Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy: A Critical Intervention

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Jurgen Habermas's The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere is an immensely rich and influential book that has had major impact in a variety of disciplines. It has also received detailed critique and promoted extremely productive discussions of liberal democracy, civil society, public life, and social changes in the twentieth century, among other issues. Few books of the second half of the twentieth century have been so seriously discussed in so many different fields and continue, almost forty years after its initial publication in 1962, to generate such productive controversy and insight. While Habermas's thought took several crucial philosophical twists and turns after the publication of his first major book, he has himself provided detailed commentary on Structural Transformation in the 1990s and returned to issues of the public sphere and democratic theory in his monumental work Between Facts and Norms. Hence, concern with the public sphere and the necessary conditions for a genuine democracy can be seen as a central theme of Habermas's work that deserves respect and critical scrutiny.

In this paper, I will first explicate Habermas's concept of the public sphere and its structural transformation in his early writings and then will note how he takes up similar themes in his recent 1990s work within the context of a structural transformation of his own work in his linguistic turn. After setting out a variety of critiques which his analysis has elicited, including some of my own, I attempt to develop the notion of the public sphere in the contemporary era. Hence, my study intends to point to the continuing importance of Habermas's problematic and its relevance for debates over democratic politics and social and cultural life in the present age. At stake is delineating a concept of the public sphere which facilitates maximum public participation and debate over the key issues of the current conjuncture and which consequently promotes the cause of participatory democracy.

Habermas Within the Frankfurt School: Origins and Genesis of Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere

The history and initial controversy over The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere are best perceived within the context of Habermas's work with the Institute for Social Research. After studying with Horkheimer and Adorno in Frankfurt, Germany in the 1950s, Habermas investigated both the ways that a new public sphere emerged during the time of the Enlightenment and the American and French revolutions and how it promoted political discussion and debate. As I indicate below, Habermas developed his study within the context of the Institute analysis of the transition from the stage of liberal market capitalism of the 19th century to the stage of state and monopoly organized capitalism of the 20th century developed by the Frankfurt School (see Kellner 1989).

Indeed, Habermas's 1960s works are firmly within the tradition and concerns of the

Institute for Social Research. One of his first published articles provided critical perspectives on the consumer society and other early texts contained studies of rationalization, work and leisure, the media, public opinion, and the public sphere (Habermas 1972). Subsequent works undertaken in the context of developing Institute positions include interventions in the positivism debate where Habermas defended the Frankfurt School conception of a dialectical social theory with practical intent against the conception of a positivistic social theory (Habermas 1976). And in Theory and Practice, Habermas maintained the unity of theory and practice central to classical Marxism and the critical theory of society, while fleshing out the moral and political dimensions of critical theory (Habermas 1973).

Habermas's initial works with the Institute for Social Research concerned studies of the political opinions and potential of students. In an examination of Student und Politik (published in 1961), Habermas and two empirically oriented members of the Institute carried out "a sociological investigation of the political consciousness of Frankfurt students" (13ff.). The study was similar to the Institute's earlier Gruppenexperiment which had attempted to discern the democratic and anti-democratic potential in wide sectors of German society after World War Two through survey analysis and in-depth interviews (Pollock 1955). Just as earlier Institute studies of the German working class and post-World War Two German citizens disclosed a high degree of political apathy and authoritarian-conservative dispositions (see Fromm 1989), so too did the surveys of German students disclose an extremely low percentage (4%) of "genuinely democratic" students contrasted with 6% rigid authoritarians. Similarly, only 9% exhibited what the authors considered a "definite democratic potential," while 16% exhibited a "definite authoritarian potential" (Habermas, et. al, 1961: 234). And within the more apathetic and contradictory attitudes and tendencies of the majority, a larger number were inclined more toward authoritarian than democratic orientations.

Habermas wrote the introduction to the study, "On the Concept of Political Participation," which provided the conception of an authentically democratic political participation that was used as a norm to measure student attitudes, views, and behavior. As he was later to do in his studies of the public sphere, Habermas sketched out various conceptions of democracy ranging from Greek democracy to the forms of bourgeois democracy to current notions of democracy in welfare state capitalism. In particular, he contrasted the participatory democracy of the Greeks and radical democratic movements with the representative, parliamentary bourgeois democracy of the 19th century and the current attempts at reducing citizen participation in the welfare state. Habermas defended the earlier "radical sense of democracy" in which the people themselves would be sovereign in both the political and the economic realms against current forms of parliamentary democracy. Hence, Habermas aligns himself with the current of "strong democracy" associated with Rousseau, Marx, and Dewey.[1]

In his early study of students and politics, Habermas defended principles of popular sovereignty, formal law, constitutionally guaranteed rights, and civil liberties as part of the progressive heritage of bourgeois society. His strategy was to use the earlier model of bourgeois democracy to criticize its later degeneration and decline, and thus to develop a normative concept

of democracy which he could use as a standard for an "immanent critique" of existing welfare state democracy. Habermas believed that both Marx and the earlier Frankfurt School had underestimated the importance of principles of universal law, rights, and sovereignty, and that a re-democratization of radical social theory was thus a crucial task.

Student und Politik was published in 1961 and during the same period student radicals in the United States developed similar conceptions of participatory democracy, including emphasis on economic democracy.[2] Henceforth, Habermas himself would be concerned in various ways and contexts to develop theories of democratization and political participation. Indeed, from the beginning of his career to the present, Habermas's work has been distinguished by its emphasis on radical democracy, and this political foundation is an important and often overlooked subtext of many of his works.

Habermas conceived of his study of the bourgeois public sphere as a Habilitationschrift, a post-doctorate dissertation required in Germany for ascension to a Professorship. Calhoun claims that Adorno and Horkheimer rejected the dissertation, finding it insufficiently critical of the ideology of liberal democracy (see Calhoun 1992: 4f). Wiggershaus, however, claimed that "Adorno, who was proud of him, would have liked to accept the thesis", but that Horkheimer believed Habermas was too radical and made unacceptable demands for revision, thus, in effect, driving away the Institute's most promising student and forcing him to seek employment elsewhere (1996: 555).

Habermas submitted the dissertation to Wolfgang Abenroth at Marburg, one of the new Marxist professors in Germany at the time and in 1961 became a Privatdozent in Marburg, while receiving a professorship in Heidelberg in 1962. In 1964, strongly supported by Adorno, Habermas returned to Frankfurt to take over Horkheimer's chair in philosophy and sociology. Thus, Adorno was ultimately able to bestow the crown of legitimate succession on the person who he thought was the most deserving and capable critical theorist (Wiggershaus 1996: 628).

