

CHAPTER TWO. MECHANISMS OF SOCIALIZING PROCESSES

Research undertaken in this study was born out of a deep conviction that only now, in our times, thanks to discoveries made in human sciences and accumulated during the last century, it has become possible to verify the principle formulated by Durkheim.

GEORGES GUILLE-ESCURÉ, *Le décalage humain*

Consciousness develops from this continuous interaction in which biology organizes experience and experience organizes biology.

STANLEY I. GREENSPAN & BERYL L. BENDERLY, *The Growth of the Mind*

Human beings are not wild animals. They are domesticated by the work of mothers, psychiatrists, priests, policemen, teachers, and so on.

ROM HARRÉ, *Social Being*

The conviction about the social nature of human beings is one of those fundamental assumptions in sociology that are usually not even mentioned in contemporary works in this field. At best, this issue is addressed in introductory chapters of handbooks, where proof of this claim is usually said to be provided by the example of “wild children” – one that is quite old and has been repeated *ad nauseam*.³⁰ The example shows that, because these children have grown up outside a social environment from their early youth, they have not mastered

30 The fate of probably the most fundamental axiom in sociology – which lies at the root of its claim to be a “unique” area in research, as determined by the fact that it is people’s growing up among others, as well as their inherent dependence on them and on their actions, that creates humanity – is probably a perfect illustration of the natural process of the banalization of concepts. With the passage of time they are becoming increasingly “empty” due to the fading of their original meanings and of the intentions that have accompanied their use. The fact that sociology uses a natural language, only trying to modify and enrich it to make its concepts more precise, certainly facilitates and accelerates this “banalization.”

any of the typical human competences; moreover, they would be incapable of developing them fully even after being introduced to society. It is deemed equally obvious that the “humanization” of people as representatives of a particular biological species occurs through culture, i.e. a historically developed set of practices, beliefs and norms, transferred by way of socialization processes and lending human actions their specific character. More pedantic authors mention two human-specific competences – the ability to use language and tools – as something that distinguishes people from other animals. The terms *homo symbolicum* and *homo faber* (as well as their many variations) are most frequently used in social sciences to capture the difference between man and animal, which is viewed as something innate, i.e. grounded in certain biological properties of human brain, making humanity superior to other species.

The deep conviction about the uniqueness of humanity does not seem to be affected by research done in natural sciences, which proves that the use of tools is quite widespread in the animal kingdom, especially among primates, though these tools may not be as sophisticated as those developed with the help of modern technology. Moreover, knowledge about their use is transmitted from generation to generation by teaching. Most species have also communication systems, some of which are complex to the point of being labelled as languages.³¹ Although such findings blur the boundary between the human and the animal, they are usually ignored by sociologists, or ascribed to mechanisms rooted in instinct, which are believed to differentiate animal behavior from cultural mechanisms that lie at the foundation of human actions.³²

It is not our aim to question the existence of *some* boundary that would make it possible to differentiate between the behavior of people and other species. The point is rather to indicate that at least some definitions of this

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- 31 A detailed account of long-term research on the language of vervet monkeys can be found in Jared Diamond (1991, Chapter Eight). Its most important conclusion seems to be the one that their language contains at least ten distinct “words” – sounds tied to particular referents (leopard, eagle, snake, etc.) – and that it is intentional, i.e. there is an *intention* at the foundation of its use, for example a desire to warn the group. Both of these features were traditionally believed to be specific only to human communication.
- 32 It is worth emphasizing that at some point a shift of accent occurred in sociology: “social being” was replaced with “cultural being,” while social environment – entailing that in order to develop specifically human skills it is necessary to grow up *among other people* – was supplanted by cultural environment, which involves being surrounded by symbols, values and cultural artefacts.

boundary – traditionally referred to by sociologists in attempts to render the meaning of the concept of sociality – cease to be valid, and that in the light of results provided by other human sciences this fundamental sociological notion begins to lose its self-evident character. Moreover, its understanding sometimes emerges as blatantly false, which crucially endangers the legitimacy of claims made by this discipline. The intensification of this process is certainly related to the phenomenon described in the previous chapter, i.e. the de-theorization of the concept of society. However, it was also influenced by some earlier predicaments that sociology ran into when trying to determine its identity (cf. Mills 2000), the side effect of which was a basically programmatic refusal to encroach on the territories developed earlier by other disciplines.³³

Such problems became apparent already at the very dawn of sociology. It was Durkheim who claimed that “every sociological problem assumes a thorough knowledge of all the special sciences that Simmel *would wish to put outside sociology* but without which it cannot exist” (1981, 1058; emphasis added). Durkheim recognized the difference introduced by sociology not in its different “field of study” or even methods, but rather in its specific approach to social facts – one based on the premise that they would be “studied like things.”³⁴ He believed that sociology is, in its very nature, an interdisciplinary science – “he did not believe,” Jerzy Szacki argues, “in any meaningful separation of sociology from other social sciences, or in the possibility of practicing it independently of data provided by other disciplines, especially history” (1965, 101). According to many contemporary scholars, however, sociology has become a discipline whose cumulative scientific output allows to independently develop research projects or theoretical concepts without the necessity to consult findings of other sciences. Needless to

33 This is pointed out by David Stark, who writes that in “developing his grand designs for sociology,” Parsons “made overt signals to his colleagues in the Economics Department at Harvard alerting them to his ambitious plans *and* assuring them that he had no designs on their terrain” (2000, 2; emphasis preserved). This gave rise to what came to be known as “Parsons’s Pact,” according to which economists are supposed to study value, while sociologists – values (cf. also Camic 1987). Similarly, it is possible to speak of a “Parsons-Kroeber Pact,” which assigns the study of social relations to sociology, and the analysis of the meaning of social actions – to anthropology (cf. Parsons & Kroeber 1958).

34 This claim demands that social facts be treated as part of objective reality, which exists independently of individual consciousness. Therefore, the social world would be as objective as that of nature, with one key difference being that the former’s objectivity stems from moral coercion, not from physical necessity.

say, such isolation may also lead to the solidification of errors and can preclude apt usage of findings from other areas of human sciences.

