. The dissertation accounts for how, in the past thus described, the new has continually been added to the already existing, so that aspects of social praxis and interaction – which in retrospect appear as formerly implicit and undifferentiated – have gradually been articulated in an increasingly specific way, insofar as they have been presented as considerations that must explicitly be taken into account.

In the dissertation, I take an interest in a past that proves to be a process of continual supplementation or accretion; of the continual addition to the old which unfolds that which was previously contained in latent or embryonic form, thus making it clearer and more pronounced. At the same time, I demonstrate how it is that former processes of articulation can be conceived of as a dividing of that which was formerly not in any way separate. This process of continual cleaving and grafting has resulted in an increasing differentiation and refinement of aspects that were formerly conflated, and taken into account in connection with other aspects. The microtransformativity of prehistory has been systematised in such a way that it has taken the shape of an unceasing gemmation, which is at once both a process of *articulation* and *differentiation*. In this process of articulation, that which is added unfolds the old, and in so doing, makes the past explicit.

This process of differentiation has continually been at work; indeed, is still at work today. Not only does the process remain unconcluded in the present, it is in principle unending, inasmuch as the undifferentiated always allows of further, continual and more refined differentiation.[i] The inquiry thus covers a past that has the character of a *multiple and unending division.*

In spite of this, I work out how it is that certain individual events begin to form more general, slowly developing patterns when connected with a number of other events, each of which implied a displacement. In each of the four parts of the dissertation I articulate, in the context of an examination of a range of past events, *a general systematism* that implies an unfolding and refinement, a relative *autonomisation*, which – in a process of unfolding – at the same time iterates or makes explicit a single aspect of a social praxis that formerly lay undeveloped and implicit.

The first half of Part I, "Justice and its Decisions" articulates an initial social interaction and commerce promulgated through ancient common accusative justice and customary law.[ii] In the second half of Part I, I explain how a

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[i] In so far as an action or occurrence that takes place can be conceived of and understood as an act that makes a difference in relation to the past in one or a number of ways, it can be characterised as an event. Any transformative accretion can, as a matter of principle, be considered as an act that introduces new, critical differentiations or divisions of – or into – the established order.

[ii] That the law is archaic and later has new accretions superimposed upon it does not mean that primitive common law disappears. On the contrary, law remains a vital part of social interaction. In this sense, the articulation of common law remains important. Accusative justice and common law established primordial and highly differentiated rituals for concrete solutions to – and the expedition

pronouncement of truth, originally incorporated in and closely related to prescriptive decrees of right, was further secreted and became irreducible in relation to justice already in the world of the ancients. I further illustrate how, in the course of the Middle Ages, the exposition, enunciation and pursuit of a form of truth which was supposed to reveal what was the case and establish it as an irrefutable fact was recognised, institutionalised and conceived of as universally binding.

In Part II, "Law and its Partition", I demonstrate how, already in the course of the Southern and Central European Middle Ages, Law was divided and presented as an independent system, binding social intercourse and interaction. Subsequently, I demonstrate how it was that the Law in this form began to assume its overpowering and ever-present status in the course of modern times. By virtue of the fact that it was no longer sufficient to make manifest the legal boundaries dividing the permissible from the forbidden, but also deemed necessary to *intern* members of society who had transgressed these boundaries, the modality and effect of the Law was developed more unequivocally in certain respects than hitherto. With the beginnings of modernity, the Law had attained an unassailable status. This had a tangible effect in the form of, among other things, the working out and laying down of a number of Constitutions. That the Law became independent, overpowering, unassailable and of crucial significance meant that a general transformation of social intercourse took place. Social intercourse was endowed with a determinate foundation in the shape of the Law. It was based on a set of openly formulated universal and universally binding commands. This fundamental change had to be confronted, even by those who wished to break the social contract.

Part III, "Discipline and its Surveillance", shows how – with the advent of modernity – certain aspects of social praxis became *disciplined* and what happened when a disciplining of behaviour was cultivated. I then proceed to account for the way in which discipline necessitated improved *surveillance* if it was to be essential and effective, and how in time it was made complete by surveillance. I also describe how the increasing dissemination of discipline came to expression through the rationalised disciplining of institutions in which maladjusted elements had formerly simply been interned. The propagation of

of – continually resurfacing conflicts. These rituals have continually been revived, and with the concrete mutual interpenetration of the primitive and social dislocation that they represent, are re-actualised in current widespread mediative practises to a higher degree than has been the case for a long period of time. Today, justice, with its apparatus, makes its present felt, albeit on a new plane.

discipline continued, until it came to have a thoroughgoing influence on social praxis in the first half of last century.

In Part IV, "Governmentality and its Economy", I examine how – throughout a protracted prehistory, but first effectively with the beginnings of modernity – the government of others began to be conceived of as an activity possessed of its own inherent logic. I explain how this governmentality – which increasingly took care of both collective and individual welfare, only to take over the complete administration of these – subsequently achieved the status of a total, overpowering and self overpowering rationality. Parallel to this, there was an increasing awareness of how government, if it were to be optimal, had to model itself upon the object it sought to administrate, taking the inherent logic the object exhibited into account in the effort to govern it. Continuing in this vein, Part IV further demonstrates how *economy* became the clearest example of a form of social exchange, possessed of so independent a character that government had to abdicate responsibility for its administration; every effort to administrate it being doomed to come too late. Finally, I suggest that the new systematism according to which the interchange and interaction of the social net's disparate elements is currently being organised, is that of *negotiation*. I demonstrate how it is that the interaction between the particular articulated or divided elements of the network has begun to be organised within the framework of a systematism of negotiation.

Just as the dissertation does not concern itself with reality as such, the various parts of the dissertation do not examine what was actually done in any given period. The question is not that of attempting to unearth what it is that once was thought, intended or even sought after in the widest sense. Instead, the various parts of the dissertation describe a systematism that, with the benefit of hindsight, must be assumed to have had a determining effect on that fund of events that have been included, and has implied that precisely these events and not others occurred. They collectively describe the prescription that must be assumed to have taken place, affecting a field of events that are widely spread in time and space.

While each part works out a systematism, collectively they suggest how the different systematisms conflict with each other; how they utilise, interpret and introject each other, each in its respective context. In my analysis of the events of the past, I seek to read a certain regularity or pattern into them, which demonstrates how it is that certain forms of social intercourse, which single themselves out from the dominant forms of the time, surface and take on a

position of central importance. The relevance of the inquiry for the present is underpinned by a consideration of how it is that the formerly dominant forms of intercourse uncovered in the analysis still have a bearing today. Each of the formerly dominant patterns is only ever provisional, in so far as it competes with, interplays with, and determines the other patterns described, and thus plays a role in the shaping of a new, unprecedented and seemingly unsurveyable pattern. Individual patterns continue to have an effect only by virtue of the fact that they contribute to the formation of new, general, relevant forms of social intercourse.

The history of becoming that the dissertation describes does not, therefore, take on the form of a cleaving off that identifies and isolates autonomous areas (or for that matter spheres or 'bodies') that single themselves out and distinguish themselves clearly and distinctly from others in an orientation around their own, unique nucleus, which would mean that they were able to meet each other externally or 'head on' as it were. The process of articulation and differentiation that the dissertation describes represents the refinement of the particular intrinsic logic of each structural system; systems that have already affected each other reciprocally and continue to refract, distort and disturb each other. As opposed to accounting for the secretion of new closed systems, whether primitively substantial or actively self defining and self producing, the dissertation reconstructs the coming into being of a range of *open systematisms*, which take shape by virtue of the fact that they reciprocally incorporate, and affect, each other. The dissertation iterates the evolution of a *division of labour* which never reaches a point where the secreted or cleaved parts enter into an external or extraneous relationship with one other.

In my presentation of a past in which events continually cleave themselves to the already existing and transform them so that the undifferentiated and implicit in them is articulated and made explicit, I present a history where the given is never inevitable or incontestable, but must be restated and reproblematised in accordance with the new refractions engendered.