The Dialectics of the Public Sphere

Habermas's focus on democratization was linked with emphasis on political participation as the core of a democratic society and as an essential element in individual self-development. His study The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere was published in 1962 and contrasted various forms of an active, participatory bourgeois public sphere in the heroic era of liberal democracy with the more privatized forms of spectator politics in a bureaucratic industrial society in which the media and elites controlled the public sphere.[3] The two major themes of the book include analysis of the historical genesis of the bourgeois public sphere, followed by an account of the structural change of the public sphere in the contemporary era with the rise of state capitalism, the culture industries, and the increasingly powerful positions of economic corporations and big business in public life. On this account, big economic and governmental organizations took over the public sphere, while citizens became content to become primarily consumers of goods, services, political administration, and spectacle.

Generalizing from developments in Britain, France, and Germany in the late 18th and 19th century, Habermas first sketched out a model of what he called the "bourgeois public sphere" and then analyzed its degeneration in the 20th century. As Habermas puts it in the Preface to the book: "Our investigation presents a stylized picture of the liberal elements of the bourgeois public sphere and of their transformation in the social-welfare state" (Habermas 1989a: xix). The project draws on a variety of disciplines including philosophy, social theory, economics, and history, and thus instantiates the Institute for Social Research mode of a supradisciplinary social theory. Its historical optic grounds it in the Institute project of developing a critical theory of the contemporary era and its political aspirations position it as critique of the decline of democracy in the present age and a call for its renewal -- themes that would remain central to Habermas's thought.

After delineating the idea of the bourgeois public sphere, public opinion, and publicity (Offentlichkeit), Habermas analyzes the social structures, political functions, and concept and ideology of the public sphere, before depicting the social-structural transformation of the public sphere, changes in its public functions, and shifts in the concept of public opinion in the concluding three chapters. The text is marked by the conceptual rigor and fertility of ideas characteristic of Habermas's writing, but contains more substantive historical grounding than much of his work and in retrospect discloses the matrix out of which his later work emerges. M y summaries in the following sections merely highlight a few of the key ideas of importance for explicating the conception of the public sphere and its structural transformation which will help to evaluate the significance and limitations of Habermas's work for elucidating the conditions of democracy in contemporary society.

The bourgeois public sphere, which began appearing around 1700 in Habermas's interpretation, was to mediate between the private concerns of individuals in their familial, economic, and social life contrasted to the demands and concerns of social and public life. This involved mediation of the contradiction between bourgeois and citoyen, to use terms developed by Hegel and the early Marx, overcoming private interests and opinions to discover common interests and to reach societal consensus. The public sphere consisted of organs of information and political debate such as newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion such as parliaments, political clubs, literary salons, public assemblies, pubs and coffee houses, meeting halls, and other public spaces where socio-political discussion took place. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society.

Habermas's concept of the public sphere thus described a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power. The public sphere thus mediates between the domains of the family and the workplace -- where private interests prevail -- and the state which often exerts arbitrary forms of power and

domination. What Habermas called the "bourgeois public sphere" consisted of social spaces where individuals gathered to discuss their common public affairs and to organize against arbitrary and oppressive forms of social and public power.

The principles of the public sphere involved an open discussion of all issues of general concern in which discursive argumentation was employed to ascertain general interests and the public good. The public sphere thus presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision-making. After the democratic revolutions, Habermas suggested, the bourgeois public sphere was institutionalized in constitutional orders which guaranteed a wide range of political rights, and which established a judicial system that was to mediate between claims between various individuals or groups, or between individuals and groups and the state.

Many defenders and critics of Habermas's notion of the bourgeois public sphere fail to note that the thrust of his study is precisely that of transformation, of the mutations of the public sphere from a space of rational discussion, debate, and consensus to a realm of mass cultural consumption and administration by corporations and dominant elites. This analysis assumes and builds on the Frankfurt School model of the transition from market capitalism and liberal democracy in the 19th century to the stage of state and monopoly capitalism evident in European fascism and the welfare state liberalism of the New Deal in the U.S. in the 1930s. For the Institute, this constituted a new stage of history, marked by fusion between the economic and political spheres, a manipulative culture industry, and an administered society, characterized by a decline of democracy, individuality, and freedom (see the texts in Bronner and Kellner 1989 and the discussion in Kellner 1989).

Habermas added historical grounding to the Institute theory, arguing that a "refeudalization" of the public sphere began occurring in the late 19th century. The transformation involved private interests assuming direct political functions, as powerful corporations came to control and manipulate the media and state. On the other hand, the state began to play a more fundamental role in the private realm and everyday life, thus eroding the difference between state and civil society, between the public and private sphere. As the public sphere declined, citizens became consumers, dedicating themselves more to passive consumption and private concerns than to issues of the common good and democratic participation.

While in the bourgeois public sphere, public opinion, on Habermas's analysis, was formed by political debate and consensus, in the debased public sphere of welfare state capitalism, public opinion is administered by political, economic, and media elites which manage public opinion as part of systems management and social control. Thus, while in an earlier stage of bourgeois development, public opinion was formed in open political debate concerning interests of common concern that attempted to forge a consensus in regard to general interests, in the contemporary stage of capitalism, public opinion was formed by dominant elites and thus represented for the most part their particular private interests. No longer is rational consensus among individuals and groups in the interests of articulation of common goods the norm. Instead, struggle among

groups to advance their own private interests characterizes the scene of contemporary politics.

Hence, Habermas describes a transition from the liberal public sphere which originated in the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolution to a media-dominated public sphere in the current era of what he calls "welfare state capitalism and mass democracy." This historical transformation is grounded, as noted, in Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of the culture industry, in which giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a sphere of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity. In this transformation, "public opinion" shifts from rational consensus emerging from debate, discussion, and reflection to the manufactured opinion of polls or media experts. Rational debate and consensus has thus been replaced by managed discussion and manipulation by the machinations of advertising and political consulting agencies: "Publicity loses its critical function in favor of a staged display; even arguments are transmuted into symbols to which again one can not respond by arguing but only by identifying with them" (1989a: 206).

For Habermas, the function of the media have thus been transformed from facilitating rational discourse and debate within the public sphere into shaping, constructing, and limiting public discourse to those themes validated and approved by media corporations. Hence, the interconnection between a sphere of public debate and individual participation has been fractured and transmuted into that of a realm of political information and spectacle, in which citizen-consumers ingest and absorb passively entertainment and information. "Citizens" thus become spectators of media presentations and discourse which mold public opinion, reducing consumer/citizens to objects of news, information, and public affairs. In Habermas's words: "Inasmuch as the mass media today strip away the literary husks from the kind of bourgeois self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers, the original meaning is reversed (1989a: 171).

Habermas offered tentative proposals to revitalize the public sphere by setting "in motion a critical process of public communication through the very organizations that mediatize it" (1989a: 232). He concluded with the suggestion that "a critical publicity brought to life within intraorganizational public spheres" might lead to democratization of the major institutions of civil society, though he did not provide concrete examples, propose any strategies, or sketch out the features of an oppositional or post-bourgeois public sphere. Still, Horkheimer found Habermas's works to be too left-wing, in effect rejected the study as a Habilitations dissertation and refused to publish it in the Institute monograph series (see Wiggershaus 1996: 555ff.). It was published, however, in 1962 and received both an enthusiastic and critical reception in Germany; when translated into English in 1989, it promoted yet more discussion of Habermas and the public sphere, lively debates still continuing, as my study will indicate.

