# II

# Social Structures of the Public Sphere

## 4 The Basic Blueprint

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason (*öffentliches Räsonnement*). In our [German] usage this term (i.e., *Räsonnement*) unmistakably preserves the polemical nuances of both sides: simultaneously the invocation of reason and its disdainful disparagement as merely malcontent griping.[1] Hitherto the estates had negotiated agreements with the princes in which from case to case the conflicting power claims involved in the demarcation of estate liberties from the prince's overlordship or sovereignty were brought into balance.[2] Since the thirteenth century this practice first resulted in a dualism of the ruling estates and of the prince; soon the territorial estates alone represented the land, over against which stood the territorial ruler.[3] It is well known that where the prince's power was relatively reduced by a parliament, as in Great Britain, this development took a different course than it did on the continent, where the monarchs mediatized the estates. The third estate broke with this mode of balancing power since

it was no longer capable of establishing itself as a *ruling* estate. A division of rule by parcelling out lordly rights (including the "liberties" of the estates) was no longer possible on the basis of a commercial economy, for the power of control over one's own capitalistically functioning property, being grounded in private law, was apolitical. The bourgeois were private persons; as such they did not "rule." Their power claims against the public authority were thus not directed against the concentration of powers of command that ought to be "divided"; instead, they undercut the principle on which existing rule was based. The principle of control that the bourgeois public opposed to the latter—namely, publicity—was intended to change domination as such. The claim to power presented in rational-critical public debate (*öffentliches Räsonnement*), which *eo ipso* renounced the form of a claim to rule, would entail, if it were to prevail, more than just an exchange of the basis of legitimation while domination was maintained in principle (section 7).

The standards of "reason" and the forms of the "law" to which the public wanted to subject domination and thereby change it in substance reveal their sociological meaning only in an analysis of the bourgeois public sphere itself, especially in the recognition of the fact that it was private people who related to each other in it as a public. The public's understanding of the public use of reason was guided specifically by such private experiences as grew out of the audience-oriented (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity of the conjugal family's intimate domain (*Intimsphäre*). Historically, the latter was the source of privateness in the modern sense of a saturated and free interiority. The ancient meaning of the "private"—an inevitability imposed by the necessities of life—was banned, or so it appears, from the inner region of the private sphere, from the home, together with the exertions and relations of dependence involved in social labor. To the degree to which commodity exchange burst out of the confines of the household economy, the sphere of the conjugal family became differentiated from the sphere of social reproduction. The process of the polarization of state and society was repeated once more within society itself. The status of private man combined the role of owner of commodities with that of head of the family, that of

property owner with that of "human being" *per se*. The doubling of the private sphere on the higher plane of the intimate sphere (section 6) furnished the foundation for an identification of those two roles under the common title of the "private"; ultimately, the political self-understanding of the bourgeois public originated there as well.

To be sure, before the public sphere explicitly assumed political functions in the tension-charged field of state-society relations, the subjectivity originating in the intimate sphere of the conjugal family created, so to speak, its own public. Even before the control over the public sphere by public authority was contested and finally wrested away by the critical reasoning of private persons on political issues, there evolved under its cover a public sphere in apolitical form—the literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain. It provided the training ground for a critical public reflection still preoccupied with itself—a process of self-clarification of private people focusing on the genuine experiences of their novel privateness. Of course, next to political economy, psychology arose as a specifically bourgeois science during the eighteenth century. Psychological interests also guided the critical discussion (*Räsonnement*) sparked by the products of culture that had become publicly accessible: in the reading room and the theater, in museums and at concerts. Inasmuch as culture became a commodity and thus finally evolved into "culture" in the specific sense (as something that pretended to exist merely for its own sake), it was claimed as the ready topic of a discussion through which an audience-oriented (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity communicated with itself.

The public sphere in the world of letters (*literarische Öffentlichkeit*) was not, of course, autochthonously bourgeois; it preserved a certain continuity with the publicity involved in the representation enacted at the prince's court. The bourgeois avant-garde of the educated middle class learned the art of critical-rational public debate through its contact with the "elegant world." This courtly-noble society, to the extent that the modern state apparatus became independent from the monarch's personal sphere, naturally separated itself, in turn, more and more from the court and became its counterpoise in the

town. The "town" was the life center of civil society not only economically; in cultural-political contrast to the court, it designated especially an early public sphere in the world of letters whose institutions were the coffee houses, the *salons*, and the *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies). The heirs of the humanistic-aristocratic society, in their encounter with the bourgeois intellectuals (through sociable discussions that quickly developed into public criticism), built a bridge between the remains of a collapsing form of publicity (the courtly one) and the precursor of a new one: the bourgeois public sphere (section 5).

With the usual reservations concerning the simplification involved in such illustrations, the blueprint of the bourgeois public sphere in the eighteenth century may be presented graphically as a schema of social realms in the diagram:

| Private Realm | | Sphere of Public Authority |
|---|---|---|
| Civil society (realm of commodity exchange and social labor) | Public sphere in the political realm<br>Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press) | State (realm of the "police") |
| Conjugal family's internal space (bourgeois intellectuals) | (market of culture products)<br>"Town" | Court (courtly-noble society) |

The line between state and society, fundamental in our context, divided the public sphere from the private realm. The public sphere was coextensive with public authority, and we consider the court part of it. Included in the private realm was the authentic "public sphere," for it was a public sphere constituted by private people. Within the realm that was the preserve of private people we therefore distinguish again between private and public spheres. The private sphere comprised civil society in the narrower sense, that is to say, the realm of commodity exchange and of social labor; imbedded in it was the family with its interior domain (*Intimsphäre*). The public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of

letters; through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state in touch with the needs of society.