In this way, the dissertation can be seen as a coherent study of a development in the ways in which we *relate*. I articulate how social intercourse and interaction represents a continual process of relating to already given central problematic fields and an attempt to come to terms with them. I determine the unique forms that this 'relating to' has taken through the ages. I describe the

problems that rules for relation engendered and made central.[i] To the extent that in 'relating to', one continually relates to oneself as immediately present and problematical – or as something that in principle can be posed as a problem – and in so far as one has recreated or re-formed oneself as problematical, or posed oneself as a possible problem, the dissertation may be considered as a study in the development of *self relation*.

In this way, the dissertation may be read as an integrated, coherent study in *social reflection*. I examine how the social as such turns in on itself, re-examining and reassessing itself in the light of the new refractions its fractured mirror reflects. The articulation of the level on which the social turns in on itself and reassesses itself in openness, so that a new form of obligation or normativity emerges, is the central preoccupation of the dissertation.[ii] The point is to describe the social's continually working reflective appraisal of itself; its *reflective judgement*.

With this approach to history, I attempt to lay bare the way in which even the most seemingly insignificant social praxis incorporates thought; how it is a *reflective* praxis. I highlight the way in which the social praxis described has never been an undisturbed, static or homogenous habit or custom, but proves to be a procedure which must continually be subjected to revision and reconsideration; that must be restructured and reassembled if it is to function. I also demonstrate how it is that we begin to reflect as soon as we act upon and react to the actions of others. In reflexive praxis such as this, we live with – and relate to – others without our being able to take a shared, common, unifying Reason or common sense for granted. One can, therefore, speak of a *coexistence without common sense*.

Inasmuch as a fundamental reflection in and on social praxis is inherent in social praxis, it bears within itself the inherent tendency to philosophize. Because there is a continual iteration and reiteration of problems within social

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[i] A dimension of *meaning* or *understanding* (an account of how the world is sensed and construed so that it takes on a determinate significance) is not explicit as an independent dimension as such. Such a dimension is, however, present throughout the text in the dissertation's articulation of self-relation, even if a dimension of meaning in the form of a generalised and radicalised version of the hermeneutic "as if" never appears as a dimension that becomes present to itself as an unbroken continuum. Meaning is articulated rather as a *continual reiteration*.
In this way an *existential* aspect is present at all times in the text; not in the form of any constitutive subjectivity, but rather in the form of the *relating to* here described.

[ii] The dissertation thus elucidates history as more than mere contingency; that, indeed, history bears in itself its own form of historical necessity.

praxis, social praxis itself is always involved in and opens itself up to philosophy. This level of reflection – where problems of a fundamental character are posed, arising within and emerging out of social praxis – I consider *the fundamental philosophical level*. It is the 'place' from which all philosophy springs, and the place to which it returns. Philosophy understood in this way is therefore essentially practical, but – and this must be noted – only as reflection.

In so far as I describe this level of reflection, I contend that there is an *irreversibility* in history; an irreversibility that is of an entirely different kind to that which the unequivocalising teleological categorical conceptual frameworks that perfectibilism and ideas of progress allow us to conceive of. I demonstrate how it is that history has been driven forward irrevocably behind the backs of the actors that have appeared on its stage, since actions and events have been alloyed to those already in existence so that only the actions and events that – often quite unintentionally – have positioned themselves in relation to, and have processed, the existing central problems have been able to 'survive' in so far as they have left their mark in the form of epoch-making events, which together have engendered new forms of social co-operation and communication. The later formations of a history of this kind contain a more comprehensive (or concrete) rationality, in so far as they are able to take account of and determine the problems that earlier formations have handed down to them.[i] The movement of articulation that the dissertation sketches is thus a history with the character of an irreversible movement of reflection.

In this way, the process of differentiation described contains within itself an infinite and immeasurable *growth in reflexivity*. If a range of events is analysed, it is also possible to glean something of this growth in reflexivity. A growth in reflection of this character can in turn be mirrored in a range of other concurrent and parallel chains of events. Because the respective sets of occurrences are reflected in, refracted by and mediated by each other, they also add something to each another in a manifold of ways. They reflect, re-reflect and superadd ad infinitum. It may be the case that history is not rational, but with an

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[i] In this sense, the later formations must necessarily be more fundamental. They will, unavoidably, in all respects described, incorporate more than the earlier formations and 're-establish' them, as it were; they have to be more inclusive and "concrete" in the Hegelian sense. This, however, by no way means that concurrent with this accretion there cannot be a loss of articulation and reflexivity in respects other than those accentuated.

unforgettable if only partially retrievable intensity, reflection and thought pervades it.

The unceasing growth in reflection and reflexivity means that historical analysis must necessarily be reflexive, as it composes itself through itself, ascertaining its own status, confirming and gauging its own assertive conditions and its own power of enunciation. It must, in its self contemplation, take account of and re-mirror the very relation of our reflection on history as being a reflection that takes place within – as dependent upon and reflecting itself in – the unending growth of reflection and reflexivity. It must, with unbending gaze, make sure that it does not come abreast of, and embrace, history's reflection, but – situated as it is within history – give it a particular redescription that can and will reduce it in certain respects. Historical reflection must re-reflect that we – in reflection, historical or ahistorical – do not back out of the cave, but are compelled to begin our flight *into* the dusk.

The historical analysis laid forth cannot, therefore, conceive of itself as accounting for or narrating history in its entirety. In the course of history, there has always been an original loss. In the fullness of time, there have been attempts to take actions that have either proved impossible or have left no trace, which have not been reincorporated and developed on; there have been efforts that one could have – indeed, perhaps should have – thought out and initiated, which were never even conceived of. That which has not been handed down, that which can no longer make its presence felt, is inaccessible. In this absolute sense, history is irrevocably and undeniably the history of the conqueror, and it is impossible to compensate for that which does not prevail. It is in this radical sense that we are able to understand only ourselves. The rest is – necessarily – silence.

Insofar as the dissertation seeks to unravel a history that still has a determining influence on the present, it inevitably adds to – and bears out – this history of conquest. The dissertation does not conceptualise the present, neither does it seek to open up a compensatory history in any absolute sense. Instead, it lets history and the present meet by rendering the coming into being, or evolution of, a *prehistory* that asserts itself in the form of our own, unavoidable *present*. There is a higher prehistory that is not past, and of which we are all a part. I do not want to rehabilitate an elapsed or lost history; it is this, if not ever present then at least all pervasive, prehistory that I have sought to articulate.

In this way, it becomes clear that historical analysis must understand itself and relate to itself as a particular, determinate, limited self presentation and

process of self recognition. Historical analysis is an activity in which the analyst accentuates certain features of history at the expense of others, because, through a process of mirroring, he projects certain facets of his present onto the past. As the analyst mirrors the already reflexive context in which he is situated and which constitutes him historically, this context is refracted and articulated in a way that facilitates a differentiated relating to – and reflection upon – certain of its constituent features. Thus, the examination that the dissertation seeks to conduct attempts to bring past and present, historical inquiry and self presentation together without depletion, as part of the general effort to clear a space for a reflexive *relating to* prehistory; a prehistory that has already emerged, become, or come into being *reflexively*, and which asserts itself as a simultaneity of all too close a proximity to be recognisable.

The crucial criterion for an examination of the kind proposed and undertaken in the dissertation is, therefore, the extent to which it is able to relate to and to construct a systematism which, by way of retrospection, would be capable of producing a conclusive elucidation within a comprehensive field of historical events, which bears witness and testifies to how it is that one has related. The primary obligation to which the dissertation binds itself is that of the determination of truth as a process of *disclosure*, which at once unifies and contextualises. In so far as the dissertation draws knowledge that has survived and been handed down together and measures this knowledge, it discloses new contexts that demonstrate the way in which there has been a comprehensive reflection in history. The contexts that the dissertation establishes are to a certain extent speculative; but the speculation is as well founded as is possible speculations, a speculation for which there is full collateral in the historical material.