Georges Guille-Escuret (1994) has pointed to, more universal reasons for the lack of communication between particular areas of human sciences. In his view, “the crucial obstacle in developing an interdisciplinary perspective that would combine natural and social sciences manifests in the persistent tendency to erect artificial barriers between dynamic, coherent wholes [*cohérences mouvants*], subjected by individual sciences to conceptual formalization, as in the case of population, ecosystem, culture, society etc. The desire to position every such category firmly on a particular ‘storey’ of reality leads to the rupture of its relationships with many others that also shape it, and to decreeing it forbidden to establish communication with other coherent wholes described by other sciences” (1994, 18). As a result of such “separatist” attitudes, knowledge about humanity has become dismembered, which has also led to the division of the human being into a series of “clones” that fit neither each other nor the data gathered by disciplines taking the human as their subject, and especially the explanations they propose.³⁵

This is particularly clear in the case of such concepts as socializing processes, whose very nature brings together themes deliberated in various areas of social sciences. Analyzed in the context of anthropogenesis, it constitutes an object of interest for biology and evolutionary anthropology, though it is also being discussed by philosophers, historians of technology and even specialists in cave paintings. As a theoretical notion, it is employed in formal models of the theory of evolution, games theory, and even within certain currents in economics. In the individual dimension, the process of socializing has been long considered the domain of sociology and social psychology, which have focused on analyzing socialization mechanisms and interpreted them in terms of learning or training necessary to become a member of society. However, since the 1950s, interest in researching socialization processes began to dwindle in these two disciplines due to a number of factors, including especially the increasing criticism of the normative paradigm founded in Parsons’ works.³⁶

35 This, in turn, strengthens the initial isolationist tendencies: the models and findings of other human-focused disciplines seem to be so radically contradictory to “our” approach that the only solution is to reject them by indicating that they do not account for certain fundamental characteristics or phenomena: human irrationality, altruism, freedom, or autonomy.

36 One of the first critics to directly attack Parsons’s view of socialization as a mechanism of reproducing social order was Denis H. Wrong (1961). At the beginning of the 1960s, he published his best-known article on the “oversocialized conception of man,”

One might have the impression that even if modern versions of sociology and social psychology raise the issue of socializing processes, it appears only as a magical formula that enables one to focus attention on the present exclusively, without bothering about the past. Socialization of human beings merely *happened* at some point, just like society simply *is*. From that moment on, human beings boast unique qualities, regardless whether they are viewed *en masse* as a species, or considered from the perspective of their individual biographies. Those qualities elevate them above the animal kingdom, in which there is no other species that would possess the crucial and exceptional ability to think.

However, if we wish to return to original intuitions offered by classical sociology in our effort to define society as the dominant form of socializing processes, these processes demand closer scrutiny.

2.1 Sociality in the perspective of anthropo- and sociogenesis

Regardless of how detailed its definition may be, the concept of sociality involves the idea of a certain change brought about in the functioning of individuals by the very fact that they lead their lives among other people. Individuals become socialized only by being included in a stream of various forms of contact with others, which fundamentally modifies their feelings, aspirations and actions. As distinct from other species living in organized communities – such as ants or bees, which are social “by nature” – the socializing processes of human beings establish within them a *second nature*, which breaks away from the biological order rather than constitutes forms of its expression and continuation. Their relation to the “first nature” – the biological one – is usually believed to be riddled with contradictions.³⁷ *Homo duplex* seems doomed to suffer from this internal and everlasting conflict between impulses originating in two sources of motivation.

which dominated in sociology at the time. However, the departure from this concept was also influenced by increased interest in individual agency, and by the impetus of social changes, which questioned the permanence of social norms (cf. Sikorska 2009). Research whose results could be related to socialization processes is currently conducted primarily by developmental and evolutionary psychologists, neurologists, and neurobiologists. Their work, however, has never been incorporated into the mainstream of sociology and social psychology.

37 This manifests most clearly in Freud's theory, in which culture imposes limitations on primeval human drives, at the same time utilizing their energy to realize its own values through “sublimation.”

This means that contacts underlying human sociality must be essentially different from those observable among other social species. They have to transcend the direct, primary nature of humankind. This conviction served as the point of departure for George Herbert Mead, whose “social behaviorism” is based on the assumption that human interactions are specific insofar as they have a symbolic character: individuals react not to directly accessible actions of those with whom they interact, but to the meanings of those actions (“intentions”). It is the use of symbols, Mead argues, that enables the emergence of intentionality³⁸ – the fundamental feature that sets humankind apart from other animals. “In one case the observer sees that the attitude of the dog means attack, but he does not say that it means a conscious determination to attack on the part of the dog. However, if somebody shakes his fist in your face you assume that he has not only a hostile attitude but that he has some idea behind it” (1972, 45).³⁹

However, the most original component of Mead’s theory is not his attention to the symbolic character of human actions, but rather the underlying conviction that processes shaping human culture and individual minds are identical. For Mead, anthropogenesis can be in fact seen from two equal perspectives: either as an evolutionary process of the rise of humankind, preceded by the emergence of humanoids, or as a process of shaping individuals who are contemporary to us. In both cases, however, the “humanization of the human” relies on the prior existence of a social environment.

Mead articulates this assumption explicitly in a passage that juxtaposes his views with the prevailing, individualistic account of the mind’s nature. Discussing theories that provide us with “the partially (but only partially) social view of mind,” Mead indicates that “on this view, though mind can get expression only within or in terms of the environment of an organized social group, yet it is nevertheless in some sense a *native endowment* – a congenital or hereditary biological attribute – of the individual organism.” Thus, “it is not itself essentially a social phenomenon, but rather is biological both in its nature and in its

38 Intentionality is understood here as having an intention (an aim) that the individual is conscious of prior to taking action. Naturally, it is a highly specific interpretation yet one that fits the broadest definition of intentionality as being “directed” onto something. Notably, what emerges here is another element fitting this broad definition: separation of the action’s goals (effects) from means (particular forms of behavior allowing to achieve this effect).

