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Time and Space in Social Theory

Anthony Giddens

In recent years, there have been fundamental changes in social theory, particularly in the English Speaking world. For many years, sociology was dominated by a series of assumptions which one could label ‚the orthodox consensus'. The orthodox consensus expressed the dominance of leading trends in American sociology over sociological thinking in Britain. The orthodox consensus, in which writers such as Talcott Parsons, R.K. Merton, S.M. Lipset and others were the major luminaries, can be characterised as follows. On the philosophical side, *naturalism*: that is to say, in the orthodox consensus it was held, in various versions, that sociology shares a broadly similar epistemological framework with the natural sciences. Many writers (not Parsons) adopted *en bloc* logical positivist models of science elaborated by such authors as Carnap, Hempel and Nagel. On the methodological side, *functionalism:* those in the orthodox consensus believed that, of all the natural sciences, sociology stands in closest proximity to biology, and hence that ‚structural-functional' explanations of the kind favoured in macro-biology should constitute the core of sociological explanation. In respect of social change, *evolutionism*. I know that for some while evolutionary thought was placed under a cloud by functionalist thinkers. In the nineteenth century, however, Spencer and Durkheim had demonstrated that there can be a close association between functionalism and evolutionism, and in due course this was given recognition by Parsons, who developed his own evolutionary theories. But I would say that evolutionism was never in fact lost. It was there, in a more surreptitious but very important fashion, in the prevalence of dichotomous models of change. As everyone knows Parsons made Tönnies's distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* the basis of his pattern variables. But evolutionism was especially pronounced in ‚modernisation' theory, which most of the above writers accepted in some version or another. This was in turn associated with a fourth, and final, trait I want to pick out about the orthodox consensus: the *theory of industrial society*. By the ‚theory of industrial society', I mean the notion that industrialism is the principal transformative force in modern history; that industrialism has generally similar consequences for whatever society that experiences it; and that Marxism is dead, i.e., that class conflict no longer plays a significant role in the contemporary world.[1]

The orthodox consensus, which reigned from roughly the early fifties to the early seventies, of course never went unchallenged. Various elements of it were strongly attacked by Marxist writers, and by those who attempted to substitute

‚conflict theories' for what they saw as an over-concentration – especially by Parsons and his followers – upon consensus in society. Those who advocated different conceptions of sociology altogether – for example, writers like Schutz in exile in the USA, or Winch in Britain, both of whom advocated the significance of strong ties between philosophy and sociology; or like Elias in exile in Britain, or Bendix in the USA, who proposed comparative and ‚historical' forms of sociology – these went largely unheard.

The decade of the seventies has seen the passing of the orthodox consensus. What was once a consensus has been disowned by almost everybody, including some of its favourite sons. The results are well-known: a fragmentation of social theory into a variety of competing schools, the rise of novel frameworks, such as ethnomethodology, and a massive resurgence of Marxist thought. For a while it seemed as though social theory would remain a kaleidoscope of fragmented particles – as though, once the orthodox consensus had been exploded, nothing would hold together any longer, and even dialogue between the varying types of social theory was impossible. We can now, I think see this as a passing phase. Major efforts at the reconstruction of social theory have already been made, and with some considerable success. I have tried to play a part in these developments in two recent books. One is called, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, *New Rules of Sociological Method;* the other, *Central Problems in Social Theory.*[2] It is not my aim to create a new orthodoxy to substitute for the old one; on the other hand, I do think that each of the four themes of the erstwhile orthodox consensus which I mentioned above have to be placed seriously in question. But it is not enough that the ideas of the orthodox consensus should be quietly forgotten: we have to see just what is defensible, and what must be abandoned, in them.

This raises a whole host of questions. In the English Speaking world, the first and fourth theme have received most attention. There have been a spate of attacks upon naturalism and positivism – in which numerous authors have looked to German and French traditions of thought which a decade ago were virtually unknown in the United States and Britain. Thus ‚hermeneutics' has only recently become a familiar word to us, and for the first time Lacan, Foucault and Derrida are influential in Anglo-Saxon social thought. Many of us are already pretty fed up with philosophical critiques of positivism, and without denying their importance, as I am a culprit in this regard, I shall not discuss such issues here. Neither shall I discuss the fourth theme, the theory of industrial society, at least not in a direct way, although some of what I have to say later does bear upon it. In my opinion there are still some very fundamental issues here that are today being debated in a significant way. I have tried to explore some of these in a book, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies,*[3] but shall not raise them in this context.

