Max Pensky

The Ends of Solidarity

Discourse Theory in Ethics and Politics

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Preface

IN AN ESSAY ENTITLED "The Unity of Reason in the Diversity of Its Voices" from 1992, Jürgen Habermas argued that a modest but stubborn, "non-defeatist"[1] conception of communicative rationality could effectively mediate between the antiquated claims of philosophical idealism, on one side, and, on the other, a reigning spirit of contingency that has abandoned all claims for the unifying power of reason. The by-now familiar basis for Habermas's work is a mode of reason that inhabits the attitudes and performances of persons as they communicate with one another. As we realize a distinctly human capacity to give and take reasons, we also enter into networks of intersubjective relationships: we project legitimate expectations of one another; we undertake mutual and symmetrical obligations for justifying to each other what we believe and intend to do; we accept conditions for symmetrical recognition; we include each other, like it or not, in ways we cannot simply manipulate for our own reasons. In short, speaking and hearing, quite apart from what may be said and what heard, already entail all the reason we can expect from ourselves and one another, in a world of real diversity in values, beliefs, and desires. But it's also all that we need.

"Weakly" anchored in the formal structures of everyday communication, reason warrants a normative conception of the social world, for if we are bound to one another by the formal structures of speaking and hearing, then underlying all we say and do—not despite but especially in our differences—we reaffirm, with each utterance, acts of ongoing inclusion. These acts of ongoing inclusion, transmitted from basic linguistic competence through the affects and attitudes of persons, through political institutions and ultimately into the ethos of a democratic form of social life, can be summarized as *solidarity*.

This core intuition at the heart of Habermas's enormous body of work—that communicative reason is itself the practice of solidarity—has of course had any number of different inflections, varying with context, with theoretical angles of attack, with opponents. But these versions have been variations on a theme of uncompromising consistency. In its most lapidary formations, as the one here in the essay on "The Unity of Reason," the claims of reason emerge in their full clarity and urgency.

> The analysis of the necessary conditions for mutual understanding in general … allows us to develop the idea of an intact intersubjectivity, which makes possible both a mutual and constraint-free understanding between individuals, in their dealings with one another, and the identity of individuals who come to a compulsion-free understanding with themselves. This intact intersubjectivity is a glimmer of symmetrical relations marked by free, reciprocal recognition.[2]

What it means for us to understand one another justifies no utopian fantasies about a specific form of life, an exemplary life history, or a common good worth desiring. But it does justify a kind of tenacity, a stubborn insistence on the possibility of living in solidarity with one another, a kind of grounding confidence that an insight into the link between reason and solidarity is itself *not* a fantastic or ethnocentric projection; a trust, to paraphrase Emmanuel Levinas, that we have not been "duped" by our own moral intuitions.[3] When we arrange our lives and actions in such a way that we are willing to listen to reasons, we assume obligations to one another for justifications, and in order to do this we must include ourselves and others in relations of solidarity.

Solidarity—so I will be arguing in the chapters to follow—provides the golden thread that connects the range of projects grouped together in what has come to be known as "discourse theory." It may be better to refer instead to a family of different theories, sharing a core of theoretical and methodological commitments. They range from a sprawling theory of modernity, through a theory of the universal pragmatics of language; a reconciliation of competing schools of modern sociology; a transformation of theories of cognitive and moral learning processes; a theory of social domination; a moral philosophy and a philosophy of law, rights, and democracy in the modern constitutional state. Beyond the dedicated theoretical writings (the *Theory of Communicative Action* and related texts, the essays on discourse ethics, and *Between Facts and Norms*), discourse theory extends

into Habermas's vast collection of political writings and his work as a public intellectual.

To claim the key notion of solidarity as a 'golden thread' connecting this vast literature is a modest claim in one aspect. Solidarity, I want to show, is a unifying concept permitting us to read Habermas's work with a degree of consistency and continuity that we might lack otherwise. This unifying concept also connects Habermasian discourse theory with a range of contemporary ethical and political debates—in some senses, in ways differently than Habermas himself has argued for. For this reason, the chapters in this book are intended to form a sustained argument, rather than an extended tour of Habermas's texts. There is no ambition here for an exhaustive summary of Habermas's work, and great swaths of it—*Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere, Knowledge and Human Interests, Legitimation Crisis*—will be mentioned only in passing or not at all. Conversely, several chapters will largely part company with Habermas's texts, carrying on explorations of the implications of Habermas's work beyond the point that Habermas himself has. I want to argue for the richness and power of a notion of solidarity, developed from out of Habermas's texts, in illuminating and clarifying issues as different as the basis for a European constitution and the normative limits of genetic testing.