## 5 Institutions of the Public Sphere

In seventeenth-century France *le public* meant the *lecteurs, spectateurs,* and *auditeurs* as the addressees and consumers, and the critics of art and literature;[4] reference was still primarily to the court, and later also to portions of the urban nobility along with a thin bourgeois upper stratum whose members occupied the loges of the Parisian theaters. This early public, then, comprised both court and "town." The thoroughly aristocratic polite life of these circles already assumed modern characteristics. With the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the great hall at court in which the prince staged his festivities and as patron gathered the artists about him was replaced by what later would be called the *salon.*[5] The hôtel provided the model for the *ruelles* (morning receptions) of the *précieuses,* which maintained a certain independence from the court. Although one sees here the first signs of that combination of the economically unproductive and politically functionless urban aristocracy with eminent writers, artists, and scientists (who frequently were of bourgeois origin) typical of the *salon* of the eighteenth century, it was still impossible, in the prevailing climate of *honnêteté,* for reason to shed its dependence on the authority of the aristocratic noble hosts and to acquire that autonomy that turns conversation into criticism and *bons mots* into arguments. Only with the reign of Philip of Orléans, who moved the royal residence from Versailles to Paris, did the court lose its central position in the public sphere, indeed its status *as* the public sphere. For inasmuch as the "town" took over its cultural functions, the public sphere itself was transformed.

The sphere of royal representation and the *grand goût* of Versailles became a facade held up only with effort. The regent and his two successors preferred small social gatherings, if not the family circle itself, and to a certain degree avoided the etiquette. The great ceremonial gave way to an almost bourgeois intimacy:

At the court of Louis XVI the dominant tone is one of decided intimacy, and on six days of the week the social gatherings achieve the character of a private party. The only place where anything like a court household develops during the Régence is the castle of the Duchess of Maine at Sceaux, which becomes the scene of brilliant, expensive, and ingenious festivities and, at the same time, a new centre of art, a real Court of the Muses. But the entertainments arranged by the Duchess contain the germ of the ultimate dissolution of court life: They form the transition from the old-style court to the *salons* of the eighteenth century—the cultural heirs of the court.[6]

In Great Britain the Court had never been able to dominate the town as it had in the France of the Sun King.[7] Nevertheless, after the Glorious Revolution a shift in the relationship between court and town can be observed similar to the one that occurred one generation later in the relationship between *cour* and *ville*. Under the Stuarts, up to Charles II, literature and art served the representation of the king. "But after the Revolution the glory of the Court grew dim. Neither the political position of the Crown, nor the personal temperament of those who wore it was the same as of old. Stern William, invalid Anne, the German Georges, farmer George, domestic Victoria, none of them desired to keep a Court like Queen Elizabeth's. Henceforth the Court was the residence of secluded royalty, pointed out from afar, difficult of access save on formal occasions of proverbial dullness."[8] The predominance of the "town" was strengthened by new institutions that, for all their variety, in Great Britain and France took over the same social functions: the coffee houses in their golden age between 1680 and 1730 and the *salons* in the period between regency and revolution. In both countries they were centers of criticism—literary at first, then also political—in which began to emerge, between aristocratic society and bourgeois intellectuals, a certain parity of the educated.

Around the middle of the seventeenth century, after not only tea—first to be popular—but also chocolate and coffee had become the common beverages of at least the well-to-do strata of the population, the coachman of a Levantine merchant opened the first coffee house. By the first decade of the eighteenth century London already had 3,000 of them, each with a core group of regulars.[9] Just as Dryden, surrounded by

the new generation of writers, joined the battle of the "ancients and moderns" at Will's, Addison and Steele a little later convened their "little senate" at Button's; so too in the Rotary Club, presided over by Milton's secretary, Marvell and Pepys met with Harrington who here probably presented the republican ideas of his *Oceana*.[10] As in the *salons* where "intellectuals" met with the aristocracy, literature had to legitimate itself in these coffee houses. In this case, however, the nobility joining the upper bourgeois stratum still possessed the social functions lost by the French; it represented landed and moneyed interests. Thus critical debate ignited by works of literature and art was soon extended to include economic and political disputes, without any guarantee (such as was given in the *salons*) that such discussions would be inconsequential, at least in the immediate context. The fact that only men were admitted to coffee-house society may have had something to do with this, whereas the style of the *salon*, like that of the rococo in general, was essentially shaped by women. Accordingly the women of London society, abandoned every evening, waged a vigorous but vain struggle against the new institution.[11] The coffee house not merely made access to the relevant circles less formal and easier; it embraced the wider strata of the middle class, including craftsmen and shopkeepers. Ned Ward reports that the "wealthy shopkeeper" visited the coffee house several times a day,[12] this held true for the poor one as well.[13]

In contrast, in France the *salons* formed a peculiar enclave. While the bourgeiosie, for all practical purposes excluded from leadership in state and Church, in time completely took over all the key positions in the economy, and while the aristocracy compensated for its material inferiority with royal privileges and an ever more rigorous stress upon hierarchy in social intercourse, in the *salons* the nobility and the *grande bourgeoisie* of finance and administration assimilating itself to that nobility met with the "intellectuals" on an equal footing. The plebeian d'Alembert was no exception; in the *salons* of the fashionable ladies, noble as well as bourgeois, sons of princes and counts associated with sons of watchmakers and shopkeepers.[14] In the *salon* the mind was no longer in the service of a patron; "opinion" became emancipated from the bonds of economic depen-

dence. Even if under Philip the *salons* were at first places more for gallant pleasures than for smart discourse, such discussion indeed soon took equal place with the *diner*. Diderot's distinction between written and oral discourse[15] sheds light on the functions of the new gatherings. There was scarcely a great writer in the eighteenth century who would not have first submitted his essential ideas for discussion in such discourse, in lectures before the *académies* and especially in the *salons*. The *salon* held the monopoly of first publication: a new work, even a musical one, had to legitimate itself first in this forum. The Abbé Galiani's *Dialogues on the Grain Trade* give a vivid picture of the way in which conversation and discussion were elegantly intertwined, of how the unimportant (where one had traveled and how one was doing) was treated as much with solemnity as the important (theater and politics) was treated *en passant*.