Habermas and the Public Sphere: Critical Debates

Habermas's study of the public sphere has been subjected to intense critical argumentation which has clarified his earlier positions, led to revisions in later writings, and has

fostered intense historical and conceptual research into the public sphere itself.[4] Few books have been so systematically discussed, criticized, and debated, or inspired so much theoretical and historical analysis. The result, I believe, is considerably better understanding of the many dimensions of the public sphere and democracy itself.

Habermas's critics argue that he idealizes the earlier bourgeois public sphere by presenting it as a forum of rational discussion and debate when in fact certain groups were excluded and participation was thus limited. Habermas concedes that he presents a "stylized picture of the liberal elements of the bourgeois public sphere" (Habermas 1989a: xix), and should have made it clearer that he was establishing an "ideal type" and not a normative ideal to be resuscitated and brought back to life (Habermas 1992: 422f). Indeed, it is clear that a certain idealization of the public sphere was present in Habermas's text, but I believe that this accounts both for its positive reception and a good deal of the critique. On the affirmative side, precisely the normative aura of the book inspired many to imagine and cultivate more inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic public spaces and forums; others were inspired to conceive of more oppositional democratic spaces as site of the development of alternative cultures to established institutions and spaces. Habermas thus provided decisive impetus for discussions concerning the democratization of the public sphere and civil society, and the normative dimension helped generate productive discussions of the public sphere and democracy.

Yet Habermas's idealization of the earlier bourgeois public sphere as a space of rational discussion and consensus has been sharply criticized. It is doubtful if democratic politics were ever fueled by norms of rationality or public opinion formed by rational debate and consensus to the extent stylized in Habermas's concept of the bourgeois public sphere. Politics throughout the modern era have been subject to the play of interests and power as well as discussion and debate.[5] It is probably only a few Western bourgeois societies that have developed any public sphere at all in Habermas's sense, and while it is salutary to construct models of a good society that could help to realize agreed upon democratic and egalitarian values, it is a mistake to overly idealize and universalize any specific public sphere as in Habermas's account.

Moreover, while the concept of the public sphere and democracy assume a liberal and populist celebration of diversity, tolerance, debate, and consensus, in actuality, the bourgeois public sphere was dominated by white, property-owning males. As Habermas's critics have documented, working class, plebeian, and women's public spheres developed alongside of the bourgeois public sphere to represent voices and interests excluded in this forum. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge criticized Habermas for neglect of plebeian and proletarian public spheres (1972 [1996)] and in reflection Habermas has written that he now realizes that "from the beginning a dominant bourgeois public collides with a plebeian one" and that he "underestimated" the significance of oppositional and non-bourgeois public spheres (1992: 430).

Hence, rather than conceiving of one liberal or democratic public sphere, it is more productive to theorize a multiplicity of public spheres, sometimes overlapping but also conflicting. These include public spheres of excluded groups, as well as more mainstream

configurations. Moreover, as I argue below, the public sphere itself shifts with the rise of new social movements, new technologies, and new spaces of public interaction.

Mary Ryan notes the irony that not only did Habermas neglect women's public spheres, but marks the decline of the public sphere precisely at the moment when women were beginning to get political power and become actors (1992: 259ff). Indeed, the 1999 PbS documentary by Ken Burns Not For Ourselves Alone vividly illustrates the vitality of a women's public sphere in 19th century America, documenting the incredible organizing efforts of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cary Stanton, and others from the 1840s well into the 20th century in a sustained struggle for the vote and women's rights. A visit to the Hull House in Chicago reveals the astonishing interventions into the public sphere of Jane Adams and her colleagues in developing forms and norms of public housing, health, education, welfare, rights and reforms in the legal and penal system, and public arts (see the texts in Bryan and Davis 1969). These and other women's groups discussed in Ryan (1992) were an extremely active element in a vital women's public sphere.

Indeed, Howard Zinn's People's History of the United States (1995) and Lawrence Goodwin's The Populist Movement (19xx) document the presence of oppositional movements and public spheres throughout U.S. history to the present. Reflections on the civil rights movement in the U.S., the 1960s movements, and the continuation of "new social movements" into the 1970s and beyond, suggest that Habermas's analysis downplays the continuing richness and vitality of the public sphere well into the 20th century. And in a concluding section, I will suggest how activities in the new public spheres of cyberspace provide further expansion of the public sphere and new sites for democratic politics.

Despite the limitations of his analysis, Habermas is right that in the era of the democratic revolutions a public sphere emerged in which for the first time in history ordinary citizens could participate in political discussion and debate, organize, and struggle against unjust authority, while militating for social change, and that this sphere was institutionalized, however imperfectly, in later developments of Western societies. Habermas's account of the structural transformation of the public sphere, despite its limitations, also points to the increasingly important functions of the media in politics and everyday life and the ways that corporate interests have colonized this sphere, using the media and culture to promote their own interests.

Yet in retrospect, Habermas's analysis is too deeply embedded in Horkheimer and Adorno's philosophy of history in Dialectic of Enlightenment and theories of mass society which became a dominant paradigm in the 1950s. As noted, Habermas's account assumes the validity of the Institute analysis of the culture industry, that giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a sphere of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity. Moreover, like Horkheimer and Adorno who nostalgically look back to and idealize previous forms of the family, so too does Habermas's Transformations idealize the earlier bourgeois public sphere -- despite its limitations and restrictions repeatedly pointed out by his critics.

It is not just his colleagues Horkheimer and Adorno, however, who influenced this conception, but also participants in debates over mass culture and communications in the U.S. in the 1950s and in particular C. Wright Mills. Although Habermas concludes Transformations with extensive quotes from Mills' Power Elite on the metamorphosis of the public into a mass in the contemporary media/consumer society, I have not been able to find in the vast literature on Habermas's concept of the public sphere discussion of the significance of Mills' work for Habermas's analysis of the structural transformation of the public sphere.[6]

C. Wright Mills himself tended to utilize the Institute models of the media as agents of manipulation and social control, although he sometimes qualified the media's power to directly and consistently manipulate the public. In White Collar, Mills (1951) stressed the crucial role of the mass media in shaping individual behavior and inducing conformity to middle class values. He argued that the media are increasingly shaping individual aspirations and behavior and are above all promoting values of "individual success." He also believed that entertainment media were especially potent instruments of social control because "popular culture is not tagged as 'propaganda' but as entertainment; people are often exposed to it when most relaxed of mind and tired of body; and its characters offer easy targets of identification, easy answers to stereotyped personal problems" (ibid, p. 336).