39 As Michael Tomasello observes, what makes humans unique is not just the consciousness of one’s goal, but primarily “an understanding of them [others] as intentional and mental beings like the self” (1999, 10).

origin, and is social only in its characteristic manifestations or expressions. [...] in direct contrast is our opposite view that *mind presupposes, and is a product of, the social process*" (1972, 224; emphases added).

Let us pause over the last statement because it has profound implications both for the understanding of the specificity of Mead's thought, and for further discussion of the nature of socializing processes. This statement – often reduced to the thesis that "man is constructed by society," recurring in most works from social sciences – does not seem to be particularly original, especially if adopted as a springboard for an analysis of socialization processes. As Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1991) convincingly demonstrated, individuals who enter this world encounter society as objective reality. Thus, they are shaped by this reality with respect to all of their actions, at least because of the properties of their biological equipment. The evolutionary aspect of shaping the human mind has always attracted less attention in sociology.⁴⁰ Most interpretations of this thread in Mead's thought create an image of individuals living in a group, who "enter processes of interactions constituted by many individual forms of behavior, directed towards each other and eliciting adaptive reactions" (Ziółkowski 1981, 35). Forming a counterpart to Mead's gestures, these forms of behavior are solidified by way of their repeatability and are consequently invested with social meanings. A particularly important category of those gestures is constituted by vocal ones since exchanging them gave rise to language. As Marek Ziółkowski put it explicitly, in Mead's work "the question of anthropogenesis in fact boils down to the issue of the emergence of human language" (1981, 38).

However, many tend to forget that, in Mead's account, this problem *cannot* be reduced to the rise of language, which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of the human mind. "There has to arise self-consciousness for the whole flowering-out of intelligence. But there has to be some phase of the act which stops short of consummation if that act is to develop intelligently, and language and the hand provide the necessary mechanisms," Mead states. For him, "[s]peech and the hand go along together in the development of the *social human being*" (1971, 237; emphasis added). He takes the metaphorical

40 In the aforementioned work by Berger and Luckmann this aspect is basically omitted, aside from the enigmatic claim that "externalization as such is an anthropological necessity" (1991, 70). Although these authors' theory gives language a particularly important role in constructing reality (making their approach in many ways a continuation of that developed by Mead), they do not take up the problem of its origins. In their account, individuals are always already equipped with language. This is clearly visible in their analysis of institutionalization (97–109).

“hand” to be synonymous with actions involving objects since “the human form constitutes its environment in terms of these physical things which are in a real sense the products of our own hands” (249). In this view, the process of “constitution” embraces both the production of objects and their endowment with meanings; moreover, any such meaning is not “intrinsic to the object but arises from how the person is initially prepared to act toward it” (Blumer 1966, 539).

Similarly, the occurrence of the “social process” does not boil down to a purely physical co-presence of other humans, regardless of whether they form a “primordial horde” or one of the many groups existing in today’s society. Mead’s statement that “the existence of the mind entails the existence of a social process and is its product” ought to be understood literally as a claim that the emergence of properties specific to human intelligence requires a prior existence of some form of *sociality*. In Mead’s view, the human mind acquires its specific features in the process of exteriorizing and sharing the meanings of actions, which cannot be said to have purely biological base (they are not reactions which would be a function of biological conditions), and therefore constitutes an inherently cultural process. Thus, before becoming fully shaped and leaving the state of nature, governed by processes of evolutionary biology, human beings must first produce some symbolic kind of that shared knowledge, and additionally a consciousness of sharing it with others.

Still, adopting Mead’s assumption leads to a certain important obstacle. If the mind is formed by breaking away from biology, how could it emerge “naturally”? This problem is usually bypassed by assuming some kind of “growth theory,” according to which the first random sounds and the first accidental uses of natural objects have gradually led – through repeatability – to the emergence of language and tools, giving in turn rise to culture, which shapes human mind and facilitates a break away from the process of biological evolution. Such explanation is implicitly contained in a discussion of Mead’s ideas by Marek Ziółkowski, who writes that “[t]hanks to mutual reactions to gestures made by two people, there *slowly* emerged a consciousness of the relationship between one’s gestures and another’s reactions” (1981, 37; emphasis added).

However, as Jean-Claude Kaufmann notes, such explanations must necessarily be based on the “orthogenesis of the psyche from brain to culture” (2001, 25). After all, reactions to gestures made by fellow members of the group also appear among animals but do not lead to the creation of consciousness. Consequently, accepting any variant of the growth theory entails assuming that it is the unique character of the human mind, grounded in biology, which is responsible for the emergence of specifically human cognition. This is precisely the kind of assumption that Mead rejects, mentioning, in the above-quoted passage, “the partially

social view of mind.” As he asserted with confidence, the “mind arises through communication by a conversation of gestures in a social process or context of experience – not communication through mind” (1972, 50). Therefore, notions of social process and sociality would become primal in relation to the concept of mind or symbolic culture, which paves the way for a specifically sociological reflection, one that could not be reduced to either psychology or disciplines focusing on culture. The specificity of the human mind would cease to be a point of departure and become a problem to be explained.

Meanwhile, the implicitly or explicitly formulated assumption about the uniqueness of the human mind is still considered obvious not only in social sciences but also in works reporting on latest discoveries in paleontology, anthropology or evolutionary biology. Christopher Stringer and Robin McKie summarize the results of molecular and genetic research on the origins of man, and argue that, in a nutshell, “the biological abyss that once supposed to divide human beings from the animals has been revealed to be the narrowest of genetic crevices. Only a 2 per cent difference separates the genomes (the collective name for an animal’s pool of genes) of human beings and chimpanzees, a wafer-thin discrepancy that is nevertheless *responsible* for all the wonders of our civilization – from plasma physics and Picasso to pizza” (1996, 12; emphasis added).⁴¹ A similar tone can be detected in Jared Diamond’s argument that “[t]he few bits of new baggage we acquired – the 2 per cent of our genes that differ from those of chimps – must have been *responsible* for all of our seemingly unique properties” (1991, 9; emphasis added).