In Germany at that time there was no "town" to replace the courts' publicity of representation with the institutions of a public sphere in civil society. But similar elements existed, beginning with the learned *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies), the old *Sprachgesellschaften* (literary societies) of the seventeenth century. Naturally they were fewer and less active than the coffee houses and *salons*. They were even more removed from practical politics than the *salons*; yet, as in the case of the coffee houses, their public was recruited from private people engaged in productive work, from the dignitaries of the principalities' capitals, with a strong preponderance of middle-class academics. The *Deutsche Gesellschaften* ("German Societies"), the first of which was founded by Gottsched in Leipzig in 1727, built upon the literary orders of the preceding century. The latter were still convened by the princes but avoided social exclusiveness; characteristically, later attempts to transform them into knightly orders failed. As it is put in one of the founding documents, their intent was "that in such manner an equality and association among persons of unequal social status might be brought about."[16] Such orders, chambers, and academies were preoccupied with the native tongue, now interpreted as the medium of communication and understanding between people in their common quality as human beings and nothing more than human beings. Transcending the barriers of social

hierarchy, the bourgeois met here with the socially prestigious but politically uninfluential nobles as "common" human beings.[17] The decisive element was not so much the political equality of the members but their exclusiveness in relation to the political realm of absolutism as such: social equality was possible at first only as an equality outside the state. The coming together of private people into a public was therefore anticipated in secret, as a public sphere still existing largely behind closed doors. The secret promulgation of enlightenment typical of the lodges but also widely practiced by other associations and *Tischgesellschaften* had a dialectical character. Reason, which through public use of the rational faculty was to be realized in the rational communication of a public consisting of cultivated human beings, itself needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to any and all relations of domination. As long as publicity had its seat in the secret chanceries of the prince, reason could not reveal itself directly. Its sphere of publicity had still to rely on secrecy; its public, even as a public, remained internal. The light of reason, thus veiled for self-protection, was revealed in stages. This recalls Lessing's famous statement about Freemasonry, which at that time was a broader European phenomenon: it was just as old as bourgeois society—"if indeed bourgeois society is not merely the offspring of Freemasonry."[18]

The practice of secret societies fell prey to its own ideology to the extent to which the public that put reason to use, and hence the bourgeois public sphere for which it acted as the pacemaker, won out against state-governed publicity. From publicist enclaves of civic concern with common affairs they developed into "exclusive associations whose basis is a separation from the public sphere that in the meantime has arisen."[19] Other societies, in contrast (especially those arising in the course of the eighteenth century among bourgeois dignitaries), expanded into open associations access to which (through cooptation or otherwise) was relatively easy. Here bourgeois forms of social intercourse, closeness (*Intimität*), and a morality played off against courtly convention were taken for granted; at any rate they no longer needed affirmation by means of demonstrative fraternization ceremonies.

However much the *Tischgesellschaften, salons,* and coffee houses may have differed in the size and composition of their publics, the style of their proceedings, the climate of their debates, and their topical orientations, they all organized discussion among private people that tended to be ongoing; hence they had a number of institutional criteria in common. *First,* they preserved a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether. The tendency replaced the celebration of rank with a tact befitting equals.[20] The parity on whose basis alone the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy and in the end can carry the day meant, in the thought of the day, the parity of "common humanity" ("*bloss Menschliche*"). *Les hommes,* private gentlemen, or *die Privatleute* made up the public not just in the sense that power and prestige of public office were held in suspense; economic dependencies also in principle had no influence. Laws of the market were suspended as were laws of the state. Not that this idea of the public was actually realized in earnest in the coffee houses, the *salons,* and the societies; but as an idea it had become institutionalized and thereby stated as an objective claim. If not realized, it was at least consequential.

*Secondly,* discussion within such a public presupposed the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned. The domain of "common concern" which was the object of public critical attention remained a preserve in which church and state authorities had the monopoly of interpretation not just from the pulpit but in philosophy, literature, and art, even at a time when, for specific social categories, the development of capitalism already demanded a behavior whose rational orientation required ever more information. To the degree, however, to which philosophical and literary works and works of art in general were produced for the market and distributed through it, these culture products became similar to that type of information: as commodities they became in principle generally accessible. They no longer remained components of the Church's and court's publicity of representation; that is precisely what was meant by the loss of their aura of extraordinariness and by the profaning of their once sacramental

character. The private people for whom the cultural product became available as a commodity profaned it inasmuch as they had to determine its meaning on their own (by way of rational communication with one another), verbalize it, and thus state explicitly what precisely in its implicitness for so long could assert its authority. As Raymond Williams demonstrates, "art" and "culture" owe their modern meaning of spheres separate from the reproduction of social life to the eighteenth century.[21]

*Thirdly*, the same process that converted culture into a commodity (and in this fashion constituted it as a culture that could become an object of discussion to begin with) established the public as in principle inclusive. However exclusive the public might be in any given instance, it could never close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique; for it always understood and found itself immersed within a more inclusive public of all private people, persons who—insofar as they were propertied and educated—as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion. The issues discussed became "general" not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility: everyone had to *be able* to participate. Wherever the public established itself institutionally as a stable group of discussants, it did not equate itself with *the* public but at most claimed to act as its mouthpiece, in its name, perhaps even as its educator—the new form of bourgeois representation. The public of the first generations, even when it constituted itself as a specific circle of persons, was conscious of being part of a larger public. Potentially it was always also a publicist body, as its discussions did not need to remain internal to it but could be directed at the outside world—for this, perhaps, the *Diskurse der Mahlern*, a moral weekly published from 1721 on by Bodmer and Breitinger in Zurich, was one among many examples.

In relation to the mass of the rural population and the common "people" in the towns, of course, the public "at large" that was being formed diffusely outside the early institutions of the public was still extremely small. Elementary education where it existed, was inferior. The proportion of illiterates, at least in Great Britain, even exceeded that of the preceding Elizabethan epoch.[22] Here, at the start of the eighteenth cen-

tury, more than half of the population lived on the margins of subsistence. The masses were not only largely illiterate but also so pauperized that they could not even pay for literature. They did not have at their disposal the buying power needed for even the most modest participation in the market of cultural goods.[23] Nevertheless, with the emergence of the diffuse public formed in the course of the commercialization of cultural production, a new social category arose.