Mills analyzed the banalization of politics in the media through which "the mass media plug for ruling political symbols and personalities." Perceiving the parallel between marketing commodities and selling politicians, Mills analyzed tendencies toward the commodification of politics, and in The Power Elite, he focused on the manipulative functions of media in shaping public opinion and strengthening the power of the dominant elites (Mills 1956). In an analysis that anticipated Habermas' theory, Mills discusses the shift from a social order consisting of "communities, of publics," in which individuals participated in political and social debate and action, to a "mass society" characterized by the "transformation of public into mass" (298ff.). The impact of the mass media is crucial in this "great transformation" for it shifts "the ratio of givers of opinion to the receivers" in favor of small groups of elites, who control or have access to the mass media. Moreover, the mass media engage in one-way communication that does not allow feedback, thus obliterating another feature of a democratic public sphere. In addition, the media rarely encourage participation in public action. In these ways, they foster social passivity and the fragmentation of the public sphere into privatized consumers.

When I presented this interpretation of Habermas's conception of the bourgeois public sphere in a conference at Starnberg in 1981 (see Kellner 1983), he acknowledged that indeed conceptions of Horkheimer and Adorno and C. Wright Mills influenced his analysis and indicated that he saw his work as providing a historical grounding for Horkheimer and Adorno's theory of the culture industries and that Mills provided a contemporary updating and validation of the Institute model. Yet in terms of finding both a standpoint and strategy of critique, as well as a practical politics to revitalize democracy, the analyses of Horkheimer, Adorno, and the early Habermas have led to a cul-de-sac. In the analyses of the culture industry and public sphere in Horkheimer and Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment and Habermas's Structural Transformation,

the Institute strategy of immanent critique could not be used, there was no institutional basis to promote democratization, and no social actors to relate theory to practice and to strengthen democratic social movements and transformation. Hence, critical theory reached a deadend with no robust normative grounds for critique or social forces capable of transforming existing society.

In the 1930s, the Institute had used the method of immanent critique by which they criticized fascist and totalitarian societies from the standpoint of Enlightenment concepts of democracy, human rights, individual and social freedoms, and rationality. In this way, the Frankfurt School used standards "immanent" to bourgeois society to criticize distortions in its later developments in fascism. But Horkheimer and Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment, written in the 1940s and first published in 1947, showed how Enlightenment norms had turned into their opposite, how democracy had produced fascism, reason had produced unreason, as instrumental rationality created military machines and death camps, and the culture industries were transforming culture from an instrument of Bildung and enlightenment into an instrument of manipulation and domination (see the discussion in Kellner 1989, Chapter 4). In this situation, the procedure of using "bourgeois ideals as norms of critique"

[has] been refuted by the civilized barbarism of the twentieth century. When these bourgeois ideals are cashed in, when the consciousness turns cynical, the commitment to those norms and value orientations that the critique of ideology must presuppose for its appeal to find a hearing becomes defunct. I suggested, therefore, that the normative foundations of the critical theory of society be laid at a deeper level. The theory of communicative action intends to bring into the open the rational potential intrinsic in everyday communicative practices (1992: 442).

Like Horkheimer and Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment, Habermas had produced an account of how the bourgeois public sphere had turned into its opposite. Recognizing that using an earlier form of social organization to criticize its later deformation was nostalgic, Habermas called for a renewed democratization of public institutions and spaces at the end of Structural Transformation (1989: 248ff), but this was merely a moral exhortation with no discernible institutional basis or social movements to realize the call. Hence, both to discern a new standpoint for critique, to provide new philosophical bases for critical theory, and to contribute a new force for democratization, Habermas turned to the sphere of language and communication to find norms for critique and an anthropological basis to promote his calls for democratization.

The Linguistic Turn

Habermas's argument is that language itself contains norms to criticize domination and oppression and a force that could ground and promote societal democratization. In the capacity to understand the speech of another, to submit to the force of a better argument, and to reach consensus, Habermas found a rationality inherent in what he came to call "communicative action" that could generate norms to criticize distortions of communication in processes of societal domination and manipulation and cultivate a process of rational discursive will-formation. Developing what he called an "ideal speech situation," Habermas thus cultivated quasi-

transcendental grounds for social critique and a model for more democratic social communication and interaction.[7]

Consequently, Habermas made his linguistic turn and shifted to language and communication as a basis at once for social critique, democratization, and to establish critical theory on a stronger theoretical foundation to overcome the impasse that he believed that Frankfurt School had become trapped in. Over the past several decades, Habermas has been arguing that language and communication are a central feature of the human lifeworld that can resist the systemic imperatives of money and power which undermine communicative structures. This project has both generated a wealth of theoretical discussions and has provided normative bases for social critique and democratization.

Habermas's theory of communicative action, his linguistic turn, and quasi-transcendental grounding of language have received a tremendous amount of commentary and criticism which I will merely allude to here to promote further critical discussion of his conceptions of democracy and the public sphere. I do want to stress, however, since this is often overlooked, that it was not just theoretical imperatives and insights that led Habermas to his concern with language and communication, but the deadlock that he and the Frankfurt School had reached and the need for stronger bases of socio-political criticism and democratization. Hence, while, as I will argue, there are continuities between Habermas's early analysis of the public sphere, there are also important alterations in his theory.

For starters, Habermas switches his focus from the socio-historical and institutional mooring of critical theory in Structural Transformation to a more philosophical ground in his post-1970s philosophical works. This has serious implications, I believe, for his theory of language and communication. In the contemporary highly historicist and constructivist milieu, it is often remarked that Habermas's notion of language is too universalistic and ahistorical. On the constructivist and historicist view, language itself is a socio-historical construct, with its own rules, conventions, and history. Meanings and uses shift over time, while different societies have their own language games and forms of language and communication, which are subject to a multiplicity of varying social forces and powers.[8]

Indeed, for contemporary poststructuralist theory, language and communication are integrally embedded in power in an existing social system, they serve interests of domination and manipulation as much as enlightenment and understanding, and are subject to historically contingent and specific constraints and biases. Hence, on this view, language in contemporary society is functionalized and rationalized, its meanings and uses are socially constructed to serve hegemonic interests, including legitimation and domination, and so language is never pure and philosophical, universal and transcendent of social conditions. While there is a utopian promise in language and communication that minds can meet, that shared understanding can be established, that truth can be revealed, and that unforced consensus can be reached, this is merely a utopian ideal. In the post-structuralist/constructivist view, language is thus integrally related to power and is the instrument of particular social interests that construct discourses, conventions, and

practices, while embedding language and communication in untruth and domination, making it an imperfect model for rationality and democracy.