However, a closer examination of results obtained within disciplines investigating human evolution clearly shows that the conviction about the biological grounds of the specifically human character of mind is based on relatively thin evidence. The problem lies in the fact that the aforementioned genetic difference emerged around six to eight million years ago when the evolutionary lines of chimpanzees and future humans split. Another two million years were necessary for our ancestors to free their hands by assuming an upright position, and further two million to attain the kind of body mass and brain size that approximate the values found among contemporary people. One hundred thousand years

41 According to latest findings, it is even less: ca 1.5 per cent. However, the recently published results of research, which looked not only into genes of chimpanzees and humans but also into the information they carry about proteins, suggest that there is in fact a huge gap between the two genomes, lurking behind the seemingly small difference. We provide this information here for clarification purposes only, since it does not affect our further argumentation.

ago, the African man was already anatomically identical to today's humans, but further sixty thousand years were required to make what evolution scholars call the "Great Leap Forward," which involved the emergence of the Cro-Magnon man, who led an entirely human kind of life: making tools, building settlements, developing art and starting early forms of religion.

The nature of this "Great Leap" is usually explained by referring to the creation of language, which certainly had biological grounds. The most popular hypothesis links its development with the lowering of larynx and the enlargement of brain. However, this was a process greatly stretched in time: the beginnings of those anatomical changes can be found already in *Homo erectus*, i.e. around 1.7 million years ago. What is more, some findings suggest that the Neanderthals – now considered an evolutionary branch parallel to that of humanity – had an identical larynx and a 10 per cent larger brain than today's people; still, it was the Cro-Magnon that prevailed (Stringer & McKie 1996, 93). The use of tools followed a similar pattern – their first traces are estimated to be 500,000 years old (or even 2.5 million years according to some hypotheses), but they remained very simple and did not change much for hundreds of thousands of years. In fact, "none of those early tools had a sufficiently consistent or distinctive shape to suggest any specific function [...] and the tool names applied by archaeologists may be little more than arbitrary divisions of a continuum of stone forms" (Diamond 1991, 33).

Therefore, it could be said that by focusing on the Great Leap and its origins in brain enlargement, followed by the development of language and tools, researchers of evolution have waved aside the existence of a "Great Hole," i.e. an inexplicably long-lasting period during which biological humans stuck to modes of living that did not set them apart from other primates. This period is simply unaccounted for if we are to think in terms of the above developmental factors.⁴² Similarly, the existence of this "Great Hole" is ignored by social scientists who have adopted various subtypes of the aforementioned growth theory, assuming that typically human cognitive skills were accumulated "slowly" and, at some point, triggered a qualitative leap.

It is the existence of this "Great Hole" that serves as the point of departure for the captivating study written by Georges Guille-Escuret. Already its title, *Le décalage humain. Le fait social dans l'évolution* ("The Human Shift. Social Fact in Evolution"), signals the desire to seek out the roots of Durkheim's "social

42 There are exceptions to this, though, e.g. Stringer & McKie (1999) recall the research of Robin Dunbar (1996), discussed below.

fact.” In the first pages, Guille-Escuret expresses his astonishment at the fact that “the mysterious origins of the social fact seem not to attract the attention of specialists” (1994, 7). He begins his analysis by arguing that proto-human behavior (primarily the use of tools) can be observed among both primates and early humanoids; however, early forms of pre-human “psycho-culture” differ significantly from what comprises human “psycho-culture” because the former is based solely on the memory of individual representatives of the species, whereas the latter rests upon symbolization. In other words, in the case of pre-human “psycho-culture” the transferring of information accumulated in tools can occur only through learning processes based on imitation. This means that the creation of such “psycho-culture” always has to commence anew in every generation, which significantly impedes the process of development, all the more so because particular skills can be easily forgotten after the death of individuals who were “conserving” them in their actions.⁴³

The earliest humanoids still lived entirely within such a pre-human “psycho-culture.” The transition from *Homo habilis* to *Homo erectus*, which occurred in the early Palaeolithic, initially did not affect their behavior despite the fact that from a biological point of view they were already human. Moreover, although “during the process of hominization the volume of the brain increased from 600 to 1,300 cm³ – a change without which humans could not later become passionate inventors who suddenly began to change the fate of the world” – for a long time it was still “the biological sphere that led the ball and set the rhythm” (Guille-Escuret 1994, 275). The “qualitative jump” occurred only in the late Palaeolithic by way of joining words with technological gestures. The beginnings of specifically human features of mind are located by Guille-Escuret in the *combined* effect of using language and tools.⁴⁴ The use of language sped up the process of transferring information contained in the tool, while language itself

43 The low effectiveness of transmitting “cultural” behavior solely through imitation is also confirmed by results of research made on the habit of washing sweet potatoes, which spread among Japanese macaques, a behavior “invented” by individuals. It shows that the average time of adopting such behavior by a group amounts to over two years (Tomasello 1999, 26–28).

44 This claim is directly supported by results of research on the mental development of children, published in the first decade of the twenty-first century. They show that representations of objects and actions are initially quite alike among infants and other primates. However, unlike other primates, human children creatively integrate these representations around the age of two when they begin to acquire language. Cf. Spelke (2009).

became another tool, in fact the most powerful one, facilitating the externalization of human memory.

An essential component of Guille-Escuret's theory is the assumption that in the first stage of evolution both processes – i.e. the development of language and the use of tools – took place on two separate levels. Language emerged as a means of coordinating relations among individuals, whereas the transferring of tool-related skills still occurred through imitation. A similar theory was developed by Robin Dunbar (1996), who claims that the primary function of language was not to convey information but to create and uphold relationships as well as determine one's position or status in the group. Dunbar draws attention to the fact that in other groups of primates this function is performed by grooming, which is nevertheless time-consuming and therefore limits the potential number of relationship that an individual can establish, which, in turn, restrains the size of the group. "As group sizes began to drift upwards from the numbers to which apes are currently limited, vocal grooming began increasingly to supplement physical grooming," Dunbar argues (1996, 115), simultaneously asserting that the growth of human groups must have been directly influenced by the shift to a nomadic lifestyle. "In effect, a set of neighboring groups would start to act co-operatively [...]. The result would be an alliance of loosely federated groups, that could come and go, merge and split up, as the mood dictated" (119). In other words, "language evolved to facilitate the bonding of larger groups" (120).⁴⁵ This contributed to the increase in the number of relationships between individuals and, in consequence, extended the scope of individual experiences possible to share within a group.