I should make clear at the very outset that the present work does not aspire to develop a theory of solidarity of its own. In all of what follows, the conception of solidarity I use is drawn from the most foundational and consistent treatments of the term in Habermas's theoretical writings, and for that reason, as will become clear in the first chapter, I choose to register and note, rather than solve, what I take to be a persistent tension in those treatments between normative and descriptive accounts of modern forms of social and political solidarity. I appeal to the notion of solidarity as *inclusion* less as part of a theory than as a schema or model. For all the chapters, solidarity is taken as a *mode or act of inclusion* of a person or persons into a group or institution structured discursively.

Inclusion always implies exclusion. Therefore, an exploration of solidarity cannot limit itself to how people are included in deliberative practices or groups, but must also, inevitably, address how they are excluded as well. The magnitude or scope of inclusion in any social group or institution, or even in abstract communities such as a moral domain, presupposes the capacity to exclude, even where no manifest rule for exclusion is available. The politics of identity in multicultural societies is, at its heart, about nothing other than how the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion will be negotiated: who

is to determine the rules and terms of inclusion and exclusion, and what social or political consequences membership, or lack of it, will bear. Even the most benign and well-intentioned modes of political inclusion presuppose that democratic polities are composed of a finite and determinate set of persons. Inclusion in a universal community of moral persons requires modes of exclusion as well, as advocates of animal rights will be quick to attest. Theories of modern solidarity normally treat the borders or limits to inclusion, rightly, as sites of particular normative interest. But to criticize apparently normatively irrelevant borders and rules of exclusion—such as ascriptive national or ethnic identity, for instance—should not commit one to have to defend a *limitless* solidarity. Cosmopolitan solidarity, which argues for robust inclusion of individuals beyond national borders, cannot coherently base its normative claims on the notion of an inclusion without exclusion. Even the concept of "the human" presupposes the ongoing work of patrolling, revising, contesting, and enforcing exclusionary boundaries. Again, the real question is how such patrolling, revising, contesting, and enforcing is carried out, who is included in *that* process.

It's just here that discourse theory, and the discourse principle that expresses its core normative claim, makes the thoroughly dialectical relation between inclusion and exclusion more complex and more interesting. Exclusion and inclusion ought to be understood as moments in processes of the construction and transformation of solidarities that are dynamic and ongoing, rather than static oppositions. Much depends on *how* exclusions happen. For instance, as sovereign nation-states establish legal provisions for the ascription of citizenship status, with its corresponding basket of rights and obligations, they set norms for the exclusion of persons. But these norms, in turn, may well be (indeed, I will argue, *must* be) publicly accessible and open toward discursive contest and redemption in institutions, such as a nascent transnational civil society, which may be inclusive precisely where national-state institutions exclude.

To include is to exclude. But, on discourse-theoretical terms, conversely, to exclude by publicly contestable legal norms is also to include, insofar as those excluded are taken as persons who are significantly affected by the implementation and likely effects of a given norm and are therefore *owed reasons*. In the context of what Habermas has called the "postnational constellation," social and political theory ought to become sensitive to ways that new solidarities are generated from within the interplay of inclusions and exclusions; at the "force field" where inclusion and exclusion, at different registers, become unstable and creative. For this reason, several

chapters argue in one form or another for a *reflexive* or "second order" solidarity. Forms of inclusion can emerge precisely from out of exclusionary practices of various kinds, insofar as such practices—if they are to be normatively justifiable at all—have to be justifiable to those who are most significantly affected by them. To present reasons to those affected is to include them in the circle of all those to whom reasons as justifications are owed. And, often enough, in the case of postnational democratic practices, making good on this debt requires that even the most exclusionary practices point toward institutional forms that are not yet in existence—for instance, stronger transnational civil society institutions in which opinion and will-formation cannot be mapped onto national polities, and thus cannot be determined by geographical borders, but are dynamically flexible according to the shifting boundaries of those caught up in practices of justification inherent in democratic governance itself.

Solidarity, in other words, is *not* here taken primarily in affective terms as fellow-feeling, friendship, the bonds of love, or the feeling of communal belonging. These affective dimensions are certainly important in any study of solidarity attempting to understand the transformations of solidarity attending the rise of social and political modernity, especially in a current context of globalization, where affectively saturated and tradition-appropriating modes of political inclusion and exclusion are mobilized to compensate for the decay of national sovereignty and collective identifications at the national and supernational levels. But a sociological and political theory of contemporary solidarity will need to presuppose, rather than prove once more, the basic point that traditional sources for the creation and maintenance of social solidarity have been transformed, and are only available for the work of inclusion in a highly reflexive, nonnaïve form.