The court aristocracy of the seventeenth century was not really a reading public. To be sure, it kept men of letters as it kept servants, but literary production based on patronage was more a matter of a kind of conspicuous consumption than of serious reading by an interested public. The latter arose only in the first decades of the eighteenth century, after the publisher replaced the patron as the author's commissioner and organized the commercial distribution of literary works.[24]

In the same way as literature, the theater obtained a public in the strict sense of the word only when the theaters attached to court and palace, so typical of Germany, became "public." Of course in Great Britain and France the populace—the *Pöbel* (people), as they were called in contemporary sources—had been admitted even as far back as the seventeenth century to the Globe Theater and the *Comédie*. This included even domestic servants, soldiers, apprentices, young clerks, and a lumpenproletariat who were always ready for a "spectacle." But they were all still part of a different type of publicity in which the "ranks" (preserved still as a dysfunctional architectural relic in our theater buildings) paraded themselves, and the people applauded. The way in which the *parterre* (main floor) had to change to become the bourgeois public was indicated by the Parisian police ordinances that from the royal edict of 1641 on were issued to combat the noise and fighting and, indeed, killing. For before long it was not only the "society" seated in the loges and balconies that was to be protected from the *filous* but also a certain part of the main floor audience itself—the bourgeois part, whose first typical representatives were the *marchands de la rue St. Denis* (the owners of the new fashion and luxury shops: jewelers, opticians, music dealers, and glove makers). The main floor became the place where gradually the

people congregated who were later counted among the cultured classes without, however, already belonging to the upper stratum of the upper bourgeoisie who moved in the *salons*. In Great Britain the change was more abrupt. The popular theater did not survive; at the time of Charles II a single theater managed to persist under the patronage of the court, "and even there it appealed not to the citizens, but [only to] . . . the fashionables of the Town."[26] Only in the post-revolutionary phase, marked by the transition from Dryden's comedies to the dramas of Congreve, were the theaters opened to an audience of which Gottsched in the sixties of the following century could finally say: "In Berlin the thing is now called *Publikum*."[27] For in 1766, as a consequence of the critical efforts of Gottsched and Lessing, Germany finally acquired a permanent theater, i.e., the "German National Theater" (*Deutsches Nationaltheater*).

The shift which produced not merely a change in the composition of the public but amounted to the very generation of the "public" as such, can be categorically grasped with even more rigor in the case of the concert-going public than in the case of the reading and theater-going public. For until the final years of the eighteenth century all music remained bound to the functions of the kind of publicity involved in representation—what today we call occasional music. Judged according to its social function, it served to enhance the sanctity and dignity of worship, the glamor of the festivities at court, and the overall splendor of ceremony. Composers were appointed as court, church, or council musicians, and they worked on what was commissioned, just like writers in the service of patrons and court actors in the service of princes. The average person scarcely had any opportunity to hear music except in church or in noble society. First, private *Collegia Musica* appeared on the scene; soon they established themselves as public concert societies. Admission for a payment turned the musical performance into a commodity; simultaneously, however, there arose something like music not tied to a purpose. For the first time an audience gathered to listen to music as such—a public of music lovers to which anyone who was propertied and educated was admitted.[28] Released from its functions in the ser-

vice of social representation, art became an object of free choice and of changing preference. The "taste" to which art was oriented from then on became manifest in the assessments of lay people who claimed no prerogative, since within a public everyone was entitled to judge.

The conflict about lay judgment, about the public as a critical authority, was most severe in that field where hitherto a circle of connoisseurs had combined social privilege with a specialized competence: in painting, which was essentially painting for expert collectors among the nobility until here too the artists saw themselves forced to work for the market. To the same degree painters emancipated themselves from the constrictions of the guilds, the court, and the Church; craftsmanship developed into an *ars liberalis*, albeit only by way of a state monopoly. In Paris the Academy of Art was founded in 1648 under Le Brun; in 1677, only three years after Colbert granted it similar privileges as the Académie Française, it opened its first *salon* to the public. During the reign of Louis XIV at most ten such exhibitions took place.[29] They became regular only after 1737; ten years later La Font's famous reflections were published formulating for the first time the following principle: "A painting on exhibition is like a printed book seeing the day, a play performed on the stage—anyone has the right to judge it."[30] Like the concert and the theater, museums institutionalized the lay judgment on art: discussion became the medium through which people appropriated art. The innumerable pamphlets criticizing or defending the leading theory of art built on the discussions of the *salons* and reacted back on them—art criticism as conversation. Thus, in the first half of the eighteenth century the *amateurs éclairés* formed the inner circle of the new art public. To the extent to which the public exhibitions received wider attention and, going over the heads of the connoisseurs, presented works of art directly to a broader public, these could no longer maintain a position of control. Yet since their function had become indispensable, it was now taken over by professional art criticism. That the latter too had its proper origin in the *salon* is at once demonstrated by the example of its first and most significant representative. From 1759 on Diderot wrote his *Salon* (i.e., knowledgeable reviews of the peri-

odic exhibitions at the *Académie*)[31] for Baron de Grimm's *Literary Correspondence*, a newsletter inspired by Madame de Epinay's famous *salon* and produced for its use.

In the institution of art criticism, including literary, theater, and music criticism, the lay judgment of a public that had come of age, or at least thought it had, became organized. Correspondingly, there arose a new occupation that in the jargon of the time was called *Kunstrichter* (art critic). The latter assumed a peculiarly dialectical task: he viewed himself at the same time as the public's mandatary and as its educator.[32] The art critics could see themselves as spokesmen for the public—and in their battle with the artists this was the central slogan—because they knew of no authority beside that of the better argument and because they felt themselves at one with all who were willing to let themselves be convinced by arguments. At the same time they could turn against the public itself when, as experts combatting "dogma" and "fashion," they appealed to the ill-informed person's native capacity for judgment. The context accounting for this self-image also elucidated the actual status of the critic: at that time, it was not an occupational role in the strict sense. The *Kunstrichter* retained something of the amateur; his expertise only held good until countermanded; lay judgment was organized in it without becoming, by way of specialization, anything else than the judgment of one private person among all others who ultimately were not to be obligated by any judgment except their own. This was precisely where the art critic differed from the judge. At the same time, however, he had to be able to find a hearing before the entire public, which grew well beyond the narrow circle of the *salons*, coffee houses, and societies, even in their golden age. Soon the periodical (the handwritten correspondence at first, then the printed weekly or monthly) became the publicist instrument of this criticism.

As instruments of institutionalized art criticism, the journals devoted to art and cultural criticism were typical creations of the eighteenth century.[33] "It is remarkable enough," an inhabitant of Dresden wrote in justified amazement, "that after the world for millenia had gotten along quite well without it, toward the middle of the eighteenth century art criticism all of

a sudden bursts on the scene."[34] On the one hand, philosophy was no longer possible except as critical philosophy, literature and art no longer except in connection with literary and art criticism. What the works of art themselves criticized simply reached its proper end in the "critical journals." On the other hand, it was only through the critical absorption of philosophy, literature, and art that the public attained enlightenment and realized itself as the latter's living process.