To the extent that the dissertation seeks to read off and to iterate a systematism that applies in and to a whole gamut of events, but which cannot be given independently of, or extrapolated out of these, it does not gravitate around a central *thesis* in the traditional sense. It does not postulate or posit a universal, independently expoundable, controversial statement for which it asserts compelling grounds and marshals arguments to convince us of the consistency, truth and applicability of; it does not confine itself to a certain, clearly delineated and closely specified area of expertise in an effort to examine the respects in which its thesis actually applies, so that – if all the required conditions are met – it can bring our knowledge of the area in question a decisive step forward. No, instead it seeks to explore and to work out transverse

perspectives that assert themselves in spite of, and athwart of, traditional, hermetic theoretical constructions and areas such as these; it seeks patterns and formations that can suffuse and integrate these constructions – patterns and formations that contribute to the making of such theories. And in thinking concretely or in context, I believe to have brought existing knowledge and science a decisive step forward in a number of ways. I further insist on the effort of bringing science forward by contending and demonstrating that the scientific itself is possessed of forms other than the merely traditional, centred as they are around the testing of a thetic universality; the scientific is also concrete reflective research.

If reflexive activity is formulated into a set of universally applicable postulates comprised under one designation, it is misconstrued. Reflection is thus misinterpreted as metaphysical; as an attempt to legislate. The notion that the real allows of direct description in thetic form is, perhaps, as Nietzsche suggests in his critique of metaphysics and morality, the fundamental error of all philosophy, which – among other things – has had a fundamental and pervasive influence on the modern notion of the scientific. If one prefers to speak of theses in connection with the systematism outlined in the dissertation, then one should do so in the original ancient Greek sense of the word *thesis*; that is, in the sense of taking a measure of the world, and relating to the measure taken, thus enabling it to emerge in a certain light; a measuring which is now no longer understood as an ontological determination, but as a historical ordering.

On a general level, the drawing of a unifying perspective that the examination represents demonstrates that the obscure and unavoidable present – which has a determining effect on us – does not form a present that can be conceived of as a contemporaneity as such (a being, happening or existing at the present moment); it is rather a simultaneity (a being, happening or existing *together* at the present moment) – that is, a *co*existence. The present is an interim in which we are located between times or ages, and among various forms of temporality, which exist alongside each other. We move and participate in different times at the same time, and in this way we never found or constitute a subject that is identical with itself; but 'we' – as the designation of a collective – is the difference, we *are* the difference – notably in the sense of our being different from each other and ourselves in certain specifiable respects. The difference that the 'we' constitutes, or the differences that *we* constitute, is – in a very general sense – precisely that which the dissertation seeks to elaborate. This

heterogeneity constitutes, perhaps, a condition for the establishing of a differentiated historical knowledge, through which we can gain a distance sufficient to enable us to turn towards – or in on – ourselves. The dissertation reveals and renders a simultaneity of different times that have no specific present (or nucleus) as referent; we are currently living out an infinitely – but not fully – reflected simultaneous existence without common sense.

3 Point of Departure in Michel Foucault

The specific springboard for the historical inquiry and analysis of the simultaneity which draws these together into a unifying perspective was worked out in the course of a long acquaintance with the thought of Michel Foucault. In the growth of this acquaintanceship, it became clear to me that Foucault's work could be understood as one protracted examination of the insistent social reflection of former times, and a reflection upon how this reflection had left traces or marks, and still has a determining effect on the current social bond.

This point of view continued to take shape and was consolidated during a long stay in Paris, where I was able to work at the library at *Centre Michel Foucault*, which houses a collection of otherwise inaccessible texts, interviews and unpublished material by the author. That I was afforded the opportunity to listen to otherwise inaccessible tape recordings of Foucault's regular lectures at the *College du France* recorded in the years 1976-1983, and able to consult transcriptions and recordings of various lectures that he had held around the world, proved to be particularly decisive.

At first glance, Foucault's development through his major works seems to be marked by several shifts in point of view and changes in levels of analysis. These displacements have spawned a number of attempts to define conclusive departures that might mark boundaries between the more general phases or periods of his work. If, however, we include Foucault's oral statements in an assessment of his work – in the form of the various interviews he gave at regular intervals, and also, perhaps even more significantly, his lectures – we are confronted with a susurrate yet more insistent voice than that at best only hinted at in his published works, and which casts light on a host of connections which, though difficult to detect, enable us to fill out the lacunae in his wider discourse.

In this sustained, largely self-addressed discourse, it becomes clear that the commonly construed breaks in and periodisations of his work turn out to be

incisions and categorisations that serve only to veil a more consistent line of ever on-going development. In the course of this development, Foucault continually adds new elements to the former, so that the individual elements are transformed as the collected body of the works grows. He persistently returns to earlier writings and statements, not in an effort to disregard or reject them, but rather to revive, reconsider and reincorporate them, and through this process of refinement, unfold new aspects. On closer examination, it becomes evident that Foucault's thought constitutes a perpetual self reassessment, in which he adds the new to the old, thus retailoring and reconstructing the utterances in the corpus of his work, so that the centres of gravity shift, enabling aspects that had hitherto remained largely dormant continually to unfold and become explicit. Rather than there being a revolutionising of the body of Foucault's work through a process of rejection, there is a constant gemmation in which past statements are perpetually reconsidered and revised, only to find new articulation and a greater differentiation.

Rather than constituting a clearly delineated body of works divided into a range of separate and independent parts, Foucault's thought thus appears as a single context shot through with criss-crossing threads that are internally related in a number of different respects. It takes on the character of a *systematism of open relations*. In this systematism, depending into which further context the traces left behind by Foucault are placed and read, certain connective threads emerge as being of primary significance, in relation to which all others are ordered. The pattern that Foucault's continued reflection proves to form, and the location of this pattern's centre of gravity, are dependent upon the wider context in which they are reflected. It is, however, possible to reveal certain general patterns, and to attempt to ascertain certain centres of gravity in this continual process of displacement.

In the dissertation, I am concerned with the constantly *reflective* Foucault with whom I believe I have become acquainted. I utilise the remnants he has left behind, working them into the context of the problem of the current social bond, reflecting on them so that they order themselves in a determinate fashion. My motive is, of course, that through the studies described, I discovered Foucault has something of crucial importance to contribute in this connection. A point of departure in the thought of Foucault, if supplemented and extended, accommodates an approach to the problem at once both sufficiently specific and broad and flexible enough to be enlightening. It facilitates the completion of a widely disposed historical analysis of social reflection out of which the current,

differentiated social bond has emerged or come into being. In my rereading of Foucault, I demonstrate that an interest in him need not be purely philological, and can appeal to a wider circle, insofar as my rereading be deemed a coherent and ambitious attempt to reconstruct the collected social history of modern society in a fashion that makes a new and surprising overview possible. At the same time, Foucault works out a new notion of what it means to write a comprehensive concrete social history, indeed, of how such a history can be written at all.

One could say that there is a mutual dependence between the treatment of the problem in the dissertation and the dissertation's preoccupation with Foucault. Without the social and historical problem I have been at pains to sketch here, the concern with Foucault would – on the one side – be empty and irrelevant; but without the specific analytical approach that the concern with Foucault accommodates, the diagnosis of the present and the historical examination would – on the other side – be blind and without orientation. There is thus a fundamental reciprocal reflexivity between the dissertation's basic concern and its point of departure in Foucault. The new context that emerges as a result is more than the sum of its parts. Indeed, an entirely new pattern takes shape. This pattern is possibly the most significant of them all.

As a result, the perspective on Foucault's writings is displaced in relation to the points of view established in the greater part of the literature published on him and his works to date. A transformation in approach of this kind allows us to abstract from, and to resituate, a set of traditional difficulties within the field of existing research on Foucault, while at the same time generating a new set of problems.

The literature on Foucault that has attempted to deal with his work in context to date is – when considered in relation to its source – surprisingly traditional in approach and unreflected in relation to its own frame of reference. This is especially true of the literature of book length. With its starting point in the 'major' works of Foucault, this secondary literature seeks, for the most part, to re-establish the chronological development in his works from beginning to end. Their central concern has been to situate Foucault's authorship as a particular event with a definite content that occurred once, and has been concluded. His authorship is considered as a pre-packaged, delivered item that has to be defined and understood, weighed up and eventually criticised before it can be deemed an actual event as such. The concern of this dissertation is different. The intention is to demonstrate how Foucault can continue to be our

'contemporary', how the tracks he left can still be *simultaneous* events, already before they are past events.

The traces left can only become present events if they are incorporated into a new context and reiterated in a new fashion. Considered in relation to the existing material 'on' Foucault, my main contribution is the aforementioned displacement of perspective. I do not deal with Foucault's works as such – this is not my subject – and I do not, therefore, treat the same object as the vast body of existing literature *on* Foucault. Instead, I am concerned with Foucault in order that – as far as possible, and to the very extent that – advantage can be drawn from him in my specific context.