In my view, language suffers its contradictions, it is situated within a conflict between truth and untruth, universality and particularity, communication and manipulation. From this perspective, Habermas's philosophical grounding of language and communication is problematic and requires concrete socio-historical specification. This task is complicated, from within the Habermasian theory, because for the past decades, a distinction between system and lifeworld has stood at the center of Habermas's work.[9] For Habermas, contemporary societies are divided between a lifeworld governed by norms of communicative interaction and a system governed by "steering imperatives" of money and power. This distinction mediates between systems theory and hermeneutics, arguing that the former cannot grasp the communicative practices of everyday life while the latter ignores the systemic forces that have come to dominate the lifeworld. For Habermas, the "steering media" of money and power enable business and the state to control ever more processes of everyday life, thus undermining democracy and the public sphere, moral and communicative interaction, and other ideals of Habermas and the Frankfurt School. It has frequently been argued that this dichotomy is too dualistic and Manichean, overlooking that the state and political realm can be used benevolently and progressively, while the lifeworld can be the site of all sorts of oppression and domination.

From the standpoint of theorizing the public sphere, Habermas concedes that from the time of developing this distinction, "I have considered the state apparatus and economy to be systematically integrated action fields that can no longer be transformed democratically from within, ... without damage to their proper system logic and therewith their ability to function" (Habermas 1992: 444). That is, like technology and production, Habermas thinks that the economy and state follow certain systemic imperatives that render them impossible to democratically transform. All one can do, from this perspective, is to protect the communicative spheres of the lifeworld from encroachment by the forces of instrumental rationality and action and the imperatives of money and power, preserving a sphere of humanity, communication, morality, and value in the practices of everyday life.

From the time that the theory of communicative action and the contrast between system and lifeworld became central to his project, Habermas's emphasis has been on political will formation through the process of "deliberative democracy," conceived as processes which cultivate rational and moral subjects through reflection, argumentation, public reasoning, and reaching consensus (Habermas 1992: 445f). Severing political discussion from decision and action, however, focuses the locus of Habermasian politics strictly on discussion and what he calls a discourse theory of democracy. Whereas theories of strong democracy posit individuals organizing, deliberating, making decisions, and actively transforming the institutions of their social life, Habermas shifts "the sovereignty of the people"

into a flow of communication... in the power of public discourses that uncover topics of relevance to all of society, interpret values, contribute to the resolution of problems, generate

good reasons, and debunk bad ones. Of course, these opinions must be given shape in the form of decisions by democratically constituted decision-making bodies. The responsibility for practically consequential decisions must be based in an institution. Discourses do not govern. They generate a communicative power that cannot take the place of administration but can only influence it. This influence is limited to the procurement and withdrawal of legitimation (1992: 452).

This is quite a shift from the perspectives of Structural Transformation where Habermas delineated an entire set of institutions and practices that could directly impinge upon and transform all realms of social life. Despite the pessimistic conclusion of Transformation, which posited the decline of the bourgeois public sphere in the contemporary era, Habermas earlier held out the hope for societal democratization of the major realms of politics, society, and everyday life, although he did not specify any particular tactics, strategies, or practices. Over the past two decades, however, his work has taken a philosophical turn that focuses on the discursive conditions of rational discussion, anchored in communicative relations of everyday life.

In his later work, I would argue, Habermas indulges in a romanticism of the lifeworld, appealing to the "true humanity" operative within interpersonal relations, assuming face-to-face communication as his model of undistorted communication, and replacing structural transformation with the ideal of cultivation of the communicatively-rational individual and group. His analysis is discourse-oriented, developing discourse theories of morality, democracy, and law, grounded in a theory of communicative action. While these analyses provide some extremely powerful insights into the conditions of democratic deliberation and consensus, moral action and development, and the role of communication in spheres ranging from morality to politics to law, the quasi-ontological separation of the sphere of communicative action/lifeworld from system is problematic, as is his specific categorical bifurcation of the social system.

The crux of the problem with Habermas's analysis is that he makes too rigid a categorical distinction between system and lifeworld, constructing each according to their own imperatives, thus removing the "system" (i.e. economy and state) from democratic transformation, while limiting the site of participatory democracy to the lifeworld. Against this conception, I would argue, as Habermas himself recognizes, that the lifeworld is increasingly subject to imperatives from the system, but that in the current era of technological revolution, interaction and communication play an increasingly important role in the economy and polity that Habermas labels the "system." Moreover, I will suggest that the volatility and turbulence of the contemporary "great transformation" that we are undergoing constitute a contradictory process where the lifeworld undergoes new threats from the system -- especially through the areas of colonization by media and new technologies that Habermas does not systematically theorize --, while at the same time there are new conflicts and openings in the economy and polity for democratic intervention and transformation.

Earlier, Habermas made a similar categorical distinction between production and interaction, arguing that the former (including technology) was governed by the logic of

instrumental action and could not be transformed, while "interaction" was deemed the categorical field for rational discourse, moral development, and democratic will-formation. In the remainder of my study, I want to argue that in an era of technological revolution in which new technologies are permeating and dramatically transforming every aspect of what Habermas discusses as system and lifeworld, or earlier production and interaction, and that such dualistic and quasi-transcendental categorical distinctions can no longer be maintained.

In particular, Habermas's system/lifeworld dualism and the reduction of steering media within the system to money and power neglects the crucial functions of media of communication and new technologies in the structure and activity of contemporary societies and unnecessarily limits Habermas's political options. Andrew Feenberg will develop an argument in this volume concerning the need to theorize technology as a crucial "steering media" of contemporary society and to democratically transform technology to make it a force and field of societal democratization. I will focus here, as a subset of this concern, on the importance of communication media and technology for the processes of democratization and reconstruction of the public sphere.

In my book Television and the Crisis of Democracy (1990), I contend that the media, state, and business are the major institutional forces of contemporary capitalist societies, that the media "mediate" between state, economy, and social life, and that the mainstream broadcasting media have not been promoting democracy or serving the public interest and thus are forfeiting their crucial structural importance in constructing a democratic society. Hence, I am assuming that the communication media are something like what Habermas calls "steering media," that, as I suggest below, they have crucial functions in a democratic social order, and that they have been failing in their challenges to promote democracy over the last decades, thus producing a crisis of democracy. In the remainder of this article, I will address this situation and propose remedies grounded in Habermas's early work and the first generation of critical theory.

In my view, Habermas does not adequately theorize the nature and social functions of contemporary media of communication and information, they are for him mere mechanisms for transmitting messages, instruments that are neither an essential part of the economy or polity in his schema, and of derivative importance for democracy in comparison to processes of rational debate and consensus in the lifeworld. In the conclusion to his "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," Habermas makes a distinction between "the communicative generation of legitimate power on the one hand" and "the manipulative deployment of media power to procure mass loyalty, consumer demand, and 'compliance' with systemic imperatives on the other" (1992: 452). Such a distinction can be analytically made and strategically deployed, but in Habermas's use, the media are excluded tout court from the realm of democracy and the possibility of democratic transformation, since they are limited by definition in his optic to systemic imperatives of manipulation, governed by "media" of money and power, and thus are excluded from the possibility of contributing to the politics of a broader societal democratization.[10]

Hence, Habermas never really formulates the positive and indeed necessary functions of

the media in democracy and cannot do so, I maintain, with his categorical distinctions. In Transformations, he sketches the degeneration of media from print-based journalism to the electronic media of the twentieth century, in an analysis that, as his critics maintain, tends to idealize earlier print media and journalism within a democratic public sphere contrasted to an excessively negative sketch of later electronic media and consumption in a debased public sphere of contemporary capitalism.