The implication of this model of solidarity is that the range of contemporary social, moral, and political issues that discourse theory brings into sharper focus are ones involving debates over the *ends* of solidarity: that is, where the dialectic between inclusion and exclusion is actually conducted. Who is authorized to make the determinations of exclusionary and inclusionary rules and practices? What provisions of democratic constitutions determine who is to be included under the canopy of constitutional rights? Can transnational institutions authorize discourses in which those traditionally excluded from national solidarities—immigrants, legal resident aliens, migrant workers, temporary guests—might become effective agents in debating the terms of citizenship? What forms of moral inclusion do we

encounter that effectively trump our political solidarities, and how does moral inclusion relate the call for justice with the demand for expanded solidarity? Who determines the limits of the human: can the present include future generations into its own ethical self-understanding, such that current ethical convictions should remain binding for future persons? Does solidarity toward the future demand a present-day disavowal of genetic technologies that might one day transform the future beyond our ethical recognition?

This range of questions, I hope to show, is rendered more powerful, more pointed, and also just a bit more manageable by a reading of Habermasian philosophy as a philosophy of modern solidarity. In the first chapter, I discuss briefly the history of the concept of solidarity, and go on to sketch out Habermas's social theory of modernity, his theory of communicative action, showing how solidarity constitutes the crucial link between modern lifeworlds and the demands and pressures of highly complex social systems. In the second chapter, the model of solidarity as inclusion is applied to the contemporary "postnational" constellation, in an attempt to clarify the terms of national, postnational, and cosmopolitan solidarities. The third chapter offers a discussion of the social, economic, and political factors in contemporary transnational migration, along with an argument for transnational civil society as an institutional seat for an expanded form of political solidarity, in which noncitizens are increasingly able to exercise the kind of political agency establishing them as significant participants in political discourses about their exclusions at the national level. Chapter four sharpens this thesis with a study of the dynamics of legal-political inclusion and exclusion in the constitutional process in the European Union. As a postnational and transnational democratic polity, the European Union is faced with a startlingly new constitutional process. On the basis of Habermasian discourse theory, I argue that this new opportunity calls for a new mode of constitution-making, one in which the scope or extent of constitutional provisions is itself made into a manifest component of constitutional law, rather than relegated to a question of naturalization to be handled legislatively.

In the fifth chapter, I conclude the institutional-political analysis of the dynamics of European integration, this time in the context of religion. Arguing against a simplistic "secularization thesis," I analyze conflicting attitudes toward religion and religious institutions in EU countries, revealing a complex and shifting tapestry. This complex picture is then understood as the background for a debate between Rawls and Habermas on the question

of the secular and the sacred, on the relation between religious and nonreligious citizens in a liberal democracy. An analysis of Habermas's responses to Rawls reveals the central importance of civil society—in this case, a European civil society—as the key factor in determining how secular and religious citizens will and will not bind themselves to one another in relations of solidarity over the giving and taking of justifications for their political positions.

In the last two chapters, I turn from politics to moral philosophy. In chapter six, reading Habermas's writings on discourse ethics, I reconstruct his claims on the internal connection between justice and solidarity in a post-Kantian deontic moral theory. The chapter ends by questioning whether Habermas's own explanation for this codependence of justice and solidarity is convincing. The seventh and final chapter expands and challenges the implications of discourse ethics through a critical reading of Habermas's objections to new genetic medical technologies, and his arguments in favor of an "ethical self understanding of the species." By tracing Habermas's position back to an older struggle against a specific German tradition of (conservative) philosophical anthropology, I attempt to show how deeply moral discourse remains within (national) ethical contexts.

The chapters that make up *The Ends of Solidarity* reflect work on Habermasian discourse theory and issues in contemporary ethics and politics that date back nearly ten years. Looking back over that decade, it's reassuring to see how much of this work has been cooperative and dialogical, and how much of what I think has grown out of being argued with, corrected, and challenged by colleagues and friends.

In acknowledging the intellectual debts I've incurred in this work, the first person to thank is Jürgen Habermas himself, whom I've had the privilege to know, to work with and for, and learn from, for over twenty years. I can't hope to express adequately the depth of my gratitude, but I hope that the present work is at least a promissory note—even (or better, especially) at those points where my disagreements are most clear. Thank you.