In what I have to say in this paper, then, I shall be concerned with a critical analysis of the other two themes of the orthodox consensus: *functionalism* and *evolutionism*. I want to advance claims for a view of sociology which is both *non-functionalist* and *non-evolutionary*. Now to raise the question of functionalism is almost enough to put everyone immediately to sleep. For has not functionalism been the subject of one of the most protracted and boring debates known to sociology?[4] Might not the same be said of systems theory, sometimes thought to be closely allied to functionalism? To a certain degree, I am prepared to grant these things – especially the sommambulent qualities of the functionalism debate of some fifteen to twenty years ago. What I cannot accept is that the problems raised

by functionalist authors can be quietly forgotten. For one thing, to my mind anyway, is certain: that this debate resolved hardly any of the issues central to the question of the relevance of functionalism to sociology. Nor are they resolved by appeals to information theory or systems theory – even if this is undeniably far more sophisticated than sociological functionalism ever was. I believe that at least some of what I want to argue applies as forcibly to Professor Luhmann's ‚functional-structuralism' as to American ‚structural-functionalism'. Professor Luhmann is still prepared to talk of functionalism. There are many, however, who declare themselves roundly to be ‚non-functionalists', and who will have nothing to do with the term. But it is not hard to show that their writings are riddled with functionalist assumptions, often of a very crude kind – I have in mind here particularly the works of the so-called ‚structuralist Marxists' who have sought to apply the views of Althusser to contemporary sociology and anthropology.

My argument will be as follows. The term ‚function', I shall say, is of no use in sociology: indeed, it would do no harm at all to *ban it altogether* as any sort of technical term in the social sciences. Most of those who have attacked functionalism, in any interesting way, have on the other hand relapsed into subjectivism. Like those influenced by ordinary language philosophy, or by varieties by phenomenology, they have seen functionalism as a deterministic type of thought, and have attempted to replace it with one which gives primacy to the intending, reasoning agent. In so doing, however, they have moved away precisely from that area where functionalism was strongest: the analysis of institutions, of large-scale social processes. In moving away from functionalism, we need to be able to recognize *both* what I shall call the theorem of ‚knowledgeability' – that all of us are purposeful, knowledgeable agents, who have reasons for our actions; *and* that social processes at the same time work ‚behind our backs', and affect what we do in ways of which we are unaware. Marx summed this up long ago in the famous aphorism, ‚Men make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing'. But I do not believe that there is any single school of thought which has managed to spell out the implications of this seemingly banal statement successfully.

‚Functionalism' means many things, but I shall define it as that type of doctrine which holds that (a) societies, or social systems, have ‚needs'; and (b) that the identification of the ways in which they meet these needs constitutes an explanation of why particular, given social processes are as they are. This characterisation includes both ‚normative functionalism' (Parsons) and ‚conflict functionalism' (Merton) as well as the various covert functionalisms of Althusser *et al.*

I shall object to functionalism on several grounds: (a) that (like structuralism) it rests upon a false division between statics and dynamics, or between the synchronic and the diachronic; (b) that, in stressing system needs, functionalist authors have been unable to see human beings as reasoning agents, who know a great deal about what they are doing in the course of day to day life; (c) that systems have no needs, except in a sense which is very different from that which functionalist authors believe; (d) that therefore to identify system needs is not to explain anything at all; that there is not anything that counts as ‚functionalist explanation'.

I shall analyse these fairly rapidly, but all the points I shall make can be unfolded in much greater detail, and have a number of very important implications for social theory.

(a) The question of the division of the synchronic and the diachronic for the first occasion begins to get us near the title of my paper: time and space in social

theory. One of the most general underlying notions in all my arguments is that time-space relations have to be bought into the very heart of social theory, in ways in which they have not been previously. Rather than addressing this directly, it is a supposition on which many of the elements of my various arguments in this paper depend. I shall not attempt to document the various differing views that functionalist authors have had on the differentiation of synchrony and diachrony. I shall assert rather dogmatically that this differentiation is *logically* rather than contingently, associated with functionalism. And I shall claim that it is a division which should be abandoned once and for all. The characteristic view of the synchronic/diachronic distinction is that, to study a social system synchronically is to take a sort of ‚timeless snapshot' of it. By abstracting from time, we can identify functional relations; when we study systems diachronically, we analyse how they change over time. But the result of this is an elementary, although crucial error: *time becomes identified with social change.* The identification of time and change has as its obverse the assimilation of ‚timelessness' and stability: the notion that synchronic analysis allows us to determine the sources of social stability, while diachronic analysis is needed to understand the sources of change in social systems. The elementary error in this is that time is obviously as logically necessary a component of social stability as it is of change. A stable social order is one in which there is close similarity between how things are now and how they used to be in the past. This shows how misleading it is to suppose that one can take a ‚timeless snapshot' of a social system, revealing its structure, as one can, say, take a real snapshot of the architecture of a building. For social systems only have structural properties in and through their ‚functioning' *over time:* the ‚patterning' of social relations is inseparable from their continual reproduction across time.