In order to maintain and unfold the concerns described, the dissertation has to zigzag back and forth through the individual works of Foucault, in each case attempting to draw out the specific parts relevant to the illustration in question. The method usually involves a rearticulation of the significant facet, through its integration into a new context, which in turn elicits new aspects. On closer inspection, the aspects thus exposed do not immediately appear to be in any way alien to previous facets, but something already implied by them, albeit often in unarticulated form.

In movements of this kind, which are transversent when seen in relation to the superficial chronology of publication and in relation to the 'major' works, I seek to reconstruct Foucault's collected authorship so it appears as a succession of coherent considerations and clarifications of the chief problem sketched.[i] The works of Foucault are treated of to the extent in which they are relevant for the perspective laid out; which implies that sections of his work usually considered peripheral are on occasion emphasised, while other more frequently invoked passages are passed over in a telling silence.[ii]

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[i] The dissertation thus offers its unique contribution to the traditional body of literature on Foucault; by demonstrating that Foucault can and ought to be read in a way different to that in which he is usually read, I show that a coherent perspective of the kind described here can only be maintained if his thought is treated as an open dispositional arrangement. The analyses of history and society put forward are thus bound up with a theory of textual interpretation.

[ii] In the mainstream secondary literature on Foucault it is, for example, often emphasised how, in the course of the 1970's, Foucault began to concentrate his attention on power and the exercising of power, and to concern himself with these activities to such a degree that at times they appear to be an explicit and gravitational thematic in his studies. Neither the question of the power-thematic and its 'sudden' emergence, nor the problem of power in general have the immediate function of a central organising principle in the dissertation. The secondary literature's treatment of Foucault, both the 'positive' and the 'negative', is predicated on the somewhat problematical premise that the problem

My approach to Foucault involves a continual supplementation of his perspectives where they seem deficient, and where it seems opportune to do so in relation to the central concerns of the dissertation. I take the liberty of reconstructing Foucault's thought in the presentation of independent historical examinations that fill out the lucanae in his own examinations. In so doing, I add new features and aspects, while allowing myself to think on in the vein and through the perspective opened up by them, in so far as I speculatively suggest implications that lay in his work in embryonic form; implications that he himself may well not have been 'aware' of.

The revisions and additions introduced in the dissertation do not represent a clearly delineated and well defined addition to a clearly marked off pre-existent area or corpus; on the contrary, they form an open-ended supplement to an initially indefinite number of statements, the boundaries and coherent context of which are not given beforehand. Insofar as a clearly defined, closed totality has not been given, that which is affixed alters the meaning of that to which it is added, transforming the context that even its smallest parts are integrated into. We can thus speak of an addition that changes 'everything'. In relation to Foucault, the new in the dissertation also becomes 'the Whole', or – more precisely – the *context*. With regard to Foucault, the dissertation's independent contribution consists in the formation of a new, irreducible systematism that endows the individual integrated parts with new meaning. The chief aim of the dissertation has been to establish a new structure that can emerge in its own right, and can be recognised as such.

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of power is present in the works only when it surfaces as explicit. At the same time, it seems problematic that there is often a tendency to read Foucault as operating with a general ontology of power from the point where his analysis of power surfaces. According to this view, all acts are understood as different kinds of statement of power.

In contrast to this and by choosing another approach, the dissertation seeks to demonstrate the way in which Foucault's concerns are anti-reductivistic. Through this approach, I illuminate the background for power's being able to emerge as a general ontology for our existence. I indicate how power and its exercise can first begin to function as a general foundation for our existence only when it has been cleansed and cleaved off as a unique aspect of social intercourse. This occurs only relatively late, with the advent of early modernity. The historico-social analysis undertaken in the dissertation could be read as a means of articulating and seeking to clarify the character of the exercise of power at different times in a differentiated fashion, without maintaining that everything – in the final analysis – can be reduced to power; without maintaining the *omnipotence* of power. Read in this way, the dissertation can be construed as a coherent study in the chief displacements in forms of the exercise of power. The work that the dissertation entails does not, therefore, address the mainstream power-thematic, but rather displaces this onto a new level.

Just as it demonstrates a pronounced lack of interest in the clear demarcation of the boundary between the authorship that is interpreted on the one side, and the interpretation and what it contributes on the other, the dissertation pays no reverence to an 'original' or 'real' Foucault. It seems quite plausible that any attempt to loyally reproduce or summarise a thinker who made a virtue out of constantly displacing his analyses and statements would be fraught with insurmountable difficulties. It is difficult, therefore, to take a loyal stance on Foucault in any other way than going beyond him. In this sense, the demand for loyalty towards the 'original' Foucault ends up being a misconceived loyalty, and the alleged illoyality a lack of reverence for no-one. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how one could demarcate oneself and one's own contribution clearly in relation to what first emerges as a coherent context only in the interpretation undertaken. A specification of where the demarcation between Foucault's thought and the dissertation lies is irrelevant to the general aim, and the endeavour to plot such a boundary unproductive, as it would constantly cut across the transverse connecting threads the dissertation seeks to trace. It would mean losing time going astray on a side track that leads away from the matter itself – it would deflect from the central endeavour: the outlining of a coherent historical perspective on the present social bond. Worse still, any such endeavour is doomed to fail, as it is simply not possible according to the given conditions. Such a drawing of boundaries would – in the current context – be an artificial construct that would render the work impossible. If the demand for a demarcation of this character is maintained as essential, a project of the kind undertaken in the dissertation would have to be deemed utterly unrealisable.

A drawing of boundaries of this kind – indeed, *demarcation* in general – plays a fundamental role in the traditional idea of the scientific, and in the science practised on the basis of this conception. According to this notion, science sets itself apart from the world by continually subjecting it to a critical judgement in which an unceasing process of discrimination takes place; a discrimination between that which must be accepted as binding and that which ought to be rejected. Through the wielding of critical judgement in which the boundaries dividing that which belongs to the field of science from that which belongs outside it are continually being drawn, the scientific critical subject is founded. At the same time, the establishing of what it is this subject represents and the determining of this subject's unique contribution are also achieved. There are, however, other ways of setting oneself apart and distinguishing oneself.

In the dissertation, I have chosen a form of distantiation different to that achieved in the self-affirming moralisation of traditional critical science; namely, that of *displacement*. With the displacement of Foucault, the entire question of what is essential in science and research is opened up to debate. Is it a matter of establishing knowledge that allows of confirmation and reiteration (and which, at the same time, separates and demarcates itself from all former knowledge)? Or is not the effort to discover new patterns that allow previously unknown connections and contexts to emerge – a research that leads to conclusively new experiences – the essential driving force here? Is thought attempting to establish what there is and who I am the most essential thing in science and research, or is it not sooner a reflexive thought that seeks to 'see'? By its very existence, the dissertation pleads for the latter of these possibilities.

4 The Dispositional Analysis

The point of entry into the thought of Foucault is, in this instance, primarily his reflection upon, and revision of, his works that he engaged in during the course of the 1970's. It was here he worked out a general method of social analysis, namely the *dispositional analysis* or *dispositive analysis*; it was here, too, he established a number of historical outlines that I proceed to highlight.

With departure in Foucault, we can understand a dispositive *(dispositif)* as a general systematism which can be revealed in a range of social events, which – at the same time – brings these events into a certain relation with one another; as a regularity of common relevance which, in spite of the individual agent's motives and intentions, makes itself apparent in a field of social actions and occurrences. A dispositive is a connection of relevance between a range of social actions and occurrences that seems to have come into being through these events, so that one can, retrospectively, show how it has had – and continues to have – a determining prescriptive effect on them.

When a dispositive is established in social analysis, a social structuring which has come into being socially – and which is of a general, common relevance – is revealed. The analysis demonstrates how this structuring has already had a prescriptive effect, inasmuch as it has brought about the tendency for certain kinds of social event to take place; it demonstrates, too, how this structuring continues to have a determining effect, as it accommodates certain kinds of event at the expense of others. By dispositive, we can understand a socially established apparatus, which manifests itself by taking into account or bringing

into effect a certain tendency or disposition towards particular kinds of social outcome. The dispositive, therefore, has a determining influence, yet orders and deploys without determining completely. This kind of structuring is a structuring that is felt by virtue of the fact that it leaves traces in the ways in which we relate to others and ourselves. The dispositive is not a causal determining factor; it merely points to a general tendency or trend.