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1

Solidarity

The Adventures of a Concept between Fact and Norm

O<small>F ALL THE CONCEPTS</small> that form the constellation of modern political thought, surely "solidarity" is a strong candidate for the most challenging. At once influential and undertheorized, the concept of solidarity appears to function across a startling range of discourses. At the core of the difficulties involved in using the concept of solidarity for illuminating contemporary political problems is an ambiguity between normative and descriptive uses of the concept itself. The goal of this introductory chapter is to offer a reconstruction, in part intellectual-historical and in part analytic, of the normative-descriptive ambiguity in our current usage of the concept of solidarity. This ambiguity between fact and norm shouldn't be taken as an unfortunate outcome of a history of misinterpretations, or as an example of a muddy concept in need of clarification. Rather, we should view the fact-norm ambiguity as a dialectical tension, in the sense that a degree of undecidability between normative and descriptive moments (in Hegel's sense) of solidarity is itself the core meaning of the term—a tension that can be turned to highly productive use, as the subsequent chapters will attempt.

In contemporary political theory solidarity can be invoked as a synonym for community, as the political value against which the freedom of individuals must be balanced and without which freedom becomes hollow. In this context, solidarity effectively translates the eighteenth-century republican ideal of "fraternity," intended as a sibling to the ideal political norms of liberty and equality. It is a strange sibling, at that: while much political theory over the past decades has been dedicated to the question of the primacy of liberty or equality, solidarity has often remained marginalized. In the "liberal versus communitarian" debates of the 1980s and 1990s, communitarian criticisms of political liberalism often appealed to an abstract conception of community that seems roughly equivalent to solidarity. On the other hand,

the core idea of a "shared sense of the good" or a substantive ethical consensus on how a group ought to live, indeed the idea of a shared identity, is quite different from the meanings normally attached to solidarity, which seems in many respects as willfully abstract, as open to ongoing contestation, as personal liberty and social equality. The ideal of fraternity itself embodies these tensions insofar as it connotes both a pre-political blood-based or kinship bond while simultaneously appealing to a transcendence or expansion of just those highly local, ascriptive ties toward fellow-citizens beyond the bonds of clan or family belonging. To the extent that solidarity translates the older, republican ideal of fraternity, it continues to embody this tension between premodern and specifically modern ideals of belonging, bonding, and inclusion.

In a different register, in moral philosophy and normative ethics, solidarity can refer to the concept of membership in a moral community or the collective, intersubjective bonds that hold autonomous moral agents together, both engendering and limiting their capacities for solitary moral reflection. We can therefore speak of a "moral solidarity" as an important entailment of moral deontology. To be an autonomous moral agent is only possible insofar as one thinks of oneself as included in an abstract set of all those who count as free and equal actors; a member in a set of all equally constituted moral agents whose mutual recognition forms the interwoven fabric of a moral point of view. The Kantian kingdom of ends transcends all possible political solidarities. But it is nevertheless constitutive for moral practice, in the sense that moral solidarity, the acknowledgment and recognition of inclusion in a universally constituted moral group, is a necessary condition for the possibility of morality. In Habermas's post-Kantian moral philosophy, as we will see, the notion of a moral solidarity as the "obverse side" of justice is the effort to argue for just this point.

Modern political and moral solidarity express belonging or mutual ties beyond contingent and ascriptive bonds. But solidarity can also be a phenomenologically highly rich term, referring to any number of greater or lesser forms of belonging or bonding. We can speak of national solidarity whose particularist features (ethnic descent, a natural language, specific national histories, and so on) enter into tension with the universalist principles of modern constitutional democratic states; of local or subnational, religious, ethnic, or racial solidarities that jostle for primacy within an overdetermined cultural-political landscape; of shifting, contingent, and multiply determined solidarities engendered by the dynamics of complex societies.

Solidarity can have widely disparate political-moral connotations as well. In its moral-universalist reading, as well as its Enlightenment, republican variant in the civic ideal of fraternity, it seems to demand an unconditioned social and political symmetry not just between individuals in a social group but between social groups overall. Solidarity evokes the dream of freedom and equality reconciled. But in other, principally nineteenth- and early twentieth-century usages, solidarity specifies a strong bonding between members of subordinated groups in a condition of sociopolitical asymmetry. In its usages in actual political and moral struggles for the past one hundred and fifty years, "solidarity" was, of course, a central term in the tradition of socialist theory and practice from the middle of the nineteenth century to the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s, a span through which the core intuition—the preparedness for mutual aid and sacrifice of an oppressed group in opposition to an otherwise hegemonic oppression—remained the same even as the opposition itself changed radically. And as a secular version of an older monotheistic, predominantly Christian conception of bonds of love and aid that transcend particular and contingent attachments, solidarity has been widely "resacralized" over the second half of the twentieth century by various Christian congregations exercising advocacy for, and supplying aid to, populations of the poor and oppressed in the developing world.