This same model of the media and public sphere continues to be operative in his most recent magnum opus Between Facts and Norms (1998), where Habermas discusses a wide range of legal and democratic theory, including a long discussion of the media and the public sphere, but he does not discuss the normative character of communication media in democracy or suggest how a progressive media politics could evolve. Part of the problem, I think, is that Habermas's notion of the public sphere was grounded historically in the era of print media which, as McLuhan and Gouldner have argued, fostered modes of argumentation characterized by linear rationality, objectivity, and consensus.[11] Obviously, Habermas is an exemplary public intellectual, intervening in the public sphere in many crucial issues of the past decades, writing tirelessly on contemporary political events, criticizing what he sees as dangerous contemporary forms of conservativism and irrationalism, and in general fighting the good fight and constructing himself as a major public intellectual of the day, as well as world-class philosopher and social theorist (again, Dewey comes to mind as a predecessor).

Since writing is his medium of choice and print media is his privileged site of intervention, I would imagine that Habermas downplays broadcasting and other communication media, the Internet and new spheres of public debate, and various alternative public spheres in part because he does not participate in these media and arenas himself and partly because, as I am suggesting, the categorical distinctions in his theory denigrate these domains in contrast to the realms of communicative action and the lifeworld. But these blindspots and conceptual limitations, I believe, truncate Habermas's discussions of democracy and undermine his obvious intention of fostering democratization himself.

Hence, despite extremely detailed discussion of democracy in Between Facts and Norms, Habermas fails, in my view, to adequately explicate the precise institutional and normative functions of the media and the public sphere within constitutional democracy. As conceived by Montesquieu in Spirit of the Laws and as elaborated in the American and then French revolutions of the 18th century, a democratic social order requires a separation of power so that no one social institution or force dominates the polity. Most Western democracies separate the political system into the Presidency, Congress, and the Judiciary so that there would be a division and balance of powers between the major political institutions. The Press was conceived in this system as the "fourth estate" and freedom of the press was provided by most Western democracies as a fundamental right and as a key institution within a constitutional order based on separation of powers in which the media would serve as a check against corruption and excessive power in the other institutions.

But democratic theory also developed stronger notions of citizen participation, or what has become known as participatory democracy, in theorists such as Rousseau, Marx, and Dewey. In this conception, famously expressed by Abraham Lincoln, democracy is government by, of, and for the people. For such a conception of radical democracy to work, to create a genuinely participatory democracy, the citizens must be informed, they must be capable of argumentation and participation, and they must be active and organized to become a transformative democratic political force. Habermas, as we have seen, limits his analysis of procedural or deliberative democracy to valorization of the processing of rational argumentation and consensus, admittedly a key element of real democracy.

But not only does he limit democracy to the sphere of discussion within the lifeworld and civil society, but he omits the arguably necessary presuppositions for democratic deliberation and argumentation -- an informed and intellectually competent citizenry. Here the focus should arguably be on education and the media, for schooling and the media play a key role in enabling individuals to be informed, taught to seek information, and, if effectively educated, to critically assess and appraise information, to transform information into knowledge and understanding, and thus to make citizens capable of participating in democratic discussion and deliberation (on the role of education and the media in democracy see Kellner 1990 and 1998).

From this perspective, then, the media are part of a constitutional balance of power, providing checks and balances against the other political spheres and should perform a crucial function of informing and cultivating a citizenry capable of actively participating in democratic politics. If the media are not vigilant in their checking of corrupt or excessive power (of corporations, the state, the legal system, etc.) and if the media are not adequately informing their audiences, then they are not assuming their democratic functions and we are suffering a crisis of democracy (an analysis that I made in Kellner 1990 and 1992, but will qualify below).

Habermas's various analyses in his by now astoundingly prolific and monumental work recognizes these two sides of democracy, but does not adequately delineate the normative character of the media in democracy and does not develop a notion of radical democracy in which individuals organize to democratically transform the media, technology, and the various institutions of social life. In particular, he does not theorize the media and public sphere as part of a democratic constitutional order, but rather as a sphere of civil society that is a sounding board for problems that must be processed by the political system. To this extent, the public sphere is a warning system with sensors that, through unspecialized, are sensitive throughout society. From the perspective of democratic theory, the public sphere must, in addition, amplify the pressure of problems, that is, not only thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions, and dramatize them in such a way that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes. Besides the 'signal' function, there must be an effective problematization. The capacity of the public sphere to solve problems on its own is limited. But this capacity must be utilized to oversee the further treatment of problems that takes place inside the political system. (1998: 359).

In Habermas's conception, the media and public sphere function outside of the actual political-institutional system, mainly as a site of discussion and not as a locus of political organization, struggle, and transformation. In fact, however, I would argue that while the media in the Western democracies, which is now the dominant model in a globalized world, are intricately intertwined within the state and economy, in ways that Habermas does not acknowledge, nonetheless oppositional broadcast media and new media technologies such as the Internet are, as I argue below, serving as a new basis for a participatory democratic communication politics. Habermas, by contrasts, fails to perceive how new social movements and oppositional groups and individuals use communication media to both educate and organize oppositional groups and thus expand the field of democratic politics.

Habermas himself does not distinguish between the differences in the public sphere under the domination of big media and state broadcasting organizations in Europe contrasted to the corporate and commercial dominated system of big media in the United States. In Europe's system of state-controlled broadcasting, a fusion emerged between the political sphere and the public sphere, in which state-financed and often controlled broadcasting organizations attempted to promote the national culture and in some cases to inform and educate its citizens. In the U.S., by contrast, it was big corporations which colonized the public sphere, substituting popular entertainment for expressions of national culture, education, and information. In the U.S., in contrast to Europe and much of the world, public broadcasting never emerged as a major cultural or political force and never served as the instrument of the state -- although conservative critics constantly attacked its "liberal" biases, while radical critics attacked its centrist and conservative spectrum of programming, and exclusion of more radical perspectives and views.