Thus, with the dispositive, a new common level of prescription is generated; a level that has come into being through a series of analysed, individual prescriptive actions and occurrences, and which continually asserts itself in its determining influence on what it is that can be said, done or imagined. As a product of analysis, the dispositive comes into being as the complex response carried out in a historical situation. The dispositive seems to have a critical influence, in that it outlines the way of *relating to* that has been implemented in the concrete historical situation; that is, the way in which the situation has been dealt with, coped with, or assimilated by its being *related to prescriptively*. The relating to generated in the dispositive takes on the status of an incontrovertible and unavoidable 'reality', to the extent that the dispositive leaves unmistakable traces in the way it forms sociality's (already prescriptive) activities. The dispositive's influence is absorbed into and becomes embedded within the institutions, thus reshaping them; but it undeniably and incontrovertibly effects the behaviour of the individual, forming his perception of that which happens or occurs.

The dispositive is, on the one side, an 'ideal' entity, insofar as it bears the character of a response to the challenge contained in previous occurrences; a reply in which certain outcomes are prescribed without their being fully determined or in any way absolute or hegemonic. But on the other side, the dispositive is a collectively generated and binding idea that is 'given' to the extent to which it is 'commonly tangible'. From the outset, the ideal existed only as a concrete, *present* ideality already realised in society's institutions and courses of action. If the dispositive is not an autocratic or *omnipotent* idea, as an already realised all pervading context it is undeniable, incontrovertible and unavoidable.

Inasmuch as the dissertation takes its point of departure in the utterances of Foucault, it articulates the aforesketched historical process of differentiation as the expulsion and coming into being of a series of new types of dispositive. Each of these implies the displacement of social intercourse and interaction onto a new level.

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In Part I, the dissertation demonstrates how, at the beginnings of history, unresolved consanguine disputes and conflicts were regulated in a dispositive of accusative justice and customary law. It is already possible in Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, however, to detect how a new apparatus of inquiry that managed to establish *a new factual truth* began to assert itself and supersede the traditional authoritative form of truth that accusative justice had been founded on. After the tragedy of Oedipus had drawn the first programmatic outline of this form of truth, it became installed as a more stable apparatus in the course of the Middle Ages. This happened at first with the apparatus of juridical inquiry that came to be known as the 'enquête'. At a later stage, the enquête was expulsed, gaining an increased independence as a general unassailable form of truth in the new sciences that blossomed forth with the dawn of modernity. Starting with classical Greek tragedy, an increasingly independent apparatus for the enunciation of truth was in turn expulsed, divided and proliferated, which thereafter attained its own history.

In Part II, the dissertation explains how the dispositive of accusative justice and customary law was transformed, as in the course of the High Middle Ages a law dispositive began to be presented, which took on an increased significance when it dovetailed into the apparatus of internment with the beginnings of modernity. By way of introduction in this section, I explain the law's early origins in the period spanning from the High Middle Ages to the 17th century. Law in the modern sense first came into being with the presentation of an unequivocal designation of that which had simply been unproblematically presupposed in customary law. This initially occurred largely through the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Law was originally presented as general, independent commands, as laws, insofar as the Church rediscovered, revived and transformed compilations of Roman juridical determinations and decisions, which in themselves had not had the character of laws. In time, the Law thus constructed became the general mode of appearance of, and basis of justification for, the Roman Catholic Church. The monarchical power that surfaced in the Middle Ages appropriated the Law as a means of distancing itself from the unresolved rivalry of powerful men and asserting itself in the conflicts with the Catholic Church and its emergent law. Insofar as the monarchy assumed the Law as its mode of presentation and justification, it conspired in its further promulgation, so that, finally, it appeared as something it became necessary to relate to.

In the course of this development, the character of the law changed from referring to an orally orientated, unthematised, relatively diffuse presupposed agreement, to the presentation of a written, coherent universality. During this transformation, perceptions of time and change altered. Where change formerly could, by and large, have taken place unnoticed – as a slow, unthematised displacement of established guidelines – it now emerged as a clear break with what the former presentation had established. Thus, a modern perception of time came into being, in which change had to be made explicit and understood as renewal. As a result of the displacement described, legislative activity no longer appeared as a cataloguing or compilation, or a collection and fixing of a received series of individual decisions of customary law and the guidelines that appeared to have proceeded from them. Legislation became a *codification*; a collective and thoroughly considered stipulation of a new juridically applicable and legitimate universality. With the presentation of the Law, the first real distinction between public and civil justice took shape. With public law, a public sphere had been formed long before the 'primordial' civility of the bourgeoisie emphasised by Habermas. This Law's first public sphere was, however, initially representative, not critical. In the course of the development that presented the Law's central and coherent public code, a central highest authority was also established, which – remaining relatively unchallenged – ruled over a given territory. In this way, former common rivalry was at the same time fettered, and the continual violent conflicts within the body politic were marginalised to an increasing degree, pacifying civil relations to a large extent. Finally, violent conflicts were expulsed mainly to the frontiers where territorial powers collided; now in the radicalised form of war. In the course of the transformation thus described, the meaning of the word 'status' changed. *The State* no longer referred to the immutable, stable, harmonious state conceived of as underlying continual outbursts of – at times – violent conflict, but came to refer to the agents within society who established and maintained peace and stability. The development described involved the displacement of the inherited problem of dominance and the closely related problem of the virtuous and good life of the members of society in the polis. In this way, new – apparently distinct – problems emerged. The rapid advance of the Law saw the problematic of dominance expulse a separate *problematic of power*. If the power problematic that had arisen was perceived with departure in the Law, new questions could be raised concerning the legitimacy of the exercise of power. Questions of legality and legitimacy were of crucial significance from

this point forward. Concurrent with the formulation of these problems, questions about guidelines for the life of the individual – i.e. morality – were also formulated as belonging to an independent problem area. Efforts to address this problem were often also steeped in legalistic and juridical terms.

With the dawning of modernity, Hobbes' reflection upon sociality in purified form gave currency to the perception that law had thrust itself forward as an overpowering apparatus. According to Hobbes, coexistence and social interchange could first properly be described as a *civitas* – a commonwealth – if subjected to universally binding laws that all were duty bound to obey. Civil community thus changed character. It no longer appeared as a foundation that could be presupposed and relied upon, but instead took on the character of a coincidence of interests that must be agreed upon in the form of a contractual act of unification. At the same time, the community became an agreement that an established sovereign as founder of laws and society constantly had to struggle to uphold. With the Law having made its decisive breakthrough, and having taken over the status of social ossature, a *sovereignty problem* in the radical, modern sense of the word was opened up. This was the problem of how to found the highest, self sufficient and juridically unlimited authority, under the auspices of which – insofar as it spoke the language of universal command – alone a social context could come into being. The presentation of the Law as the backbone of the commonwealth had thus led to a change in the perception of the very idea of *authority*. With Hobbes, authority no longer appeared as an attribute with which social agents were endowed by virtue of their natural and patent superiority. Instead, authority was determined as a power that certain beneficiaries acquired by virtue of the fact that it had been transferred to them, or conferred upon them, by others. Authority became dependent on an antecedent and unceasing authorisation. To the extent that the members of society authorised a central community-forming authority, they also recognised it, as they submitted themselves to it as subjects.

The structuring of reality introduced with the presentation of the Law was finally cultivated in pure form and truly established its monolithic and overshadowing status when the law dispositive was grafted into a newly arrived related dispositive in the seventeenth century. The Law and the new *dispositive of internment* worked together in the establishing and maintaining of a well defined and insurmountable binary boundary in the societal, which separated the permissible from the prohibited; that which belonged in the lap of the community from that which was situated outside it. This was marked by the

establishment of the *Hôpital Général* in Paris. In Racine's neo-classical tragedy of the times, the limitations and fragility of the community that judgements of the Law and internment had erected and sustained had begun to be formulated.