We can thus distinguish between an Enlightenment, universalist reading of solidarity, surviving in various forms to the present, in which the abstract and voluntarist claims concerning the inalienable freedom and equality of persons might itself generate, or demand, a form of social cohesion or intersubjective bonding based upon these very rational attributes. Solidarities between persons and between groups presuppose a basic norm of *symmetrical* conditions of mutual inclusion in this abstract sense. On the other hand, specifically in the nineteenth century, in both socialist and nationalist thought solidarity was normally taken to presuppose an *asymmetrical* relation between an in-group and its hostile other; an intense intergroup bonding in response to external threats.

These powerfully *normative* usages of the concept of solidarity, comprising more of a family resemblance than a consistent definition, also have to be squared with the *descriptive* usages of the term in discourses within contemporary social theory. For the founders of modern social theory—Emile Durkheim and Max Weber—the fundamental question of social theory was the task of explaining the distinctive features of modernity on the levels of culture, society, and personality. Solidarity, most famously in

Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society*, lay at the heart of this task. In its various forms, the founding generation of sociology attempted to answer the question of modernity by explaining how the transition from traditional to modern societies entailed a transformation of social solidarity as a mode for integrating new members into social institutions and practices. Traditional modes for the validity and legitimacy of social codes, norms, and approved practices or normed behavior become devalued. The old, obligatory normative consensus carried by metaphysical-religious worldviews collapses, and with it the most familiar and most effective mechanism for social integration and cohesion, namely, discourses of individual and collective identity and belonging, paired with strongly motivating, normed behavior, connecting social institutions and practices, cultural values, and personality structures.

In modernity, the creation and maintenance of legitimate social institutions and practices increasingly shift from preestablished normative consensus to the shoulders of social members themselves, who must undertake the work of social integration through their own participation in largely disenchanted procedures and institutions. Durkheim sees this shift in the transformation from mechanical to organic solidarity; Weber sees the process of disenchantment interwoven with the dissemination, differentiation, and institutionalization of instrumental rationality. In both cases, the descriptive account of solidarity enters into a complex and productive relationship with a normative version. Both Durkheim and Weber were guided by powerful moral and political convictions. Social theory is itself also a form of social praxis, and modern sociology is a discipline that speaks from, and appeals to, the very phenomena it attempts to explain: the modern, secular worldview. Durkheim's writings on the need for the establishment of a postreligious mode for social bonding, like Weber's ethics of fraternity beyond the "iron cage" of means–ends rationality, deliberately blurs the distinction between a functionalist, descriptive account of solidarity as social integration—a function that *any* society must perform if it is to reproduce itself successfully—and a normative account of how *our* society *ought* to be in solidarity, how *we* ought to include one another, on what basis we ought to recognize one another, what we owe to one another as social members, or as human beings.

This tension between normative and descriptive accounts of modern forms of social solidarity is, as I hope the following chapters will show, not a problem to be solved. Instead it ought to be taken as definitive for modern social and political thought—as it is in so many of Jürgen Habermas's

works. The distinction between normative and descriptive accounts of solidarity is ultimately itself referred to ongoing social practices insofar as the very idea of such a distinction—what counts as an "ought" statement, what doesn't—is reflective of actual practices of justification, practices that are deeply socially and institutionally embedded. If we probe deeply enough into the relation between the descriptive and the normative uses of solidarity, we ultimately confront the status of those intersubjective processes that themselves are constitutive for the very possibility of a distinction between normative and factual claims in a social context. Such processes are not solitary. They are themselves processes that consist of including persons into discursive relationships.

Indeed it is the *loss* of the distinctive tension between normative and descriptive conceptions of modern social solidarity, in the development of functionalist sociological theories, that is more problematic, and more typical. As we will see, the sociological conception of solidarity supposes that a certain kind of agency has to be invoked to explain how increasingly complex societies are able to integrate and include new members, and thereby meet the ongoing and increasing need for legitimation. A collective agency of this kind, of course, supposes a very great deal about how modern societies function. It presupposes that functional accounts of modern societies are incomplete as long as they remain silent on how the dynamics of integration and legitimation involve the attitudes, norms, and beliefs of social subjects themselves, rather than the performance of social institutions. Another way to put this is that social solidarity, as the mode of integration for modern, posttraditional societies, demands a sociological explanation at both macro and micro levels—both at the level of large and complex social *systems* and at that of the *lifeworld*.