The difference between a state-controlled public broadcasting system contrasted to a more commercial model has, of course, itself collapsed in the era of globalization where commercially-based cable television has marginalized public broadcasting in most countries and where in a competitive media environment even public broadcasting corporations import popular, mostly American, entertainment, and are geared more toward ratings than political indoctrination, or enlightenment. Nonetheless, public broadcasting continues to offer an ideal of public interest communication geared toward the common good and, ironically perhaps, the proliferation of new media, including the Internet which I discuss below, have multiplied information and discussion, of an admittedly varied sort, and thus provide potential for a more informed citizenry and more extensive democratic participation. Yet, the dis- and misinformation that circulates on Internet undermines democratic information and discussion, pointing to sharp contradictions within the current media system.

Habermas, however, neglects intense focus on the vicissitudes of the media, excludes democratization of the media from the realm of democratic politics, and does not envisage how new media and technology could lead to an expansion and revitalization of new and more democratic public spheres. In fact -- and this is the crux of my critique of his positions --, Habermas simply does not theorize the functions of the media within the contemporary public sphere, deriving his model more from face-to-face communication and discussion, rather than

from media interaction or communication mediated by the media and technology.[12] In the next section I will argue, however, that the development of new global public spheres with the Internet and new multimedia technology require further development of the concept of the public sphere today and reflection on the emerging importance of new technologies within democracy.

<u>Globalization, New Technologies, and New Public Spheres</u>

In this concluding section, I wish to argue that in the contemporary high-tech societies there is emerging a significant expansion and redefinition of the public sphere -- as I am conceiving it, going beyond Habermas, to conceive of the public sphere as a site of information, discussion, contestation, political struggle, and organization that includes the broadcasting media and new cyberspaces as well as the face-to-face interactions of everyday life. These developments, connected primarily with multimedia and computer technologies, require a reformulation and expansion of the concept of the public sphere -- as well as our notions of the critical or committed intellectual and notion of the public intellectual (see Kellner 1995b for an expansion of this argument). Earlier in the century, John Dewey envisaged developing a newspaper that would convey "thought news," bringing all the latest ideas in science, technology, and the intellectual world to a general public, which would also promote democracy (see the discussion of this project in Czitrom 1982: 104ff). In addition, Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin (1969) saw the revolutionary potential of new technologies like film and radio and urged radical intellectuals to seize these new forces of production, to "refunction" them, and to turn them into instruments to democratize and revolutionize society. Jean-Paul Sartre too worked on radio and television series and insisted that "committed writers must get into these relay station arts of the movies and radio" (1974: 177; for discussion of his Les temps modernes radio series, see 177-180).

Previously, radio, television, and the other electronic media of communication tended to be closed to critical and oppositional voices both in systems controlled by the state and by private corporations. Public access and low power television, and community and guerilla radio, however, opened these technologies to intervention and use by critical intellectuals. For some years now, I have been urging progressives to make use of new communications broadcast media (Kellner 1979; 1985; 1990; 1992) and have in fact been involved in a public access television program in Austin, Texas since 1978 which has produced over 600 programs and won the George Stoney Award for public affairs television. My argument has been that radio, television, and other electronic modes of communication were creating new public spheres of debate, discussion, and information; hence, activists and intellectuals who wanted to engage the public, to be where the people were at, and who thus wanted to intervene in the public affairs of their society should make use of these technologies and develop communication politics and new media projects.

The rise of the Internet expands the realm for democratic participation and debate and creates new public spaces for political intervention. My argument is that first broadcast media like radio and television, and now computers, have produced new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain both the potential to invigorate democracy and

to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas -- as well as new possibilities for manipulation, social control, the promotion of conservative positions, and intensifying of differences between haves and have nots. But participation in these new public spheres -- computer bulletin boards and discussion groups, talk radio and television, and the emerging sphere of what I call cyberspace democracy require critical intellectuals to gain new technical skills and to master new technologies (see Kellner 1995b and 1997 for expansion of this argument).

To be sure, the Internet is a contested terrain, used by Left, Right, and Center to promote their own agendas and interests. The political battles of the future may well be fought in the streets, factories, parliaments, and other sites of past conflict, but politics today is already mediated by media, computer, and information technologies and will increasingly be so in the future. Those interested in the politics and culture of the future should therefore be clear on the important role of the new public spheres and intervene accordingly.

A new democratic politics will thus be concerned that new media and computer technologies be used to serve the interests of the people and not corporate elites. A democratic politics will strive to see that broadcast media and computers are used to inform and enlighten individuals rather than to manipulate them. A democratic politics will teach individuals how to use the new technologies, to articulate their own experiences and interests, and to promote democratic debate and diversity, allowing a full range of voices and ideas to become part of the cyberdemocracy of the future.

Now more than ever, public debate over the use of new technologies is of utmost importance to the future of democracy. Who will control the media and technologies of the future, and debates over the public's access to media, media accountability and responsibility, media funding and regulation, and what kinds of culture are best for cultivating individual freedom, democracy, and human happiness and well-being will become increasingly important in the future. The proliferation of media culture and computer technologies focuses attention on the importance of new technologies and the need for public intervention in debates over the future of media culture and communications in the information highways and entertainment by-ways of the future.[13] The technological revolution of our time thus involves the creation of new public spheres and the need for democratic strategies to promote the project of democratization and to provide access to more people to get involved in more political issues and struggles so that democracy might have a chance in the new millennium.

Further, in an era of globalization and technological revolution, the increased capacity of information, technology, and automation in the economy puts in question both Karl Marx's labor theory of value, upon which the early work of the Frankfurt School was based, as well as Habermas's distinction between production and interaction/communication as the fundamental distinction to make sense of, interpret, and criticize contemporary societies. Habermas, of course, often argued himself that the expanding functions of science and technology in the production process undermined the Marxian labor theory of value (see Habermas 1973: 226ff.). Expanding

this argument, I contend that increased intensification of technological revolution in our era undermines Habermas's own fundamental distinction between production and interaction, since production obviously is structured by increased information and communication networks, while the latter are increasingly generated and structured by technology.[14] Hence, where Habermas earlier argued (1973, 1979, 1984, and 1997), and continues to argue, that production is governed by the logic of instrumental action, whereas relations in the lifeworld are governed by the logic of communicative action, more and more communicative action is playing a direct role in production, as information technology, communications, and interpersonal interaction structure the field of labor, and more modes of instrumental action become constitutive aspects of everyday life, as my typing this article on a computer, or sending e-mail to the editor of this volume, would suggest.

Thus, I have argued in this paper that Habermas's project is undermined by too rigid categorical distinctions between classical liberal and contemporary public spheres, between system and lifeworld, and production and interaction. Such dualistic conceptions are themselves vitated, I have argued, by technological revolution in which media and technology play vital roles on both sides of Habermas's categorical divide, subverting his bifurcations. The distinctions also rule out, I believe, efforts to transform the side of Habermas's distinction that he considers impervious to democratic imperatives or the norms of communicative action. My perspectives, by contrast, open the entire social field to transformation and reconstruction, ranging from the economy and technology to media and education.