The law has continued to assert itself as an overpowering, unavoidable and unassailable dispositive in the period spanning from the seventeenth century to the present day. The law dispositive has not only formed the inexorable mode of appearance of the modern kingdom, but has also formed the unquestioned framework of current democratic forms of government. At the same time, most of the current criticism of the critique of power is still formulated in the language of legitimacy and legality. Critique as such, therefore, has had considerable difficulty in formulating and upholding an alternative to the existing exercise of power it turns against without couching it in the very same legal terms.

Part II of the dissertation concludes with a further specification of the basis of the phenomenon which has asserted itself with a certitude of such monolithic proportions that it has taken on the character of a ubiquitous and all pervasive metaphysics. Here, the formalisation of judgement that arose with the presentation of the Law – which meant that judgement seemed to follow certain presented universal rules – is of central significance. With a point of departure in the reflections of Wittgenstein on *rule following*, it is possible to problematise the notion of how it is that we follow laws and rules that have been presupposed, since the Law was installed as a dispositive it became impossible to evade. Through it, the presented law or rule has invariably appeared relatively unproblematic, as the basis from which the 'judge' could secure a foothold, and which established a fixed track that he could, indeed *had to*, follow. Furthermore, judgement itself has been understood as an instance of the application of the rules spelled out. Wittgenstein demonstrates how, in the final analysis, a conception such as this makes it impossible to explain how and why we have to continue to use a given law or rule at any given time in a way that seems natural to us. The radical implication of the interpretation of the rule or law that takes place in its application (a process in which an unlimitable hermeneutic 'as if' is imported) – is that it is misleading to think of the law or rule as an independent and self-identical entity which can form the basis of judgement unproblematically. Wittgenstein's discussion thus paves the way for another conception of the workings of rules and of judgement. According to this conception, the presented law or rule is no longer the sound basis for judgement it was presumed to have been, but something rather more modest; a

symbolisation that serves to bring together, and lay bare, a regularity in judgement.

Part III works out how a discipline and surveillance dispositive emerged and achieved a dominant status after the presentation of the Law. This section starts with an explanation of how *discipline* gradually advanced within, and influenced, a range of selected traditional areas, and how, in penetrating them, it contributed to their initial constitution as institutions, bearing the hallmark of their own, intrinsic logic. This became clear in transitions of the provision for attack and defence that led from wartime armies to the standing armies of modern societies. It is also revealed in the slide from the apprenticeship and readership of the Middle Ages to the modern school. It can also be detected in the transition from the organisation of crafts and trades in guilds to an industrial form of production. These historical accounts are followed by a more systematic effort to formulate the common features of various forms of discipline that arose locally. Part III continues to elaborate the distinctive features of the discipline that emerged in various places within the social corpus, and which from here gradually began to emanate outwards.

Part III then proceeds to demonstrate how it was that the discipline dispositive opened up a problematic of surveillance. The introduction of a thorough and effective disciplining would necessitate a continual surveillance of those who were to be disciplined. In the course of time, methods of surveillance were developed to a point where they took the shape of an actual *surveillance dispositive*, which merged with the discipline dispositive, giving it a new direction.

Later in Part III, an account is given of how, from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, the discipline dispositive thus described gradually left its local point of origin and diffused out into the social corpus. This manifested itself, among other things, when discipline began to penetrate and transform the closed space of the *Hôpital Général* which had evolved as a result of, and expression of, the internment dispositive described in Part II. As a result, the new institutions of the clinic, the asylum and the prison emerged.

In its concluding phase, Part III demonstrates how discipline – together with a generalised *supervision* that functioned as a new regime of truth – had become an all pervasive and unavoidable phenomenon by the end of the nineteenth century. I sketch the new form of judgement of the social that emerged in connection with a disciplining which attained an all pervasive character. With the *norm*, a new species of collective social measure was introduced, which – in

contrast to the Law – was not presented anywhere as such. The norm was a social group's collective measure of an 'appended' character, in relation to which all orientated themselves, without necessarily being able to live up to, or incarnate it. Concurrent with the emergence of discipline and its norm, a new problematic of social integration evolved.

In Part IV, the dissertation demonstrates how a new dispositive of the *rationality of government* arose; a dispositive that came to have a significant influence on everyday social intercourse by the middle of the nineteenth century, when alloyed to another new dispositive – *the dispositive of economics*. With a point of departure in these types of dispositive, it is possible to cast light on the cohesive power of a political rationality that has formed and influenced the modern *welfare state*, including all its paradoxes; not least its restless and unceasing effort to achieve security, combined with its ability to moderate itself and its will to adjust to 'realities'. By way of introduction, this section elaborates the working out of a *reason of state* as it arose during, and shortly after, the time of Machiavelli. The problematic of governance of Ancient times and the Middle Ages, expressed as it is in writings from Plato's *Seventh Letter* and Seneca's early speculum for princes, *De clementia*, to Thomas Aquinas' *De regimine Principium*, and even to some extent in Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, was not – in the first instance – about being able to rule so that ruling itself could establish its meet place within a wider overpowering context. With the reason of state, however, anticipated in certain respects by Machiavelli, the government of others began to be perceived as an activity in its own right and with its own, intrinsic logic; a logic that separated it off from a whole range of other activities. Here, for the first time, an increasingly self-sufficient perspective of government arose, in which it was differentiated from justice, law and morals. Part II described how, as the apparatus of the Law became the dispositive that set the general tone, the early dominance problematic divided into two, hitherto unknown, problem areas; on the one hand a problematic of legitimisation, which allowed itself to be treated of within the framework of the rationality of law, and on the other hand a power problematic, which took on the status of a residual problem. Part IV proceeds to demonstrate how the logic of power began to be conceived of as a logic of *governmentality* at the point where attempts were made to articulate the problematic of the exercise of power as something independent of, and lying beyond the horizon of, the problematic of law, and with the attempt to work out the unique, intrinsic logic of the exercise of power itself.

Part IV then proceeds to account for how Foucault attempts to trace a protracted prehistory of the reason of the state and the governmentality it presents. The prehistory of the reason of the state begins with an early Jewish pastoralism, only to assert itself in earnest with a later Christian *pastoralism*, insofar as it distinguished itself from forms of governance typical of the ancient world. While in the ancient and even the feudal world the problematic of rule had primarily been a question of how to govern an already existing community as a whole so that its conflicts could be resolved and it could be steered safely through any crisis, with pastoralism, a new form of government emerged. In the instructions laid down for the Christian shepherd's tending of his flock, Foucault finds a new, detailed form of leadership, in which one not only had to care for the well being of the flock as a whole, but for the salvation of each of its individual members. With pastoralism, a form of leadership was implemented that continually revived, replenished and reconstituted the community that did not subsist beyond its leadership, right down to its individual elements; a context in which the individual members, and especially the leaders themselves, were inculcated with the notion of sacrifice and self-sacrifice in relations of mutual care or servitude. Since pastoralism determined government and politics as a form of protective tending, which – at times – could result in a certain aggression of servility, in a number of respects it appeared as a forerunner of the governmentality that was expulsed and further developed in earnest in the reason of state.

Part IV then proceeds to describe the generalisation of pastoralism and the reason of state that arose during the centuries following the formulation of a specific reason of state. In step with this transformation, the new *governmentality* embedded in certain institutional structures was gradually dislodged, and began to diffuse out into, and to transform, structures of authority and administration in general. The 'state' that had survived and had been handed down, and which had been organised upon the rationality of law, was thus penetrated by the new rationality of government. It became *'governmentalised'*. As a result of this development, a number of previously unknown governmental apparatuses began to be conceived of. *Diplomacy* became a modus operandi whose central concern was with Europe's function as a precarious counterbalance between the newly emergent competing territorial states, and which, therefore – in this fashion – opened up an endless perspective of government. Similarly, the idea of – and the effort to implement – a comprehensive internal government of each of these individual states arose,

which, it was believed, would optimise their ability to compete. This new, common internal authority was known as the *police*. The effort to optimise the function of society through the introduction of a thoroughgoing administration of it led to a dawning recognition of the *population* as a unity in a manifold, the well being of which became the central concern of governments from the middle of the eighteenth century. The recognition of this was expressed by, among others, the mercantilists, the cameralists and the French physiocrats. The discovery that the population was an entity the government had to secure the well being of, resulted in – and was further perpetuated through – the creation of public health and hygiene. In this new management of the population, humankind began to figure as a biological species characterised by a certain lawfulness, which management could study and affect. In this way, government came to be perceived as a form of a power, the exercise of which had the human being's social biology as its chief object. Thus a new *'biopower'* took shape.