Putting the matter in this way reminds us of just how ambitious Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* truly is. The theory is, among many other things, an attempt at a definitive resolution of the century-old dispute between macro and micro sociological approaches, a dispute that, notwithstanding the *Theory of Communicative Action's* many virtues, appears to continue unabated to this moment.[1] For the present context, the point I am offering is relatively simple: the project of reconciling macro and microsociology, or functionalist and phenomenological-interpretive approaches in social theory is in large measure provoked by the need, over the course of Habermas's theory, to return to the foundational question of modern social theory, and explain how the shift from traditional to modern societies is made possible by a *transformation of solidarity*, a shift from tradi-

tional resources to ongoing, rational, error-prone human agency as the mode for the creation and maintenance of social integration and legitimacy.

This theoretical need is met by a theory as vast, complex, and demanding as any that social theory has seen. But one core claim should be articulated: the *Theory of Communicative Action* places a new conception of modern social solidarity at its heart. This conception embodies a tension between normative and descriptive accounts of intersubjective inclusion and bonds; this tension is transferred from social theory to moral philosophy, to political theory and the philosophy of law, and finally to occasional writings on contemporary politics and culture, without being lessened. Finally, the tension between normative and descriptive accounts of solidarity— "between fact and norm"—is not a problem to be solved or reduced, but is constitutive for contemporary theory as such.

As we use the term "solidarity" in the present, we appropriate a term whose origins trace back to Roman law, in which *obligatio in solidum* defines the status of joint liability for a financial debt. In an illuminating intellectual history, Andreas Wildt examines how this narrow legal-financial term acquires (in a quintessentially Roman fashion) the added connotation of a moral virtue. To be in solidarity means that a man is good for his debts and stands up to his obligations to others even when he has not benefited from them directly. To be the cosignatory of a loan means that one is liable for the reversals of fortune of another; that one's own economic well-being is no longer completely in one's own hands.[2] The original scope of inclusion into the circle of those who found themselves in such solidary obligation would have been the extended family, and it is worth lingering a moment on this older conception of solidarity as *fraternité*. The bonds of fraternal recognition—to the circle of those whom we recognize as family—are not blood bonds in this Roman conception, nor are they affective. Neither genes nor love, but liability is the bonding force. We are bound together with those with whom, like it or not, our own fates and our own well-being are interwoven. That, and not a sum of money to be repaid, is the sense of the acknowledgment of debt.

Wildt's candidate for the earliest modern example of a usage of the term "solidarity" is French. While "solidarity" translates the older revolutionary conception of "fraternity" as the third element of the republican tricolor, this translation—with the added connotation of shared liability from the older Roman word—is as late as 1840, in Pierre Leroux's *De l'humanité, de son principe, et de son avenir*, a work in which *solidarité* is evoked as the founding

creed of a secular-humanist ersatz religion. For Wildt, it is a conception affiliated with, and roughly contemporary with, other early concepts of secular humanist faith, most notably the idea of *Gattungswesen* or "species being" in Ludwig Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* and Marx's 1844 manuscripts.[3] Solidarity based on the cognition of shared humanity and the affect of filiation and friendship is meant to replace the Christian ethic of duty. Likewise it is August Comte who introduces the conception of solidarity into academic discourse. "He uses the term to refer to social and economic interdependencies—just as liberal economists do—without losing sight of the universalist-moral and affective dimensions of the concept."[4]

From this beginning in the discourse of secular humanism, republicanism, and revolutionary ethics, as a nineteenth century translation of the Enlightenment-revolutionary ideal of fraternity, solidarity is thus, via Marx, taken into the socialist tradition, where it reaches the zenith of its political currency in the last decades of the nineteenth century up until the German revolutions of 1918. In its migration from the French communards to the German communists—from *solidarité* to *Solidarität*—the term now effectively trumps liberty and equality, and stakes its claim as the highest political value. "The concept of general human solidarity," Karl Liebknecht claimed, "is the highest cultural and moral concept; to turn it into reality is the task of socialism." Or, in Eduard Bernstein's version of the same claim, "It can be said that no principle, no idea, exerts greater force within the working class movement than the recognition that it is necessary to exercise solidarity. All other great principles of the social law pale by comparison—whether it is the principle of equality or the principle of liberty."[5]