Yet it is the merit of Habermas's analysis to focus attention on the nature and the structural transformations of the public sphere and its functions within contemporary society. My analysis suggests that we should expand this analysis to take account of the technological revolution and global restructuring of capitalism that is currently taking place and rethink the critical theory of society and democratic politics in the light of these developments. Through thinking together the vicissitudes of the economy, polity, technology, culture, and everyday life, the Frankfurt School provides valuable theoretical resources to meet the crucial tasks of the contemporary era. In this study, I have suggested some of the ways that Habermas's Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere provides a more promising starting point for critical theory and radical democracy than his later philosophy of language and communication and have suggested that thinking through the contributions and limitations of his work can productively advance the project of understanding and democratically transforming contemporary society. In particular, as we move into a new millennium, an expanded public sphere and new challenges and threats to democracy render Habermas's work an indispensable component of a new critical theory that must, however, go beyond his positions in crucial ways.

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Notes

1. While working on an article on Habermas and Dewey in the early 1990s, I asked Habermas if Dewey had influenced him and he responded that Dewey's strong notion of liberal democracy, of politics and the public, and of the active connection between theory and practice made a strong impression on him; see Antonio and Kellner 1992 for details. Hence, I think its fair to say that Habermas has emerged as one of the major theorists and defenders of a robust conception of liberal democracy in our day, and thus can be seen as a successor to Dewey.

2. On SDS, see Sale 1974; Gitlin 1987; and Miller 1994.

3. Habermas 1989a [1962]); A short encyclopedia article succinctly summarizes Habermas's concept of the public sphere (1989b).

4. For a discussion of the initial critiques of Habermas's Offentlichkeit, see Hohendahl 1979; for a bibliography of writings on the topic, see Görtzen 1981; and for a set of contemporary English-language discussions of the work, after it was finally translated in 1989, see Calhoun 1992. To get a sense of the astonishingly productive impact of the work in encouraging research and reflection on the public sphere, see the studies in Calhoun 1992 and Habermas's "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere" that cite a striking number of criticisms or developments of his study.

5. One example relevant to Habermas's time frame: the framing of the U.S. constitution as analyzed in Beard 19xx who demonstrates that the U.S. form of constitutional government was decisively formed through compromises between competing Northern and Southern elites rather than through rational argumentation and consensus concerning common interests.

6. There is no mention, for instance, of C. Wright Mills in the index of the collection of articles on Habermas and the public sphere in Calhoun 1992. Mills himself was influenced by the works of the Institute for Social Research and paid explicit homage to the Institute in a 1954 article where he described the dominant types of social research as those of the Scientists (quantitative empiricists), the Grand Theorists (structural-functionalists like Talcott Parsons), and those genuine Sociologists who inquire into: "(1) What is the meaning of this -- whatever we are examining -- for our society as a whole, and what is this social world like? (2) What is the meaning of this for the types of men and women that prevail in this society? and (3) how does this fit into the historical trend of our times, and in what direction does this main drift seem to be carrying us?" (Mills 1963: 572). He then comments: "I know of no better way to become acquainted with this endeavor in a high form of modern expression than to read the periodical, Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences, published by The Institute of Social Research. Unfortunately, it is available only in the morgues of university libraries, and to the great loss of American social studies, several of the Institute's leading members, among them Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, have returned to Germany. That there is now no periodical that bears comparison with this one testifies to the ascendancy of the Higher Statisticians and the Grand Theorists over the Sociologists. It is difficult to understand why some publisher does not get out a volume or two of selections from this great periodical" (ibid).

7. Habermas has been developing these positions since the 1970s; see, among others, Habermas 1970, 1979, 1984, and 1987a.

8. In a sense, Habermas and poststructuralism articulate the opposing poles of language: while Habermas argues that language and communication involve a relation to meaning, truth, recognition, and universality, post-structuralism stresses its embeddedness in power and its potential for

untruth, distortion, and domination (for Habermas's own critiques of poststructuralist conceptions, see Habermas 1987b). I will argue below that both sides are one-sided and express contradictions of language and communication that must be worked through and mediated in order to develop more comprehensive theories.

9. Habermas indicates how problems in his 1960s work led him to develop this distinction in the 1970s (1992: 443f), a framework articulated most systematically in Theory of Communicative Action (1984 and 1987a), but crucial to all of Habermas's post-1970s works.

10. One exception in Habermas is a reference to the role of communication media in promoting the overthrow of state socialism: "The transformation occurring in the German Democratic Republic, in Czechoslovakia, and in Roumania formed a chain of events properly considered not merely as a historical process that happened to be shown on television but one whose very mode of occurrence was televisual" (Habermas 1992: 456). Habermas cites this example to indicate "the ambivalent nature of the democratic potential of a public sphere" and to suggest contradictory functions of electronic media, but he does not theorize in any systematic way how communication media and technology could be democratized and serve the ends of democratic transformation, and thus has no democratic media politics, a project that I outline below. I should perhaps also note here that there are ambiguities in Habermas's choice of the term "media" for steering-mechanisms of money and power, whereas mass media of communication are seen from his perspective as domianted by the "media" of money and power, and thus are not given independent status as an important societal force. While I do not deny that money and power, corporations and the state, control the media of communications in the current situation, I am claiming that communications media have a normative role in democratic theory and that without a democratizing of the media, more expansive and inclusive societal democratization is not foreseeable.

11. See McLuhan 1961 and 1964 for arguments that print media were a fundamental constituent of modernity, helping produce individualism, secularism, nationalism, democracy, capitalism, and other key features of the modern world. Gouldner (1976), while avoiding McLuhan's excessive technological determinism, sets out some of the ways that print media fostered rationality, objectivity, political participation, and consensus.

12. While Habermas describes the public sphere as "a network of communicating information and points of view" in Between Facts and Norms, he then states: "Like the lifeworld as a whole, so, too, the public sphere is reproduced through communicative action, in which mastery of a natural language suffices" (1998: 360). His public sphere is thus grounded in a lifeworld with an "intersubjectively shared space of a speech situation in "concrete locales where an audience is physically gathered" (1998: 361). On this analysis, then, the public sphere is anchored in concrete physical relations of the lifeworld, so that communications media information and debate, or disembodied communication in cyberspace on the Internet, are excluded from the very concept of the public sphere and democratic will-formation. I would argue, however, that providing important information for democratic discussion and debate and the processes of dialogue and argumentation are crucial for democracy and can legitimately take place in broadcast media and new computer informational cyberspaces as well as face-to-face deliberation.

13. On media and communications politics of the present, see Kellner 1990, 1995a, 1997, and 1999.

14. I have suggested in this paper the expanding role of technology in politics, communication, and everyday life and will augment the discussion of the ways that new information, entertainment, and communications technology are restructuring the global economy and all dimensions of social life in further writings; for extensive documentation of the role of information/ communication technology in the global economy and rise of the "network society," see Castells 1996, 1997, and 1998 and Best and Kellner forthcoming