As the dispositive of the rationality of government gradually took shape and developed an increasingly overpowering character, it slowly and steadily became necessary to reflect upon its guiding principles and implications. At first, governmentality sought its guiding principles primarily within itself. Solutions to the problem of leadership had been sought through the introduction of an ever more detailed, comprehensive and optimal government. With the emergence of a *liberal criticism* of the existing governmentality, all former, largely implicit, guiding principles were thrown open to discussion. The new liberal rationality of government – the outline of which had already been sketched by the French physiocrats of the mid-eighteenth century, but which first achieved a position of dominance towards the turn of the century with the nascence of the political economy – argued that government should not seek its fundamental rationale in the effort to maximise management as had previously been the case, but should attempt to find it elsewhere. Liberal criticism stated that there were certain points on which governments would do well to abdicate responsibility, for the sake of facilitating the unfolding of these areas' own intrinsic logic; not only out of the conviction that it was inappropriate to regulate these areas, but because it was quite impossible to do so. Thus it was emphasised that political leadership at the highest level had to exercise self restraint if it was to be optimal. In the course of this process, it was increasingly stressed that economic exchange was a prime example of a form of social relation that should not be regulated. In the final analysis, *civil society* was thought of and cited as an area that fell beyond the pale of thorough

regimentation, while at the same time it was seen as the example one must refer to when identifying the object of government and, indeed, the reason for government itself. Part IV, therefore, accounts for the development of the demand for *self-restraint of governmentality* by tracing the rise and spread of the liberal critique of this rationality; it also accounts for the evolution of an idea of the economy and civil society as realities that implied that governmentality had to exercise restraint and moderation. In this sense, a debate was initiated that still has relevance, and has not yet been concluded, today; a debate about the guiding principles governmental rationality must follow. The friction between the traditional governmentality and the liberal counter movement laid the foundations for a range of *security generating measures*. Through the mild ambivalence of the dispositive of governmentality and its economy, a *new regime of truth* had propelled itself forward; namely, the boundness to a truth that has the character of a *trial* or test. By way of the dispositives of governmental rationality and economics, a new form of normativity thrust itself forward until it achieved an overpowering status. With time, there has been an increase in a boundness to a normativity that has the character of averageness, of *normality*. Concurrent with this, a new form of common *public 'sphere'* centred on normality has emerged.

The final passages of the dissertation indicate how a new *dispositive of negotiation* has begun to assert itself, with a modifying effect not only on the dispositives of the rationality of government and economics, but also on the apparatuses described earlier. Finally, the dissertation elaborates the temporality or historicity that discloses itself if the individual sections of the work are read in connection with each other; a temporality that distances itself radically from modern historicity. On the basis of this temporality, the dissertation returns to its starting point, in order to articulate more clearly the conditions for the historical diagnosis of the present presented in the work.

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With departure in Foucault, the presented work also articulates the forms of dispositive described as various kinds of *social technology*, or ways in which we have related to, and processed, our social surroundings. The clearly accentuated attention paid to the importance of the changes that have taken place within the field of the natural sciences and scientific technology have often masked the fact that changes of a similarly radical and thoroughgoing

nature have occurred within western society's social technologies. An analysis of dispositives demonstrates that, besides the technologies that society has employed in its dealings with the world, there have been technologies that we – in our sociality – have, often unawares, established and applied to ourselves; thereby qualifying the social intercourse of individuals. These transformations in social technology have the same degree of inevitability or unavoidability as the changes in scientific technology: they lay new foundations for social interaction; foundations that it later proves impossible to ignore or 'get behind'. In this sense, social technologies have contributed to the organisation of our social environment. Without this organisation, the advances within the field of natural science would to a large extent have been impossible, and would have failed to leave social traces of any efficacy or import. Social technologies are important, not only because they form a precondition for the breakthrough of the technologies of the natural sciences, but also because they have changed our world.

By portraying the interplay of undifferentiated aspects of social communication that cannot be evaded at given points in time, and in accounting for how social interaction has been influenced by certain general dispositives, the historical dispositional analysis can yield insight into a specific given time. In its individual Parts, the dissertation thus draws up cross-sections that reveal outlines of various constellations of uncontemporaneous dispositives. At the same time, it indicates the general transformations arising between the outlines traced. These cross-sections take the place of a general periodisation and the succession of times that this would establish.

Through the articulation of the different social technologies and the different types of normativity they point towards it is possible to enter another level. The dissertation draws the outline of a constellation in which the apparatus of accusative justice, together with the unthematised customary law and a conflictuality articulated in relations of kinship figure as the dominant dispositives that establish an interchange between all other apparatuses. In a sociality organised through this constellation, the limited light that the ritualised ordeal (or 'evidence') of accusative justice allows to fall on social differences and relations shines out towards a more comprehensive – and in relation to the socially given – correct order, upon which the interaction itself rests, and which it presents in its own, uniquely graded refraction. Social intercourse is formed as dominant dispositives initiate a gradual emanation of an *antecedently given*

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transcending canon that is both revealed in and concealed in the movement that exemplifies it. This constellation is articulated in Part I.

A configuration in which law and internment function as the dominant dispositives that allow integration of other apparatuses can also be mapped. In this sociality, a binary distinction between the permissible and the prohibited, expressed in the Law, functions as a foundation presupposed in all social intercourse. Whereas customary law, the system of kinship and accusative justice establish a sociality which presupposes a received canon in its decisions, the dispositives of internment and Law initiate and implement a *basis*; a foundation presented as always and already *present* in social intercourse. This configuration is described in Part II.

A process of matching and interlocking can also be plotted, in which discipline and surveillance become the dominant dispositives ordering social intercourse. Within a social context of this kind, that which is processed by the dispositives is worked on in order to adjust it, as far as possible, to a formerly unrealised *'appended' norm*. While the Law and internment seek to constitute a social order through prescription, discipline and surveillance establish a moralising normation. This adjustment is elaborated in Part III.

Furthermore, it is possible to sketch a contiguity in which an apparatus that becomes generalised attempts to govern and organise a complex reality consisting of isolated units whose actions are governed by considerations of self interest. In the efforts to regulate what appears as an incontrovertible yet alien reality, a rationality of government seeks to decide and optimise its normal function, insofar as it tries to rectify irregularities and correct deviations from the given average. Averages such as this are also established and constantly adjusted in the exchanges of economics. If the promulgation of discipline and surveillance install a prescription around a norm that has the character of an appended ideal, then the rationality of government and the rapidly emergent economics organise a sociality around a reality and its *normality*. A normality like this is both everywhere and nowhere to be found. It is the omnipresent but non-existent common measure which a host of agents seem to establish, relate to and constantly re-establish in social intercourse. This contiguity is sketched in Part IV.

Part IV also describes a social intercourse influenced by an increasing attempt to mediate between various apparatuses – each of which seeks to dictate to, and form, the others by re-creating both the foundation for social intercourse and paths of possible action – via dispositives of negotiation and security. As the

individual participants attempt at one and the same time to re-create reality and determine the actions of others, they appear to engage in a mutual normation and re-creation of the social space. While the rationality of government and of economics are ordered around a reality and its normality, the dissemination of the dispositives of security and negotiational procedures imply an overt *mutual normation*, which continually introduces a *re-artificialisation* of this reality. The conflictuality that this mutual normation and the re-artificialisation of reality bear with them are counterbalanced by the dispositive of negotiation's harmonising procedures. This last constellation is sketched only towards the end of the dissertation.