Normative and descriptive determinations of the concept appear beside the point in emphatic claims such as these. The *fact* of the shared interests, values, and fate of the working class, while constituted by the condition of oppression under capitalism, provides a sufficient account of the *norm* of an ongoing political practice, as in this earlier, highly Hegelian claim by Lassalle from 1862: "The ethical idea of the working class is that the unrestricted, free exercise of individual powers by the individual is not *sufficient* by itself, but that in an ethically structured community the following has to be *added* to it: *the communality and reciprocity of development.*"[6] Of special significance in this social-revolutionary, Marxist appropriation of the older republican ideal is, perhaps not surprisingly, an insistence on completing the work of disenchantment on the way to a "scientific" political science and practice: the dissolving of the last admixture of romantic sentiment from the concept of solidarity as a political norm. Insofar as the situation of the working

classes, and the solution to that situation, must be diagnosed from unimpeachable scientific principles, the political value that characterizes this struggle must be equally unsentimental, equally "scientific." Solidarity, on this German Marxist reading, must be expunged of its vestige of affect. A longer and absorbing quotation from Kurt Eisner, speaking in 1918, can summarize the special timbre of this social-revolutionary appropriation of the older republican ideal.

> No, no more talk of love, pity, and compassion. But the cold, steely word solidarity has been welded in the furnace of scientific thought. It does not appeal to floating, gliding, sweetly shining, perishing sentiments; it trains the mind, fortifies the character, and provides the whole of society with an iron foundation for the transformation and renewal of all human relations in their entire scope. Solidarity has its cradle in the minds of mankind, not in the feeling. Science has nurtured it, and it went to school in the big city, between the smokestacks and the streetcars. Its apprenticeship is not yet completed. But if it has become mature and omnipotent, then you will recognize how, in this cold concept, the burning heart of a world of new feelings and the feeling of a new world passionately beats.[7]

For all its bombast, this quote is so evocative and arresting because it says more than it intends. The image of a solidarity anthropomorphized precisely as posthuman, having put away its recognizably human attributes in the interest of fighting for truly human conditions, ought to remind us of one last inheritors of the Marxist tradition of solidarity, Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, who would surely have been quick to recognize in Eisner's evocation of the power of "coldness" the same principle of the bourgeoisie, renunciation of life in the name of its continuation, that Eisner's socialism was meant to oppose. Not just the renunciation of affect but the establishment of group identity through opposition—bitter, cold, and indefinite in duration—is what unsettles.[8] Behind the evocation of coldness, the "new world" whose heart burns so hotly is not one, I suspect, in which the question of the extension of solidarity beyond existing sociopolitical and economic antagonisms is ultimately open. The socialist version of solidarity effectively denies the contribution of agency in the formation of new kinds of social solidarities insofar as the claim to objectivity of its diagnosis of the contemporary "conjuncture" extends to prognosticating the future of solidarity as well.

The historical discourse of solidarity offers two troublesome alternatives, then. In the first instance, a conception of solidarity concentrates on affect and sentiment, on the principle of likeness. Such a conception has an apparently inevitable shortcoming. Its concentration on affective or ascriptive factors such as "shared identity," fellow-feeling, friendship, or empathy tends to undermine the basic and productive sociological claim that there is a *qualitative* difference in premodern and modern forms of engendering social solidarity, and that this qualitative difference entails both mechanisms for inclusion into social groups, and also the scope of possible inclusion, or the capacity to move mechanisms for inclusion beyond contingent and ascriptive, morally arbitrary features of human beings. Theorizing solidarity as affect thus risks occluding the very phenomenon most in need of explanation. In the second instance, a conception of solidarity abstracts entirely from the normative dimension and offers "scientific" explanations for how highly advanced and hypercomplex societies manage the ongoing task of social integration. Such conceptions—shared both by liberal political theorists and functionalist sociological approaches such as systems theory—have the inevitable effect of foreshortening the *agency* of social actors in the task of creating and maintaining their own social world.

As this brief genealogical reconstruction shows, any effort to derive an unambiguous definition of the concept of solidarity across a broad spectrum of disciplines and histories is bound to run up against some persistent (it's tempting to say dialectical) limits to explanation. More promising is the effort to construct a family resemblance across this spectrum, in order to attend how the concept changes and translates itself. Solidarity refers, first and foremost, to the status of *intersubjectivity*, in which a number of persons are *bound* together, whether by the facts of their existing needs or their interpretations of their own interests, into definite *relations*. The status of mutual relationships of interdependence seems to be a necessary but not sufficient characterization; for in the normative reading of solidarity, subjects—whether self-reflexively aware of this normativity or not—are in solidarity with one another insofar as these very relations of reciprocity and interdependence are identified as a resource for the provision of need or the successful mastering of challenges. In this sense, conceptions of social solidarity, as in the socialist tradition, often construct the norm of social solidarity as cohesion of a subaltern group in a situation of asymmetrical power. To be in solidarity in an oppressed group is to resist oppression by