(b) My second objection can be stated as implying that functionalist theories have lacked adequate accounts of human *action*, in the sense in which much recent philosophy has been preoccupied with that term. I think that this judgement applies to Parsons as much as to anyone else, in spite of the fact that he labelled his theory ‚the action frame of reference'. This is a complicated issue, but basically I think it is true to say that human agents appear in Parsons's scheme (as in that of Althusser) as what Garfinkel calls ‚cultural dopes'; not as actors who know a great deal (discursively and tacitly) about the institutions they produce and reproduce in and through their actions. Contrast Parsons or Merton with Goffman. Why do Goffman's works have an intuitive appeal for those who have not met with much sociological writing before, while those of authors such as Parsons or Merton (I believe) do not? This is not simply the result of Goffman's own writing skill, however significant it may be. It is because Goffman treats human beings as skilled and knowledgeable agents, who employ their knowledgeability routinely in the production and reproduction of social encounters. There is a strong phenomenological component in this, which in my opinion is of central importance in social theory. Goffman shows us many of the things we ‚know' about social conventions or institutions, and which we must know for their reproduction, but which we know in a tacit rather than an explicit sense. They become clear to us only when he points them out, but nevertheless we do already know them: and very dazzling and subtle these tacit forms of knowledge turn out to be, however much we ordinarily take them for granted as members of any given society. Functionalists, by contrast, discount agents' reasons in favour of ‚society's reasons': a true sociological explanation gets ‚behind the backs' of social actiors themselves. (Reasons, it might be emphasised, are not at all well analysed as ‚manifest functions'.)[5]

For the sake of brevity, let me merge (c) and (d) together. Social systems have no needs – nor even do they have any ‚functional exigencies'. Now there have been functionalists (e.g., Malinowski) who have held that only individuals have needs, not social systems. But most functionalists have attributed needs, or ‚requirements', to social systems, and have believed these have an integral explanatory role in understanding these social systems. But social systems do not have needs, at least in the sense that individual actors do. Let us consider a concrete illustration, Marx's discussion of the reserve army in the capitalist economy. Marx's argument can be read, and frequently has been read, in a functionalist vein. Capitalism has its own ‚needs', which the system functions to fulfil. Since the system needs a reserve army, one comes into being. The argument is sometimes stated in reverse. Since the operation of capitalism leads to the formation of a reserve army, this must be because it needs one. Neither version of the reserve army argument can be defended. Not even the most deeply sedimented institutional features of societies come about because those societies need them to do so. They come about *historically*, as a result of concrete conditions that have in every case to be directly analysed; the same holds for their persistence.

There is only *one* logical format in which talk of ‚system needs' is viable, but it does not involve attributing empirical needs to social systems. This format, on the contrary, is one of *counter-factual argument*. We can quite legitimately pose conjectural questions such as: ‚What would have to be the case for social system X to come about, or persist, or be transformed?' But we have to be very careful with such propositions, because they readily lend themselves to interpretation in a functionalist mode. Take as an example the statement: ‚in order to persist in a relatively stable form, the capitalist economy has to maintain a certain overall level of profit'. The force of ‚has to' here is counter-factual: it involves identifying conditions that must be met if certain consequences are to obtain. The ‚has to' is not a property or ‚need' of the system.