45 This hypothesis finds confirmation in two separate sets of data discussed by Dunbar. Firstly, he demonstrates the correlation between brain volume in primates and the size of their groups. For example, gibbons, who have relatively small brains, live in family groups of 4–6, while chimpanzees, who have bigger brains, can assemble groups as big as 50–80. The size of human "herds," estimated on the basis of these relations, ought to amount to ca. 148, which is confirmed both by the size of groups of currently existing hunters-gatherers, and by the size of Neolithic settlements discovered for example in Mesopotamia. Secondly, Dunbar presents results of his analyzes of conversations held at various universities, which show that academic matters took only 14 per cent of the total talking time, while 70 per cent was devoted to personal relations and experiences, constituting the functional equivalent of "grooming." It is also worthwhile to recall in this context another hypothesis, which forms a crucial part of Eric Berne's transactional analysis (1987), namely that of "strokes exchange" as the basis of contacts among humans.

One needs to keep in mind that language is a system of meanings developed situationally, i.e. in practical contexts of specific actions.⁴⁶ Therefore – as Guille-Escuret argues – as long as the realms of technology and interpersonal relations were not combined, the evolution of human “psycho-culture” was painfully slow. It was only the merger of the two that infinitely multiplied the possibilities for exteriorizing and objectivizing both the technical memory stored in tools, and the social memory preserved in the germs of language, becoming in turn a fundamental factor in the development of both: “language emerged from the sphere of biology *through* technology and vice versa [...]. Since it became a habit for human beings to *somehow* simultaneously do what they are talking about, and *somehow* talk about what they are doing, i.e. since around the late Palaeolithic, *they could no longer act without talking about it at the same time* (341; emphasis preserved). It is this mutually reinforcing and empowering relationship between the two processes that constitutes, according to Guille-Escuret, the fundamental factor explaining the emergence of both specifically human culture and Durkheim’s social fact.

This leads to that aspect of Guille-Escuret’s theory which seems to be particularly interesting from the perspective of sociology. According to him, the sudden feedback between language and tool (or between speech and hand, as Mead would have it) led during the first stages to the deregulation of actions so far controlled by biologically conditioned habits. Therefore, the biological basis for the coordination of actions undertaken in the world had to be replaced with a different yet equally comprehensive basis of symbolic and intentional character; the drive-based orientation towards material phenomena had to be supplanted by a reflective orientation towards “intentions” and “causal forces” hidden behind them, while the community of needs – including the “community of fear” – had to be replaced with a community of knowledge supplemented with a consciousness of belonging.

To put it differently: as long as the discharging of still basically animalistic drives could not easily fit in sufficiently coherent, legitimized and stable patterns and institutions, the emerging world of human “psycho-culture” functioned as a destabilizing factor (cf. also Gehlen 1993). It had to be integrated in the act of “foundational holism” (in Jean-Claude Kaufmann’s phrasing), which would facilitate directing and limiting the possibilities of human choices, stored in individual memory, and would simultaneously lend them meanings that go beyond

46 Already Lev Vygotski (1994) underscored the importance of this fact for the process of individual language acquisition. We shall return to this later.

the situational “here and now.” The construction of a meaningful order occurred not simply through classification of surrounding reality, but primarily through *the creation of a holistic, symbolic image of the world* and its legitimization by reference to the sacred.⁴⁷

The fact that this image took a religious form has minor significance in this context. It is much more important to answer the question about the factors responsible for its development. After all, in light of Guille-Escuret’s hypothesis, the mechanisms that contributed to the creation of a symbolic view of reality also have to be responsible for socializing processes. Surprisingly enough, the pursuit of this question can greatly benefit from conclusions drawn in research into Palaeolithic cave art.

Since they were first found, cave paintings have fascinated scholars, provoking them to formulate opposing hypotheses. The contentious issue has been whether these works express aesthetic needs of Palaeolithic artists, a kind of art for art’s sake, or belong to the sphere of magical rituals, in which representations of various animals are supposed to secure success in hunting. The former hypothesis might be disproved by the fact that these pictures almost never show humans, and even if they do, they are greatly simplified or even ineptly made, unlike the ones presenting animals, which abound in naturalistic details and are full of artistic expression. At the same time, however, the hypothesis about hunting magic is also questionable because many paintings present animals that prehistoric hunters did not actually track, which makes it difficult to convincingly argue why they would be found on ritualistic images.

Nonetheless, most scholars agree that cave paintings are testimony to their authors’ unique abilities to think in symbolic terms and to intentionally communicate specific information. This conviction has been variously expressed. For instance, Neumann argues that “each of these painted animals is the embodiment and essence of the animal species. The individual bison, for example, is a spiritual-psychic symbol; he is in a sense the ‘father of the bison,’ the idea of the bison, the ‘bison as such’” (1971, 86; after Humphrey 1998). Deacon, in turn, claims that “[t]he first cave paintings [...] are the first irrefutable expressions of a symbolic process that is capable of conveying a rich cultural heritage of images

47 The same idea is found in Arnold Gehlen who – in drawing attention to old myths relating how gods established the order of the world by overcoming chaos (1993) – supports Durkheim’s thesis that “[b]asically, the concepts of totality, society, and deity are really just different aspects of one and the same notion” (2001, 337). It is also worthwhile to recall the original Latin meaning of *re-ligio*: “to bind what was disconnected.”

and probably stories from generation to generation” (1997, 374; after Humphrey 1998). However, the English psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, a specialist in the evolution of the human mind, argues (1998) that there is evidence of something contrary: the creators of cave art did not reach the stage of conceptual thinking and did not manifest greater interest in communicating anything.