sticking together. The shared experiences of injustice and deprivation both generate a sense of shared fate and shared identity for the subaltern group, and provide a weapon in its struggle insofar as these experiences themselves strengthen the group's resolve. This conception of solidarity in the context of asymmetrical power is of course most clearly articulated in the labor and union movements of the twentieth century, and indeed "solidarity" understood as intersubjective cohesion of union members—mutual aid and support during strikes or in times of contentious labor-management negotiations, for instance—remains a core concept of the labor union movement in the developed world to this day. In more recent Christian appropriations of solidarity, this presumption of asymmetrical conditions acquires an unusual twist, as solidarity between, say, an affluent Christian congregation in the United States and an impoverished parish in a developing country presupposes multiple asymmetries (both between the two congregations and the larger global asymmetries that generates the relationship in the first place) and demands that the rich "stand up for" the poor prior to the articulation of any concrete obligations.

The consciousness of one's status as a member of a set of persons whose needs and interests are intertwined highlights the norm of bonds and debt, a normative core that seems deeper than, even prior to, the bonds of family or of fellow-feeling, love, or friendship. It also foregrounds the element of *belonging*. The status of belonging to a group in solidarity is not derivative from a calculation of the benefits that membership grants to the individual person, as in some version of rational choice. Rather, the fact of membership, of belonging, is primary, and extends to cover both the benefits and the costs. To be in solidarity, in this sense, is to be committed, to belong fully, precisely through the consciousness of vulnerabilities, of possible harms and liabilities, that have to be assumed collectively even if—perhaps especially if—dissociation from the group would circumvent them. To belong is to share troubles; to make oneself, at least potentially, more vulnerable than one might be otherwise.

Finally, this conception of a norm of belonging—the status of membership as a rule on which norm-conforming behavior of one kind or another is expected to follow—can connect us back once again with the discourse of social solidarity derived from the tradition of modern sociology, a tradition in which social solidarity is understood primarily as *the outcome of any successful process of social integration*. In its functionalist inflection, of course, this sociological understanding is rigorously descriptive and disavows any normative evaluation of whether a given group *ought* to be solidary, let alone

whether the basis of a group's solidarity is itself normatively desirable. There are plenty of social groups that come readily to mind that one would want very much to have less, not more solidarity, and there are plenty of sources of social solidarity, now as before, that one might very much want to see disappear. Still, for any society or social group to function, in the sense of perpetuating itself by the creation and integration of new members and the maintenance of the validity of norms and the legitimacy of institutions, a social theorist interested in the use of the term "solidarity" will have to assume that a successful, "solidary" process of integration has already occurred.

If we register the various points in this constellation, or the various iterations in this family resemblance, we can perhaps construct a model for further discussion, if not a tidy definition. For the following chapters I propose the model of inclusion. The word itself is not quite satisfactory, since by "inclusion" here I mean a rendering into English of the German *Einbeziehung*, not coincidentally the word that Jürgen Habermas chooses for his collection *Die Einbeziehung des Anderen*, "The Inclusion of the Other."[9]

That title was intended to evoke the specifically modern challenge of solidarity. Modern norms of community, whether abstract moral communities, postnational democratic polities, or identity-based social groups, must all negotiate mechanisms for inclusion that allow for the subject's agency, and that are different from absorption. In Habermas's often-used formula, "inclusion does not imply locking members into a community that closes itself off from others. The 'inclusion of the other' means rather that the boundaries of the community are open for all, and most especially for those who are strangers to one another and want to remain strangers."[10]

This deceptively simple formula is meant as an encapsulation of the shift from premodern solidarities based on the principle of likeness, where "to be like" is normally achieved only via ascriptive differences of family, clan, ethnos, or nation to modern solidarity, in which the nation-state had to find an effective mechanism for the inclusion of large numbers of persons independently of traditional symbolic resources. These "strangers"—people we don't know, *and never will*—"remain" strangers: they will retain traditional-cultural differences, they will maintain separate agendas for loyalties, and will have different, often inscrutable tastes, preferences, and ambitions. To integrate different people into one democratic polity, to come to see different people as "one of us" on the basis of abstract, voluntarist principles and attributes, is, for Habermas, the basic challenge that the Westphalian