In this context, the moral weeklies were a key phenomenon. Here the elements that later parted ways were still joined. The critical journals had already become as independent from conversational circles as they had become separate from the works to which their arguments referred. The moral weeklies, on the contrary, were still an immediate part of coffee-house discussions and considered themselves literary pieces—there was good reason for calling them "periodical essays."[35]

When Addison and Steele published the first issue of the *Tatler* in 1709, the coffee houses were already so numerous and the circles of their frequenters already so wide,[36] that contact among these thousandfold circles could only be maintained through a journal.[37] At the same time the new periodical was so intimately interwoven with the life of the coffee houses that the individual issues were indeed sufficient basis for its reconstruction. The periodical articles were not only made the object of discussion by the public of the coffee houses but were viewed as integral parts of this discussion; this was demonstrated by the flood of letters from which the editor each week published a selection. When the *Spectator* separated from the *Guardian* the letters to the editor were provided with a special institution: on the west side of Button's Coffee House a lion's head was attached through whose jaws the reader threw his letter.[38] The dialogue form too, employed by many of the articles, attested to their proximity to the spoken word. One and the same discussion transposed into a different medium was continued in order to reenter, via reading, the original conversational medium. A number of the later weeklies of this genre even appeared without dates in order to emphasize the trans-temporal continuity, as it were, of the process of mutual enlightenment. In the moral weeklies,[39] the intention of the

self-enlightenment of individuals who felt that they had come of age came more clearly to the fore than in the later journals. What a little later would become specialized in the function of art critic, in these weeklies was still art and art criticism, literature and literary criticism all in one. In the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian* the public held up a mirror to itself; it did not yet come to a self-understanding through the detour of a reflection on works of philosophy and literature, art and science, but through entering itself into "literature" as an object. Addison viewed himself as a censor of manners and morals; his essays concerned charities and schools for the poor, the improvement of education, pleas for civilized forms of conduct, polemics against the vices of gambling, fanaticism, and pedantry and against the tastelessness of the aesthetes and the eccentricities of the learned. He worked toward the spread of tolerance, the emancipation of civic morality from moral theology and of practical wisdom from the philosophy of the scholars. The public that read and debated this sort of thing read and debated about itself.

## 6 The Bourgeois Family and the Institutionalization of a Privateness Oriented to an Audience

While the early institutions of the bourgeois public sphere originally were closely bound up with aristocratic society as it became dissociated from the court, the "great" public that formed in the theaters, museums, and concerts was bourgeois in its social origin. Around 1750 its influence began to predominate. The moral weeklies which flooded all of Europe already catered to a taste that made the mediocre *Pamela* the best seller of the century. They already sprang from the needs of a bourgeois reading public that later on would find genuine satisfaction in the literary forms of the domestic drama and the psychological novel. For the experiences about which a public passionately concerned with itself sought agreement and enlightenment through the rational-critical public debate of private persons with one another flowed from the wellspring of a specific subjectivity. The latter had its home, literally, in the sphere of the patriarchal conjugal family. As is well known,

this family type—emerging from changes in family structure for which centuries of transformations toward capitalism paved the way—consolidated itself as the dominant type within the bourgeois strata.

To be sure, the urban nobility, especially that of the French capital which set the standards for the rest of Europe, still kept an open "house" and despised the bourgeois family life turned in on itself. The continuity of the family line, one with the inheritance of privileges, was sufficiently guaranteed by the name alone; not even a common household was required of the spouses who frequently enough lived each in his or her own *hôtel* and who in some cases met one another more often in the extrafamilial sphere of the *salon* than in the circle of their own family. The *maîtresse* was an institution and symptomatic of the fact that the fluctuating but nevertheless strictly conventionalized relations of "life in society" only rarely allowed for a private sphere in the bourgeois sense. A playful intimacy, where it managed to arise nevertheless, was distinct from the permanent intimacy of the new family life. The latter, in turn, contrasted with the older forms of communality in the extended family as they continued to be observed among the "people," especially in the countryside, until long after the eighteenth century. These forms were pre-bourgeois also in the sense that they did not fit the distinction between "public" and "private."

But already the seventeenth-century British gentry, becoming more bourgeois in orientation, appeared to have deviated from a life-style that in this manner involved the "whole house." The privatization of life can be observed in a change in architectural style: "Certain changes were taking place in the structure of the houses newly built. The lofty, raftered hall . . . went out of fashion. 'Dining rooms' and 'drawing rooms' were now built of one storey's height, as the various purposes of the old 'hall' were divided up among a number of different chambers of ordinary size. The courtyard . . . , where so much of the life of the old establishment used to go on, also shrank . . . , ; the yard was placed no longer in the middle of the house but behind it."[40] What Trevelyan reports here about the coun-

try seat of the British gentry held true on the continent for the bourgeois homes of the subsequent century:

In the modern private dwellings in the big cities, all rooms serving the "whole house" are limited to the extreme: the spacious vestibules are reduced to a scanty entrance way; instead of family and servants, only maids and cooks are left bustling about the profaned kitchen; in particular, however, the courtyards . . . have frequently become small, dank, smelly corners. . . . If we look into the interiors of our homes, what we find is that the "family room," the communal room for husband and wife and children and domestic servants, has become ever smaller or has completely disappeared. In contrast, the special rooms for the individual family members have become ever more numerous and more specifically furnished. The solitarization of the family members even within the house is held to be a sign of distinction.[41]

Riehl analyzes that process of privatization which, as he expresses it in one place, made the house more of a home for each individual, but left less room for the family as a whole.[42] The "public" character of the extended family's parlor, in which the lady of the house at the side of its master performed the representative functions before the domestic servants and neighbors, was replaced by the conjugal family's living room into which the spouses with their smaller children retired from the personnel. Festivities for the whole house gave way to social evenings; the family room became a reception room in which private people gather to form a public. "Those places and halls that are for everyone are reduced as much as possible. The most imposing room in the distinguished bourgeois home, in contrast, is reserved for a completely novel chamber: the *salon* . . . yet this *salon* does not serve the 'house'—but 'society'; and this *salon* society is by no means to be equated with the small intimate circle of friends of the house."[43] The line between private and public sphere extended right through the home. The privatized individuals stepped out of the intimacy of their living rooms into the public sphere of the *salon*, but the one was strictly complementary to the other. Only the name of *salon* recalled the origin of convivial discussion and rational-critical public debate in the sphere of noble society. By now the *salon*, as the place where bourgeois family heads and their wives were

sociable, had lost its connection with that sphere. The privatized individuals who gathered here to form a public were not reducible to "society"; they only entered into it, so to speak, out of a private life that had assumed institutional form in the enclosed space of the patriarchal conjugal family.