In my recent writings I have proposed that functionalism should be replaced by what I call a *theory of structuration*. I consider that such a theory meets the criterion I mentioned before, of dispensing with the concept of ‚function', and with the notion of ‚functional explanation'. It does so, however, without sacrificing the interests of functionalists in institutions, and in long-term, large-scale social processes. I shall not attempt to describe this theory in detail here, but merely indicate its outlines in the briefest fashion, because it connects through to what I have to say about evolution. According to the theory of structuration, all social action consists of social practices, situated in time-space, and organised in a skilled and knowledgeable fashion by human agents. But human knowledgeability is always ‚bounded' – by unacknowledged conditions of action on the one side, and unintended consequences of action on the other. A crucial move in this theory is an attempt to transcend the opposition between ‚action' theories and ‚institutional' theories mentioned above. This move is accomplished by the concept of what I call the *duality of structure*. By the duality of structure, I mean that the structured properties of social systems are simultaneously the *medium and outcome of social acts*. One way to illustrate this idea is by taking example from language. The structural properties of language, as qualities of a community of language speakers (e.g., syntactical rules) are drawn upon by a speaker in the production of a sentence. But the very act of speaking that sentence contributes to the reproduction of those syntactical rules as enduring properties of the language. The concept of the duality

of structure, I believe, is basic to any account of social reproduction, and has no functionalist overtones at all.[6]

This returns us to the theme of time. According to the theory of structuration, there are three intersecting levels of time involved in every moment of social reproduction; each is also a *contingent* feature of social reproduction. First, there is the temporality of immediate experience, the continuous flow of day-to-day life: what Schutz, following Bergson, calls the *durée* of activity. Second, there is the temporality of *Dasein*, the life-cycle of the organism. Third, there is what Braudel calls the *longue durée* of institutional time: the long-term sedimentation or development of social institutions. It is essential to see that each of these interpenetrate, and that, according to the theorem of the duality of structure, every moment of social interaction implies the *longue durée* of institutional time. The most trivial exchange of words implicates the speakers in the long-term history of the language in which those words are formed, and at the same time in the continuing reproduction of that language. This is very important. For most theories in sociology which have had strong phenomenological overtones, which have focussed on the knowledgeability of social actors, have had at best a truncated time-sense. They have reorganised the Schutzean *durée*, but not that of Braudel. In the theory of structuration, I am explicitly concerned with rejecting the idea that either form of *durée* has logical primacy over the other. Hence it is necessary to elaborate an account of the *longue durée* of institutional time, and this brings me to the second theme of the erstwhile orthodox consensus, the theme of evolution. Just as I argued for a wholly non-functionalist sociology, so I also want to make a radical rejection of *all forms* of evolutionary ideas that, in my view, have had a particularly noxious influence in sociology.

Evolutionary theory, of course, is also about time, in a two-fold sense – the elapsing of time in the *longue durée*, and writing about time in the sense of the interpretation of history. In the orthodox consensus, there was a prevalent view of the relation between sociology and history which demarcated them rather clearly. Sociology, it was believed by many, is about the discovery of laws or generalisations that have the same logical status as laws in the natural sciences. Such laws therefore abstract from time and place, and within limiting conditions apply to all historial periods. History is about the ‚content' which can be organised in terms of such laws: the historian provides the ‚raw material' that the sociologist generalises. Such a conception is only tenable within a positivist epistemology, and with the demise of positivism can easily be seen to be fundamentally defective. Its residues continue to be felt, however, and there is no shortage of authors who would wish to sustain the existence of some sort of fairly clearcut distinctions between sociology and history. I do not believe that any such distinctions exist. In saying this, I mean more than to advocate some sort of ‚historical sociology', which would have a distinctive field of investigation of its own. I mean to say that there simply are no distinctions between history and sociology. The theorem of the duality of structure, it seems to me, serves as a basic organising principle for social science as a whole. I do not intend by this to say that there are no sociological laws or generalisations. But sociological laws, in my view, do not have an identical logical form to those of the natural sciences, if we continue to presume that the latter have a universal character.[7] That is to say, they are themselves historical; the causal relations they embody are *in principle* mutable in the light of human knowledgeability, including within this the sorts of knowledgeability generated by sociologists.

In the heyday of the orthodox consensus, any kind of analysis of long-term institutional processes, as I have commented before, was unpopular. Functionalism severed itself of from evolutionary theories, and the conception of sociological laws mentioned above meant that few sociologists immersed themselves in matters of historical detail. (All of this is no doubt less true in Germany than in the Anglo-Saxon world.) Following Parsons's lead, however, there has been a strong revival of interest in evolutionary theory. Moreover, conceptions of evolution have achieved a revival of interest in anthropology, while in archaeological theory they remain dominant. Finally, and by no means least important, we should remind ourselves that an evolutionary theory, in some version or another (and there are various ones) is basic to Marxism. For Marx's vindication of the triumph of socialism depends upon predicating a progressive dialectical movement from tribal society to a mature socialist order.