Humphrey draws attention to the similarity between Palaeolithic cave images and drawings made by autistic children. The data he refers to comes from a study about a six-year-old autistic girl Nadia (cf. Selfe 1985; quoted after Humphrey 1998).⁴⁸ She began to manifest a special talent for drawing already at the age of three. Her works shared no features with drawings made by non-autistic peers, but displayed a stunning similarity to the best-known paintings from the Chauvet Cave in terms of content, form, and composition.

Similarities between Nadia’s drawings and cave art inspired Humphrey to formulate the hypothesis that the way of thinking typical for prehistoric artists was – at least in some aspects – closer to autistic modes of cognition rather than those of today’s people. Humphrey draws particular attention to the aforementioned lack of human figures on cave paintings, linking it with the hypothesis made by Guille-Escuret and Dunbar, whom he quotes, namely that human language initially developed as a tool for regulating interpersonal relations.⁴⁹ This would mean that Palaeolithic artists did not have at their disposal words for the represented animals. It is this lack of proper linguistic means that he deems responsible both for the presence of animal images on cave paintings, and for the specific mode of representing them. As Humphrey demonstrates on the example of Nadia’s drawings, who did not know names of either animals or people, the latter actually make an appearance and are presented as naturalistically as the former.

This line of argumentation led Humphrey to conclude that the specific features of Palaeolithic art ought to be treated not as an expression of their authors’ highly developed skills in symbolic thinking (as the above-mentioned scholars wanted), but as a proof that people from that period thought in “pre-modern”

48 Autism is a developmental disability characterized by weak sound processing skills, poor understanding of words and impaired planning of actions. Children suffering from it barely speak and do not react to attempts at contacting them in social contexts. Their actions are divorced from reality, guided by drives and momentary emotions, which display little connection with outside conditions.

49 Humphrey also recalls his own research on communication among rhesus monkeys (1974). Its results indicate that these animals are interested in differences among members of the group, and that they are able to categorize them, at the same time entirely ignoring differences among individuals from other species.

terms.⁵⁰ Their intellectual capacities would be *in some ways* reminiscent of those found among autistic children. Importantly, Humphrey does not claim that Palaeolithic artists were autistic, but that their cognition approximated that of autistic children.⁵¹

Humphrey's interpretation supports the thesis about intellectual and emotional chaos that would precede the moment of foundational holism, all the more so because a key role in his argumentation is played by the fact that Nadia's special skills disappeared entirely when therapy resulted in her beginning to master language. Similarly, the specific kind of art represented by cave paintings disappeared eleven thousand years ago. "And the new traditions of painting that emerged over five millennia later in Assyria and Egypt were quite different in style, being much more conventionally childish, stereotyped and stiff. (...) Maybe, in the end," Humphrey concludes, "the loss of naturalistic painting was the price that had to be paid for the coming of poetry. Human beings could have Chauvet or the Epic of Gilgamesh but they could not have both" (1998, 176).

Nevertheless, Humphrey's hypothesis does not answer the question about what provoked the transition from visual to language-based representations. In his book *The Mind in the Cave* (2011), David Lewis-Williams, one of the greatest specialists in cave art, offers a possible answer by formulating the thesis that cave paintings were the work of shamans, who would thereby preserve the visions they saw in a state of ecstasy. Although Lewis-Williams limits himself to explicating the origin of paintings themselves, he convincingly presents links between Palaeolithic rituals, the process of developing specifically human features of cognition and the early stages in the emergence of strictly social relations based on symbolic ties. He argues that a key role was played in this process by the

50 In texts by authors researching the Palaeolithic, the term "modern" is usually used in reference to the entire period after the Great Leap. Humphrey emphasizes that ascribing a highly developed ability to think in symbolic terms to people from that time usually rests on interpreting other artefacts in the context of cave art, which is treated as the highest manifestation of cognitive capabilities. Since the earliest paintings of this type are dated back to 32 thousand years, and the Great Leap happened 40 thousand years ago, Humphrey's interpretation would necessitate moving the date of birth of "modern" thinking almost ten thousand years towards the present.

51 This claim acquires special significance in light of latest findings about autism, which is now viewed as an impairment resulting from insufficient coherence of cognitive processes. "Recent theorizing about the nature of the cognitive impairment in autism suggests that autistic individuals display abnormally weak central coherence, the capacity to integrate information in order to make sense of one's environment" (O'Loughlin & Thagard 2000, 375; cf. also Thagard 2003).

fact that those participating in the ritual could reach so-called altered states of consciousness (cf. James 2004, Castaneda 1972).⁵² They would be induced by consuming hallucinogens, listening to rhythmical sounds, fasting for long periods, or meditating. All of these “ecstasy techniques” – as termed by Mircea Eliade (1989) – allow one to enter a state of trance, which can help to cross the boundary between real world and the world of visions, or between consciousness and the unconscious. Usage of those techniques would be also confirmed by the appearance of various types of patterns and geometrical figures – e.g. zig-zags, spirals, rhombuses, circles – on cave images showing animals. According to current research, such pulsating patterns are among the first to emerge in visions induced by drugs such as hallucinogenic mushrooms, or in states of trance achieved with other means.

According to Lewis-Williams, it was the great intensification of specific emotional states accompanying shamanistic rituals that lay at the foundation of the development of symbolic thinking and intentionality. This mechanism is related to the fact that experiencing a state of trance by an entire community has two particularly important properties. First, it opens a path to another world, i.e. that of visions going beyond the material reality.⁵³ Second, it creates a bond that brings together individuals participating in the ritual, and unifies them with the universe. This stems from the fact that the state of trance disables those parts of the brain that are responsible for orientation and association – parts that support orientation in space and the sense of being separated from the rest of the world. It is also known that such states are accompanied by important physiological changes in the entire organism, causing the emotions experienced in a state of trance to become “inscribed” in the brain’s structure and thus granting them greater significance.⁵⁴

52 Such states belong to a broader category defined collectively as autistic states (i.e. ones divorced from reality), which also includes daydreaming and dreams.

53 Let us note that hallucinations constitute the original act of abstraction. Science is based on having visions too, for example in the case of the ability to discern in reality something that does not exist there in the purely material sense (e.g. identifying relations, links, regularities etc.).