This space was the scene of a psychological emancipation that corresponded to the political-economic one.[44] Although there may have been a desire to perceive the sphere of the family circle as independent, as cut off from all connection with society, and as the domain of pure humanity, it was, of course, dependent on the sphere of labor and of commodity exchange—even this consciousness of independence can be understood as flowing from the factual dependency of that reclusive domain upon the private one of the market. In a certain fashion commodity owners could view themselves as autonomous. To the degree that they were emancipated from governmental directives and controls, they made decisions freely in accord with standards of profitability. In this regard they owed obedience to no one and were subject only to the anonymous laws functioning in accord with an economic rationality immanent, so it appeared, in the market. These laws were backed up by the ideological guarantee of a notion that market exchange was just, and they were altogether supposed to enable justice to triumph over force. Such an autonomy of private people, founded on the right to property and in a sense also realized in the participation in a market economy, had to be capable of being portrayed as such. To the autonomy of property owners in the market corresponded a self-presentation of human beings in the family. The latter's intimacy, apparently set free from the constraint of society, was the seal on the truth of a private autonomy exercized in competition. Thus it was a private autonomy denying its economic origins (i.e., an autonomy *outside* the domain of the only one practiced by the market participant who believed himself autonomous) that provided the bourgeois family with its consciousness of itself. It seemed to be established voluntarily and by free individuals and to be maintained without coercion; it seemed to rest on the lasting community of love on the part of the two spouses; it seemed to permit that non-instrumental development of all

faculties that marks the cultivated personality. The three elements of voluntariness, community of love, and cultivation were conjoined in a concept of the humanity that was supposed to inhere in humankind as such and truly to constitute its absoluteness: the emancipation (still resonating with talk of "pure" or "common" humanity) of an inner realm, following its own laws, from extrinsic purposes of any sort.

However, the conjugal family's self-image of its intimate sphere collided even within the consciousness of the bourgeoisie itself with the real functions of the bourgeois family. For naturally the family was not exempted from the constraint to which bourgeois society like all societies before it was subject. It played its precisely defined role in the process of the reproduction of capital. As a genealogical link it guaranteed a continuity of personnel that consisted materially in the accumulation of capital and was anchored in the absence of legal restrictions concerning the inheritance of property. As an agency of society it served especially the task of that difficult mediation through which, in spite of the illusion of freedom, strict conformity with societally necessary requirements was brought about. Freud discovered the mechanism of the internalization of paternal authority; his disciples have related it, in terms of social psychology, to the patriarchally structured conjugal family type.[45] At any rate, the independence of the property owner in the market and in his own business was complemented by the dependence of the wife and children on the male head of the family; private autonomy in the former realm was transformed into authority in the latter and made any pretended freedom of individuals illusory. Even the contractual form of marriage, imputing the autonomous declaration of will on the part of both partners, was largely a fiction, especially since a marriage, to the extent that the family owned capital, could not remain unaffected by considerations regarding the latter's preservation and augmentation. The jeopardy into which the idea of the community of love was thereby put, up to our own day, occupied the literature (and not only the literature) as the conflict between marriage for love and marriage for reason, that is, for economic and social considerations.[46] Finally, occupational requirements also contradicted

the idea of a personal cultivation as its own end. Hegel soon grasped how cultivation at its core (which as bourgeois cultivation it could not acknowledge) remained tied to the socially necessary labor. The old contradiction continues on today in the conflict between a cultivation of the person, on the one hand, and a training that provides mere skills, on the other.

Although the needs of bourgeois society were not exactly kind to the family's self-image as a sphere of humanity-generating closeness, the ideas of freedom, love, and cultivation of the person that grew out of the experiences of the conjugal family's private sphere were surely more than just ideology. As an objective meaning contained as an element in the structure of the actual institution, and without whose subjective validity society would not have been able to reproduce itself, these ideas were also reality. In the form of this specific notion of humanity a conception of what existed was promulgated within the bourgeois world which promised redemption from the constraint of what existed without escaping into a transcendental realm. This conception's transcendence of what was immanent was the element of truth that raised bourgeois ideology above ideology itself, most fundamentally in that area where the experience of "humanity" originated:[47] in the humanity of the intimate relationships between human beings who, under the aegis of the family, were nothing more than human.[48]

In the intimate sphere of the conjugal family privatized individuals viewed themselves as independent even from the private sphere of their economic activity—as persons capable of entering into "purely human" relations with one another. The literary form of these at the time was the letter. It is no accident that the eighteenth century became the century of the letter:[49] through letter writing the individual unfolded himself in his subjectivity. In the initial stages of modern postal service—chiefly a carrier of news reports—the letter soon came to serve scholarly communication and familial courtesy. But even the "well worded" family letter of the seventeenth century, which before all else declared "married love and faithfulness" to the spouse and affirmed filial obedience to *Herr Vater* and *Frau Mutter*, still had its mainstay in the dry communications, the news reports (*Zeitungen*), which had by then become a

separate and distinct rubric. The bride of Herder, in contrast, was already afraid that "nothing but reports" might be contained in her letters and that "you may even be capable of considering me only a good news reporter."[50] In the age of sentimentality letters were containers for the "outpourings of the heart" more than for "cold reports" which, if they get mentioned at all, required an excuse. In the jargon of the time, which owed so much to Gellert, the letter was considered an "imprint of the soul," a "visit of the soul"; letters were to be written in the heart's blood, they practically were to be wept.[51] From the beginning, the psychological interest increased in the dual relation to both one's self and the other: self-observation entered a union partly curious, partly sympathetic with the emotional stirrings of the other I. The diary became a letter addressed to the sender, and the first-person narrative became a conversation with one's self addressed to another person. These were experiments with the subjectivity discovered in the close relationships of the conjugal family.