As this list indicates, there are many kinds of evolutionary theories, and I have no intention in this context of even attempting to survey or even classify them. I have, however, carried out an extensive review of conceptions of evolution in sociology, anthropology and archaeology in another publication.[9] The concept of evolution, whether posed in ‚universal', ‚unilinear' or ‚multilinear' form, in virtually all theories I have examined hinges upon (a) some kind of notion of ‚adaptation', in which (b) adaptation to the material conditions of the environment is given prime place. ‚Adaptation' may be understood in a more or less mechanical way in different theories. The most sophisticated Marxist versions, including the particular ‚reconstruction of historical materialism' worked out by Professor Habermas in his theory of evolution, take ‚adaptation' to imply an active mastery by human beings of their environment, in which there is a mutual interplay between man and nature. Other Marxist or Marx-inspired versions, such as that which for such a long while enjoyed a pre-eminent position in archaeological circles, the work of V. Gordon Childe, have been of a more mechanical kind.[10] Some of the crudest notions of adaptation appear in functionalist theories of evolution, although one must except Parsons's account from this evaluation. So far as the bearing of ‚adaptation' upon the material world is concerned, there are again numerous different interpretations. In more orthodox Marxist conceptions, as is very familiar, the accent is placed upon man's increasing capacity to expand the forces of production, this process propelling human evolution through a series of revolutionary changes. In other schemes, such as those proposed by Habermas or Parsons, considerable emphasis is placed upon societal norms and values as the ‚cybernetic' controllers of material transformations. But the two points I have indicated both apply to these as to other variants of evolutionary theory.

Now I want to erase the notion of ‚adaptation' (or any synonyms) from sociological vocabulary as I want to do with that of ‚function', but this time on a combination of theoretical and empirical grounds. So far as the logical grounds are concerned, the idea of ‚adaptation' – at least as used by most evolutionary thinkers – if offered as an explanatory principle of social change, falls into the same category as the functional ‚needs' to which I have already objected. Societies have no need to ‚adapt' well or poorly to their environments. We can posit as a counterfactual the supposition that every society which has survived over a period of time ‚must' have acquired enough food, shelter, etc., for its members to have survived. But this is not an explanatory principle: it merely calls for one. Now one might then perhaps be prone to argue that it is not societies as such which ‚adapt' to their environment, it

is precisely their members that do so, in knowledge of what they are doing and with the desire to become as ‚materially productive' as they possibly can. It is here that we have to move to the more empirical side of the argument. It has long been posited by Marxist authors, and by many non-Marxist ones besides, especially within the discipline of archaeology, that the drive to mastery of the material environment is the key to major phases of social transformation. But recent archaeological and anthropological evidence has placed a serious question-mark against this. It has proved wrong to suppose, as the anthropologist Stanley Diamond has put it, that there is an ‚immanent logic' in surplus production: that is to say, that if ‚primitive' societies do not produce a ‚surplus', it is because they cannot – because the forces of production are inadequately developed.[11] A good case can be made for Sahlins's view that, at least in many so-called ‚subsistence economies', no principle of material scarcity operates: ‚Scarcity', he argues, ‚is a creation of modern economies – and the driving principle of the market-industrial system.'[12] Hunting and gathering societies are not necessarily impoverished: even in relatively harsh environments hunters and gatherers do not typically ‚work hard' as compared to a modern industrial labourer. Much the same standpoint is expressed by Pierre Clastres, who claims to show that members of most ‚primitive' societies ‚have at their disposal, if they so desire, all the time necessary to increase the production of material goods.'[13] They do not so desire, since the expansion of material production is not experienced as an impelling demand.

All this, I think compromises the very core of at least many evolutionary theories. And it does so not just by questioning old dogmas about ‚adaptation'. It has a further implication that relates back to my discussion in the earlier part of this paper. In other words, most theories of evolution, like much of sociology when it was dominated by the orthodox consensus, either has no place for, or underestimates the knowledgeability of human subjects – in this case, human subjects living in relatively ‚primitive' societies. The transitions from hunting and gathering to agriculture, or from settled agrarian communities to class-divided ‚civilisations', have no inevitability about them at all; neither can we assume that such transitions were actively sought after by those involved in them. On the contrary, there is plenty of evidence that, for instance, those in ‚primitive' societies have often known a good deal about supposedly superior ‚civilisations', and have actively resisted incorporation within them. There can be no doubt that the military factor has been decisive here, and indeed that the significance of military power in historical transformations has been vastly underrated by very many areas of social theory, including those of an evolutionary sort.