54 Lewis-Williams’s hypothesis is confirmed by various studies summarized by Jonathan Haidt, a psychologist of morality, in the book *The Righteous Mind* (2012). Haidt introduces the notion of a “hive mode” switch to denote a specific adaptation of humanity, developed by selection at a group level and meant to tighten group bonds. This mode can be triggered in individuals in many ways. Haidt recalls, for example, the concept of “muscular bonding,” developed by the historian William McNeill, to refer to ties created by joint performance of synchronized movements (2012, 635–636).

The above-mentioned conceptions support the hypothesis of “social break-away,” put forward by Guille-Escuret, and simultaneously allow formulating certain assumptions about the very essence of the related process of “creating human beings and the society.” In fact, the main consequence of these conceptions is to significantly shift accent from strictly cognitive properties of the human species (as the main factor in the development of human culture and society, assumed in “growth theories”) to an interdependence of cognitive and emotional mechanisms. It is this interdependence that we deem to be the right point of departure for further analysis of social processes. Let us also recall that due to the conditions in which this “emotional imprinting” has been taking place – leading human beings from the world of biology into that of culture – the process of socializing initiated by it has acquired several fundamental features.

First, the transformation of an individual from a being that satisfies its desires not only by using the germs of language and tools but also through a developed cultural symbolism, into a fully “humanized being” occurs by *tying* one to the entire community, not just to particular individuals.⁵⁵ After all, it is this community that constitutes the superior whole with which every individual is unified in ecstatic states and whose well-being is the aim of the ritual.

Second, as a consequence of tying individuals to communities, a specific mutual dependence is established among their members – the kind that makes the actions of all individuals subordinated to a higher goal defined in terms of the *common good*, regardless whether it would mean banishing evil spirits, success in hunting, or assuring the favor of deceased ancestors.

Third, it facilitates the development of intentionality because the image of reality created during rituals not only determines a specific correspondence between the nature of the world and actions taken in it or with regard to it but also *provides meaning* to individual actions by placing them within the framework of a sacred order. The world constituted in shamanistic rituals is not only organized, but also marked in *moral categories*, i.e. divided into good and evil

However, it usually occurs in the presence of others and creates a special feeling, “as if *the existence of individual consciousness* had disappeared and been replaced by a single unifying group consciousness” (Hsieh 2010; quoted after Haidt 2012, 511). Interestingly enough, the special meaning of rituals (and emotions evoked by them) for the emergence of primitive forms of religion and for *supporting* existing forms of sociality was already pointed out by Durkheim, whom Haidt often quotes.

55 This concerns especially rites of passage, which incorporate maturing individuals into society.

powers, protective and malicious spirits, creative and destructive forces, ones that can be appealed to and ones that ought to be avoided, etc.

Therefore, fourth, the subordination of individual actions to the sacred vision of the world *consolidates* that *order* by marginalizing other potential actions.

Finally, the fifth and last point is that a sense of collective spirit, created with “emotional imprinting,” establishes (already at the level of behavior) not only similarities but also *differences*, calling into existence not only the idea of “us” but also one of “them.”

The comprehensive and orderly character of primordial religious beliefs, which gives meaning to the world (both natural and human) that surrounds the individual, can be regarded – Guille-Escuret argues – as constitutive of human culture and sociality, the latter emerging in this context for the first time. Concepts developed by Humphrey and Lewis-Williams support the hypothesis that the unification and ordering of human memory, exteriorized through the use of language and tools, did not occur “gradually,” i.e. through progressive extension of the scope of reality covered by symbolization, but rather “during a ‘cultural Big Bang’ when the ordering of everyday reality reached ever higher levels until it became defined what powers are responsible for the functioning of the world and explicating it, and thereby the keystone of the entire symbolic system is established” (Kaufmann 2004, 42), which becomes the guardian of coercion to act in compliance with the developed image of the world. It is this coercion that constitutes the foundation of Durkheim’s social fact.

Guille-Escuret’s discussion fills a void left in Mead’s theory, a gap usually eliminated by assuming some variant of growth theory.⁵⁶ Both theories remain in astonishing accord with each other, at least in terms of their fundamentals. In both cases, it is assumed that the development of language and tools, as well as the change in brain’s volume, were a necessary yet insufficient condition of humanizing humanoids. Both accounts emphasize that the process of sociogenesis is prior to that of anthropogenesis. Therefore, “foundational holism” – which Guille-Escuret views as the basis of the Great Leap – would not have a biological character but a strictly cultural one. Similarly, Mead assumes

56 It seems that Mead himself was aware of this void because he attempted to derive the emergence of human language from imitative processes, nevertheless adding so many caveats to this explanation that it is impossible to ascribe this hypothesis to him. Rather, it is more accurate to say that, without having today’s knowledge on the matter, he assumed that the development of human language is *somewhat given*, and took it as the basis for arguing further about the role played by symbolic communication in the development of mind.

the prior existence of a social process, which acts as the condition of the existence of individual minds.

It seems, however, that the significance of the “foundational holism” hypothesis goes far beyond merely supplementing certain elements of Mead’s theory, although this may not be immediately clear. After all, at first glance this theory does not implicate anything that would question what is accepted in sociology as the default view of society, socialization, or even the beginnings of anthropogenesis. Since the publishing of the excellent study by Berger and Luckmann, titled *The Social Construction of Reality*, in the mid-1960s, the claim that reality in which people function is socially constructed does not meet with much resistance; one could even say that it has become a cliché. It might seem that finding the exact moment when the “foundational construct” was born in the late Palaeolithic is a rather irrelevant addition to one of those assumptions that currently shape the basis of sociological thinking, and on this occasion, a way of doing justice to one classic thinker who displayed admirable perspicacity in locating the roots of social life in religion (cf. Durkheim 2001).