Subjectivity, as the innermost core of the private, was always already oriented to an audience (*Publikum*). The opposite of the intimateness whose vehicle was the written word was indiscretion and not publicity as such. Letters by strangers were not only borrowed and copied, some correspondences were intended from the outset for publication, such as those of Gellert, Gleim, and Goethe in Germany. An idiomatic expression current at the time described the well composed letter as "pretty enough to print." Thus, the directly or indirectly audience-oriented subjectivity of the letter exchange or diary explained the origin of the typical genre and authentic literary achievement of that century: the domestic novel, the psychological description in autobiographical form. Its early and for a long time most influential example, *Pamela* (1740), arose directly from Richardson's intention to produce one of the popular collections of model letters. Unawares, the plot used by the author as a vehicle then came to occupy center stage. *Pamela* in fact became a model, not indeed for letters, but for novels written in letters. Richardson himself, with *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, was not the only one to stay with the form once it was discovered. When Rousseau used the form of the

novel in letters for *La Nouvelle Heloise* and Goethe for *Werthers Leiden*, there was no longer any holding back. The rest of the century reveled and felt at ease in a terrain of subjectivity barely known at its beginning.

The relations between author, work, and public changed. They became intimate mutual relationships between privatized individuals who were psychologically interested in what was "human," in self-knowledge, and in empathy. Richardson wept over the actors in his novels as much as his readers did; author and reader themselves became actors who "talked heart to heart." Especially Sterne, of course, refined the role of the narrator through the use of reflections by directly addressing the reader, almost by stage directions; he mounted the novel once more for a public that this time was included in it, not for the purpose of creating distance (*Verfremdung*) but to place a final veil over the difference between reality and illusion.[52] The reality as illusion that the new genre created received its proper name in English, "fiction": it shed the character of the *merely* fictitious. The psychological novel fashioned for the first time the kind of realism that allowed anyone to enter into the literary action as a substitute for his own, to use the relationships between the figures, between the author, the characters, and the reader as substitute relationships for reality. The contemporary drama too became fiction no differently than the novel through the introduction of the "fourth wall." The same Madame de Staël who in her house cultivated to excess that social game in which after dinner everyone withdrew to write letters to one another became aware that the persons themselves became *sujets de fiction* for themselves and the others.

The sphere of the public arose in the broader strata of the bourgeoisie as an expansion and at the same time completion of the intimate sphere of the conjugal family. Living room and *salon* were under the same roof; and just as the privacy of the one was oriented toward the public nature of the other, and as the subjectivity of the privatized individual was related from the very start to publicity, so both were conjoined in literature that had become "fiction." On the one hand, the empathetic reader repeated within himself the private relationships displayed before him in literature; from his experience of real

familiarity (*Intimität*), he gave life to the fictional one, and in the latter he prepared himself for the former. On the other hand, from the outset the familiarity (*Intimität*) whose vehicle was the written word, the subjectivity that had become fit to print, had in fact become the literature appealing to a wide public of readers. The privatized individuals coming together to form a public also reflected critically and in public on what they had read, thus contributing to the process of enlightenment which they together promoted. Two years after *Pamela* appeared on the literary scene the first public library was founded; book clubs, reading circles, and subscription libraries shot up. In an age in which the sale of the monthly and weekly journals doubled within a quarter century, as happened in England after 1750,[53] they made it possible for the reading of novels to become customary in the bourgeois strata. These constituted the public that had long since grown out of early institutions like the coffee houses, *salons*, and *Tischgesellschaften* and was now held together through the medium of the press and its professional criticism. They formed the public sphere of a rational-critical debate in the world of letters within which the subjectivity originating in the interiority of the conjugal family, by communicating with itself, attained clarity about itself.

## 7 The Public Sphere in the World of Letters in Relation to the Public Sphere in the Political Realm

The process in which the state-governed public sphere was appropriated by the public of private people making use of their reason and was established as a sphere of criticism of public authority was one of functionally converting the public sphere in the world of letters already equipped with institutions of the public and with forums for discussion. With their help, the experiential complex of audience-oriented privacy made its way also into the political realm's public sphere. The representation of the interests of the privatized domain of a market economy was interpreted with the aid of ideas grown in the soil of the intimate sphere of the conjugal family. The latter and not the public sphere itself (as the Greek model would

have it) was humanity's genuine site. With the rise of a sphere of the social, over whose regulation public opinion battled with public power, the theme of the modern (in contrast to the ancient) public sphere shifted from the properly political tasks of a citizenry acting in common (i.e., administration of law as regards internal affairs and military survival as regards external affairs) to the more properly civic tasks of a society engaged in critical public debate (i.e., the protection of a commercial economy). The political task of the bourgeois public sphere was the regulation of civil society (in contradistinction to the *res publica*).[54] With the background experience of a private sphere that had become interiorized human closeness it challenged the established authority of the monarch; in this sense its character was from the beginning both private and polemical at once. The Greek model of the public sphere lacked both characteristics, for the private status of the master of the household, upon which depended his political status as citizen, rested on domination without any illusion of freedom evoked by human intimacy. The conduct of the citizen was agonistic merely in the sportive competition with each other that was a mock war against the external enemy and not in dispute with his own government.

The dimension of the polemic within which the public sphere assumed political importance during the eighteenth century was developed in the course of the two preceding centuries in the context of the controversy in constitutional law over the principle of absolute sovereignty. The apologetic literature defending the secrets of state thematized the means by which the prince could maintain the *jura imperii*, his sovereignty—that is to say, brought up just those *arcana imperii*, that entire catalogue of secret practices first inaugurated by Machiavelli that were to secure domination over the immature people. The principle of publicity was later held up in opposition to the practice of secrets of state.[55] Contemporary opponents, the monarchomachists, asked whether the law was to depend upon the arbitrary will of the princes or whether the latters' commands were to be legitimate only if based on law. Of course at that time it was the assembly of estates whom they had in mind as legislator. The polemics of the monarchomachists still drew life