The work that the dissertation represents further characterises the forming of social intercourse which takes place within each of the constellations of dispositives. In this sense, we can speak of a range of ways in which there is a disposition to create order and coherence in society: a social order can be confidently *pre-supposed* as pre-existent, but no longer as fully present; it can be *constituted* by an established authority's issuing of orders or commands; it can be *installed* through an administrative or *corrective* surveillance; it can be *organised* through management and *regulation*; it can also be unceasingly *re-created* through *mediation* or mutual harmonisation. In the first instance (Part I), the re-establishing of the social order is sought with reference to a pre-given – yet no longer fully present – canon, which has to be mimicked at the social level. With a starting point in the limited manifestation of the pre-social in the social, it was possible to undertake a graded judgement of the extent to which actions and events in concrete disputes were meritable, or settled the accounts of indebtedness that had arisen. In the second instance (Part II), there was a direct attempt to manifest the social order in the societal through the presentation of the Law, which draws up a sharp binary boundary between the permissible and the prohibited. Here, events are classified according to whether or not they respect or transgress the fundamental and clear boundaries that constitute the social community. In the third instance (Part III), we can speak of a moralisation, where social events are ordered through a subsequent corrective treatment, so that they point in a certain direction, and where – as part of this effort – the social field is perceived and established as a continuum, deviating in varying degrees from an appended norm. In the fourth instance (Part IV), there is a pragmatic 'realisation', in which the social order is created and maintained by relating individual social occurrences to their common standard, and thereby establishing a relation between them that lies in their nature. In the last instance,

we can speak of an equally pragmatic 're-artificialisation', in which a social order is established through a provisional correlation, or an attempt to harmonise the occurrences and actions that produce reality.

If we are to understand *normativity* in terms of the guidance of social activity or action, we can talk of a normativity that respectively takes the form of a referential and mimetic canonisation, a prescriptive codification, normation, normalisation and mediation. These forms of guidance imply that the social field treated of by dispositive complexes – that which is guided – is perceived in accordance with a logic in which social events are, in the first instance, evaluated in terms of the degree to which they are deemed meritable or liable in relation to the presupposed canon. In the second instance they are either classified as social actions or as transgressions that exclude the agent from the social community. In the third instance they are positioned within a graded continuum of deviation from a norm. In the fourth instance they are determined as various degrees of anormality. In the fifth and final instance they are evaluated as generative of norms in a moderate or immoderate way. The various general cross-sections can thus be schematised in the following fashion:

fig.

Part	Normativity (Guidelines)	The Social Field (Classification of social events)
I	Presuppositional and mimetic canonisation	Degrees of merit and liability
II	Prescriptive codification	Inside or outside the boundary
III	Normation (exercise of norms)	Deviant
IV	Normalisation	Anormal
(V)	(Pragmatic mediation)	(Norm and reality generating in a moderate or immoderate way)

Insofar as I characterise the various configurations in the dissertation in this way, I do not seek to characterise different conceptual horizons or 'mentalities' as such. Instead, I articulate forms of *judgement*. I account for how decisions are made in a number of ways; decisions that establish conclusive differences in the world, and which order it in new ways. I elaborate ways in which differences in the world that make a difference are introduced.

5 The Problematic of the Social

On first inspection, a project of the kind undertaken in the dissertation might be thought of as symptomatic of a current boom; as part of the re-emergence of political and social philosophy as central and relatively impartial philosophical disciplines on the wider stage of philosophical activities. The general weakening of ideologies and the metaphysics that formed the inexorable framework around, and received agenda for, philosophical thought seems to have been a precondition for this development. At the same time, the reticence to wrestle directly with political and social questions – which necessitated an ethical or aesthetic circumvention, and which was, in essence, a rebellion against this wider framework – also appears to have abated. These fluctuations of a relatively new date give rise to the conviction that social and political conditions currently appear to contain within them manifest problems that are worth addressing and reflecting upon philosophically.[i]

As an efflux of this trend, the question of the general character of the societal has begun to materialise as a central problem to be grappled with, also philosophically. By virtue of the fact that sociality has begun to dislodge itself from its harbouring within given hierarchies of significance, and has begun to become meaningful on its own terms, it manifests itself as an obscure and amorphous problematic area, the nature of which is as of yet unknown, and the character of which can be clarified only if it is addressed directly. The *societal* appears as a problematic it becomes important to be concerned with 'in and for itself'. At the same time, such knowledge appears imperative, because the social – in virtue of its breaking loose from its former relation of dependence – presents itself as the unavoidable and overpowering background to our lives.

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[i] Among other recent events that have promoted such an interest are the current changes in the geopolitical framework that have arisen in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the birth of new international institutions, such as the European Union and new forms of international justice.

In step with the social's having appeared to have broken loose from its moorings and thrust itself upon us with insistence as a mystery, we have to inquire of it with a new openness. We have first to ask, with a new radicalness, how each of us in these times becomes a *social* being. How are we currently knitted together in a way where we do not simply live side by side, but actually feel ourselves to be inexorably bound up with each other and intertwined?

Precisely because a question of this kind about our present social context forms itself as a radical inquiry into the character of sociality in general, those who pose it tend towards a will to answer the traditional and general questions about the social bond. Why is man a social being? Why is it that we people cannot be satisfied simply to live side by side, but have to bind ourselves together into a society? How is it possible to live with each other and interact, when so many conditions appear to concur to make it impossible? This inquiry is social philosophy's counterpart to the first questions of metaphysics "Why is there being at all, and not simply nothingness?", and in its full radicality, the social problematic raises the questions: Why is there a social context at all, and not pure chaos? What constitutes a social context that binds us together?

The social problematic, however, has a far wider ranging prehistory than the confines of the current conjuncture suggest; a prehistory which gives the problem an unmistakable appearance. And, if one so wishes, the dissertation can also be read as a protracted inquiry into how the phenomenon of the social has taken centre stage in the spectrum of our interests, as a central mystery to which we must respond. How has it become a matter of course that the individual's existence is thought of as having its being and its origin in the area of the social? How is it that this sociality forms the nexus in which we are to meet others? In this way, a togetherness that does not depend on something we agree on, which does not have the character of an actual community or unity, has for the first time overtly been assumed as our starting point. For the first time, our point of departure is to be found in our belonging closely, indefinably and, anyway, inevitably together. With the emergence of the social we have in thought and action also for the first time become obviously opaque to, and dissynchronous with ourselves. We have begun to experience ourselves as belonging together, without actually knowing who or what we are, or where we belong. With the social, a problematic is presented; a specific complex object of

inquiry, in which an infinity of history is 'sublated'. It is this implicit present history that the dissertation seeks to liberate.[i]

But while I attempt to pose and to answer the question of the social bond in all its generality and radicality in this way, to me it seems important to maintain that today is not the time when this question can be posed impartially. Even this question is posed on assumptions; the current questions about the social bond are already (partly) answered, in virtue of the fact that they can be asked.

With the idea of the social, it can be said that sociality discloses itself as an open problem as such, but this does not mean that sociality has arrived at itself. It is quite characteristic of the idea of the social that sociality is conceived of in a certain refraction. Sociality is here understood as something that participants in society have to assume as a common practical presupposition without being able to understand its existence, let alone explain it theoretically. When we begin to inquire of the social, we assume precisely without question the intertwinedness of the participants in this society, and that this has a certain mysterious character.

It is precisely this determination of the social bond, given with the idea of the social, that determines the approach to history. It is just such a determination that decides that the central question which surfaces is: Why and how does society cohere at all at different times?

Beyond posing such a question, the dissertation seeks to illuminate how this question's problematic has come into being. While the dissertation gives a, necessarily incomplete, answer to this question, it strives to illuminate how such a question has become an unavoidable necessity.

By thus taking seriously the modern tragic groundswell of experience that begins to exert itself while the social as such appears as an unavoidable problematic, namely the experience that there is nothing to be found beyond or behind the horizon of history (other than nature and the social that first and foremost appears as that which evades being written into history), the dissertation seeks to place its own perspective in relief. And by thus demonstrating the horizons of this perspective, I hope to have pointed beyond them. If history is maintained as an all overpowering basic condition for reflection, then how one relates to such a history – how one can articulate such

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[i] The dissertation emphasises how the social emerges through a history in which guidelines followed in social judgement increasingly appear as immanent. It comes into being through a weakening of immediate metaphysics.

a history's fundamental mode of being, its historicity, and thereby also the means of writing another prehistory – remains unresolved.

In the tragic meeting with the unavoidability of history, the individual is confronted with the impossibility of escape, but senses at the same time a possible means of avoidance; by breaking up, and contributing. Until he, like Josef K in Kafka's *Der Proceß*, is finally apprehended and taken, when the final exhaustion ultimately catches up with him.