If the central mechanism of most evolutionary theories – ‚adaptation' – is removed, much of the distinctiveness of evolutionary theory is lost anyway. I have some sympathy, given this reservation, with what is sometimes called ‚limited multilinear evolution', but in this there is no need to use the term ‚evolution' at all, with its strong resonance of evolutionary theory in biology. Rather than using such terminology, I want to suggest an approach to history which understands social organisation and transformation in terms of what I shall call *episodic* characterisations and what I shall label *time-space edges*. ‚Episodes' refer to processes of social change which have a definite direction and form, in which definite structural transformations occur. Episodes would include such transitions as those transforming settled agrarian commununities into class-divided states – or the reverse process. In talking of time-space edges I want to emphasise the significance of the *simultaneous*

existence of types of society in episodic transitions. If we take an evolutionary view of history, we tend to think of societal change in terms of ‚stages', in which one type of society is supplanted by another, and so forth. But the emergence of class-divided societies, for example, did not eliminate tribal societies from the world. Industrial capitalism has existed, and still exists, in conjunction with various other types of society (including, now socialism) however strong and apparently implacable its tendency to corrode or to absorb them. Time-space edges refer to the forms of contact – and often of interdependency – betwen different structural types of society. These are the edges of potential or actual social transformation, the (often unstable) intersections between different planes of societal organisation.

The implications of all this, I believe, are far-reaching. They spell the death-knell of the sorts of dichotomous conceptions of societal development so popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, mechanical and organic solidarity, etc. – insofar as these are offered as overall frameworks for understanding institutional history. They also mean breaking with what I would call ‚unfolding' models of social change. By ‚unfolding models' I mean those conceptions which regard a society as an isolated unit, and as containing within itself the mechanisms which bring about its transformation. Sociology has been dominated by unfolding models, in Marxian as well as in other traditions. In the work of Wallerstain, Emmanuel, Amin and others we see the beginnings of an alternative view. But, thus far, their ideas have been focussed on the ‚world system' of modern capitalism. Recognition of the conceptual significance of time-space edges implies also acknowledging the importance of what Wolfram Eberhard calls ‚world time'.[14] That is to say, an episodic transition that occurs in one historical conjuncture may have quite a different form, and quite different consequences, to an apparently similar episode in a different conjuncture. To appreciate the importance of this is to appreciate the importance of taking seriously the proposition that sociology and history are one and the same. The choice is not one of evolutionism on the one hand, or some kind of abstracted ‚comparative sociology' on the other; both of these have to be rejected.

I am sure I have come to the end of my allotted time for this lecture – without ever having really arrived at the title I set myself, a discussion of time, let alone a mention of space. And yet I do think that everything I have said in this talk, if it has any value, is only a prolegomenon. I have talked around the subject of time, but I have not approached the mysterious but sociologically fundamental issue of the conceptualisation of time – or, as I would rather put it, the conceptualisation of time-space relations. In such a conceptualisation, I believe, reside some of the most difficult but most pressing problems of social theory – ones that are vitalo what I have earlier referred to as the theory of structuration. I think, with Parsons, that the most elementary, and the most complex, problem of social theory is ‚the problem of order'. But he interpreted the problem of order in Hobbesian terms, as how it comes about that the clash of egoisms can be reconciled with the existence of society. I hold that the problem of order is one of time-space – or, as the French would say, of presences and absences. How is it that societies are organised across time and across space? How is it that each individual's experience of the *durée* of time is meshed with that of others who are distant in either time or space or both? These, to me, are fundamental questions of social theory. I believe I have some answers to them; but to suggest what these are must await another time, another place.

References

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4 For a survey, see N.J. Demerath and Richard Peterson: *System, Change, and Conflict*. New York: 1967; Piotr Sztompka: *System and Function*. New York: 1974.
5 Cf. *Central Problems in Social Theory, op.cit.*, Chapter 6.
6 This statement needs a great deal of elaboration, however. See *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.
7 Cf., however, Mary Hesse: *The Structure of Scientific Inference*. London: Macmillan, 1974.
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9 *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. London: Macmillan, 1981.
10 V. Gordon Childe: *Man Makes Himself*. London: Watts, 1956 (Third Edition).
11 Stanley Diamond: *In Search of the Primitive*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1974.
12 Marshall Sahlins: *Stone-Age Economics*. London: Tavistock, 1974, p. 2.
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14 Wolfram Eberhard: *Conquerors and Rulers*. Leiden: Brill, 1965, pp. 16ff.