from the tension between the princes and the ruling estates. But they were already aimed against the same absolutist bureaucracy against which, from the end of the seventeenth century, bourgeois polemics were also directed. Indeed, as late as at the time of Montesquieu the battle lines against the common foe were intermingled, often to the point of indistinguishability. The only reliable criterion for distinguishing the more recent from the older polemic was the use of a rigorous concept of law. Law in this sense guaranteed not merely justice in the sense of a duly acquired right, but legality by means of the enactment of general and abstract norms. To be sure, both the Aristotelian-Scholastic and the modern Cartesian philosophical traditions were familiar with the category of the *lex generalis* or *universalis*, but in the domain of social philosophy and politics it was first introduced implicitly by Hobbes and defined explicitly by Montesquieu.[56] "And so, whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth, is bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees. . . ."[57] Locke ascribed to the law, as opposed to the command or ordinance, "constant and lasting force."[58] In the French literature of the following century this definition was made more precise: "The laws . . . are the necessary relations arising from the nature of things."[59] They were rational rules of a certain universality and permanence. Montesquieu called government by decrees and edicts "a bad sort of legislation."[60] In this way the reversal of the principle of absolute sovereignty formulated with finality in Hobbes's theory of the state is prepared: *veritas non auctoritas facit legem* (truth not authority makes law). In the "law" the quintessence of general, abstract, and permanent norms, inheres a rationality in which what is right converges with what is just; the exercise of power is to be demoted to a mere executor of such norms.

Historically, the polemical claim of this kind of rationality was developed, in conjunction with the critical public debate among private people, against the reliance of princely authority on secrets of state. Just as secrecy was supposed to serve the maintenance of sovereignty based on *voluntas*, so publicity was supposed to serve the promotion of legislation based on *ratio*.

Locke already tied the publicly promulgated law to a common consent; Montesquieu reduced it altogether to *raison humaine*. But it remained for the physiocrats, who will be discussed later,[61] to relate the law explicitly to public opinion as the expression of reason. A political consciousness developed in the public sphere of civil society which, in opposition to absolute sovereignty, articulated the concept of and demand for general and abstract laws and which ultimately came to assert itself (i.e., public opinion) as the only legitimate source of this law. In the course of the eighteenth century public opinion claimed the legislative competence for those norms whose polemical-rationalist conception it had provided to begin with.

The criteria of generality and abstractness characterizing legal norms had to have a peculiar obviousness for privatized individuals who, by communicating with each other in the public sphere of the world of letters, confirmed each other's subjectivity as it emerged from their spheres of intimacy. For as a public they were already under the implicit law of the parity of all cultivated persons, whose abstract universality afforded the sole guarantee that the individuals subsumed under it in an equally abstract fashion, as "common human beings," were set free in their subjectivity precisely by this parity. The clichés of "equality" and "liberty," not yet ossified into revolutionary bourgeois propaganda formulae, were still imbued with life. The bourgeois public's critical public debate took place in principle without regard to all preexisting social and political rank and in accord with universal rules. These rules, because they remained strictly external to the individuals as such, secured space for the development of these individuals' interiority by literary means. These rules, because universally valid, secured a space for the individuated person; because they were objective, they secured a space for what was most subjective; because they were abstract, for what was most concrete. At the same time, the results that under these conditions issued from the public process of critical debate lay claim to being in accord with reason; intrinsic to the idea of a public opinion born of the power of the better argument was the claim to that morally pretentious rationality that strove to discover what was at once just and right. Public opinion was supposed to do justice to

"the nature of the case."[62] For this reason the "laws," which it now also wanted to establish for the social sphere, could also lay claim to substantive rationality besides the formal criteria of generality and abstractness. In this sense, the physiocrats declared that *opinion publique* alone had insight into and made visible the *ordre naturel* so that, in the form of general norms, the enlightened monarch could then make the latter the basis of his action; in this way they hoped to bring rule into convergence with reason.

The self-interpretation of the public in the political realm, as reflected in the crucial category of the legal norm, was the accomplishment of a consciousness functionally adapted to the institutions of the public sphere in the world of letters. In general, the two forms of public sphere blended with each other in a peculiar fashion. In both, there formed a public consisting of private persons whose autonomy based on ownership of private property wanted to see itself represented as such in the sphere of the bourgeois family and actualized inside the person as love, freedom, and cultivation—in a word, as humanity.

The sphere of the market we call "private"; the sphere of the family, as the core of the private sphere, we call the "intimate sphere." The latter was believed to be independent of the former, whereas in truth it was profoundly caught up in the requirements of the market. The ambivalence of the family as an agent of society yet simultaneously as the anticipated emancipation from society manifested itself in the situation of the family members: on the one hand, they were held together by patriarchal authority; on the other, they were bound to one another by human closeness. As a privatized individual, the bourgeois was two things in one: owner of goods and persons and one human being among others, i.e., *bourgeois* and *homme*. This ambivalence of the private sphere was also a feature of the public sphere, depending on whether privatized individuals in their capacity as human beings communicated through critical debate in the world of letters, about experiences of their subjectivity or whether private people in their capacity as owners of commodities communicated through rational-critical debate in the political realm, concerning the regulation of their

private sphere. The circles of persons who made up the two forms of public were not even completely congruent. Women and dependents were factually and legally excluded from the political public sphere, whereas female readers as well as apprentices and servants often took a more active part in the literary public sphere than the owners of private property and family heads themselves. Yet in the educated classes the one form of public sphere was considered to be identical with the other; in the self-understanding of public opinion the public sphere appeared as one and indivisible. As soon as privatized individuals in their capacity as human beings ceased to communicate merely about their subjectivity but rather in their capacity as property-owners desired to influence public power in their common interest, the humanity of the literary public sphere served to increase the effectiveness of the public sphere in the political realm. *The fully developed bourgeois public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatized individuals who came together to form a public: the role of property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple.*

The identification of the public of "property owners" with that of "common human beings" could be accomplished all the more easily, as the social status of the bourgeois private persons in any event usually combined the characteristic attributes of ownership and education. The acceptance of the fiction of the *one* public, however, was facilitated above all by the fact that it actually had positive functions in the context of the political emancipation of civil society from mercantilist rule and from absolutistic regimentation in general. Because it turned the principle of publicity against the established authorities, the objective function of the public sphere in the political realm could initially converge with its self-interpretation derived from the categories of the public sphere in the world of letters; the interest of the owners of private property could converge with that of the freedom of the individual in general. Locke's basic formula of "the preservation of property" quite naturally and in the same breath subsumed life, liberty, and estate under the title of "possessions"; so easy was it at that time to identify political emancipation with "human" emancipation—to use a distinction drawn by the young Marx.