However, at least the last argument ought to invite a close consideration of the consequences of adopting the “foundational holism” hypothesis. As we have demonstrated in the first chapter, contemporary sociology has greatly departed from Durkheim’s vision of the social world. What is more, although constructivism became part of the mainstream in social sciences and its key claim began to be quoted on the first pages of handbooks, it has only slightly influenced the fundamental tenets of sociological thinking.⁵⁷ It might even be said that the embracing of constructivist assumptions reinforced sociology’s internal split between the micro and macro worlds, individuals and society as a system, or the “experienced world” and the world of objective social structures.⁵⁸

In fact, this is also related to the dominant ways of understanding Mead’s theory. Although it could become a theory that enables grasping the nature of relations between the functioning of individuals and the features of community, it has lost some of its crucial properties in works produced by Mead’s students

57 Its influence manifests itself primarily in supplementing the list of sociological publications with a number of works devoted to the reconstruction, deconstruction or sometimes even “construction” (using elements that do not create a coherent whole) of images of various portions of reality, occurring in various social collectives.

58 This division is clearly reflected by the very structure of the book by Berger and Luckmann, because its two main parts are titled “Society as objective reality” and “Society as subjective reality.”

and followers, splitting into two separate currents.⁵⁹ Thus, the most original element of Mead's theory was obscured, namely the relationship between the process of forming individual minds and the shape of the environment, both social and natural, which people inhabit and transform through social interactions.⁶⁰ This relationship holds key significance for understanding the essence of socializing processes. However, in order to grasp it fully we have to scrutinize the mechanisms that mold the human mind.

2.2 Social foundations of the human mind

At this point, doubts may arise regarding the extent to which it is justified to return to the Palaeolithic (even late) in considerations guided by the question of what is essential about contemporary social transformations. What new light could be shed on them by even the most striking hypothesis on the beginnings of anthropo- and sociogenesis if the present focus is on current phenomena arising from long-lasting process of the development of human societies, whose actors are individuals socialized since at least thirty thousand years?

The answer is simple and may in fact change our perception of both the process of development and actors engaged in it. As Jean-Claude Kaufmann has rightly observed, localizing the historical moment when the "social breakaway" occurred – i.e. the moment of transition from an existence conditioned by biological mechanisms to one determined by culture – is not only a way of providing a missing element that complements our knowledge and helps with analyzes that embrace continuity of human development from *Homo habilis* to contemporary humanity. It also entails a radical shift in basic assumptions informing analyzes

59 One of them focuses on the process of the emergence of individual *self*, and is treated in sociology as a theory describing socialization processes. The other refers to social actions, giving rise – in Blumer's interpretation – to symbolic interactionism, which entirely abandons considerations of the concept of society, focusing on individual actions instead. Although it is possible to point out yet another current – that of an interactionist theory of emotions (cf. Turner 2002) – the first attempts to develop this concept appeared only towards the end of the 1970s. So far, it has had little impact on sociological thinking.

60 Let us recall here that along with interactionism and most other contemporary sociological theories that incorporate its findings, there disappeared the concept of sociological group, which plays a key role in Mead's theory. For example, in the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens (1986), which in its fundamental aspects constitutes a specific synthesis of crucial currents present in contemporary sociology, the concept of the group does not appear even once.

undertaken in social sciences. Among these assumptions, an important place is assigned to the very idea of social development and the vision of reflective individuals, who initiated that development due to their unique genetic equipment.

The connection between social development and individual Reason was established during the Enlightenment, and was consolidated – as Kaufmann notes – by the iconographical impact of the widespread image of the “March of Progress,”⁶¹ additionally supported by “our epoch’s ideology, which focuses on the concept of sovereign individual” (2004, 24). The significance of representations popularizing the process of evolution was also pointed out by Guille-Escuret, who mentions spontaneous mental images appearing in the minds of both experts and amateurs, all equally influenced by such iconography: “We are able to ‘see’ the growth of brain and the development of the psyche as a march forward, as in the comic strip presenting the gradual straightening of the chimpanzee until reaching a fully erect position of the human being” (1994, 245–246). However, this way of “seeing” is entirely false because in the light of available data it rather ought to be assumed that the development of the human brain – the “mental organ” as Noam Chomsky has termed it – concluded around the late Palaeolithic. We have actually stopped marching then, and have not changed in the biological sense. Brains of contemporary people are exactly like brains of those who lived as hunter-gatherers before and after the “cultural Big Bang;” therefore, it is not any configuration of their “material” properties that should be considered the source of social development.

Before attempting to answer the question regarding this source, let us dwell for a moment on the first part of the above statement. The premise contained in it, which serves as the point of departure for evolutionary psychology, has led some researchers to formulate conclusions that we would definitely disagree with. For example, in his otherwise excellent book on the workings of the human mind, Steven Pinker notes that “[f]or ninety-nine per cent of human existence, people lived as foragers in small nomadic bands”; from this he draws a completely unwarranted conclusion that “[o]ur brains are adapted to that long-vanished way of life, not to brand-new agricultural and industrial civilizations” (1998, 42), thus equating the form of the brain with the functioning of the mind. We would

61 Reference is made here to the frequently reproduced yet misleadingly false image supposedly illustrating the basic premise of evolution. It shows a line of humanoids, one more erect than the other, marching under the leadership of contemporary man. Kaufmann borrowed the term “March of Progress” from Stephen J. Gould (1989).

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rather lean towards concepts originating in evolutionary psychology, which seek to explain the ways in which the minds of contemporary people function within a framework of *interdependence* between them and biological or environmental factors. Among such theories there is the one developed by Daniel C. Dennett.

Like many other scholars, Dennett assumes that the development of intentionality, especially of the second-order kind, which is a specifically human feature involving “beliefs and desires about beliefs and desires, its own or those of others,” was “an important advance in kinds of minds” (1996, 121). At the same time, he notes that this kind of intentionality also appears among animals.⁶² In that case, though, it assumes the form of “non-reflective proficiency.” By observing the behavior of pets, it is easy to conclude that a dog *wants* us to take specific action (e.g. take it for a walk); thus, it behaves *intentionally*, i.e. in a way that takes into account its intentions as well as the ones of its owner (e.g. by circling next to the door and gazing expectantly when it sees the owner getting ready to leave). This does not mean, however, that it thinks like us, having access to a representation of the owner’s mind, which would facilitate formulation of judgements about our behavior (“he or she wants to go out”). It suffices that a dog has at its disposal “a largish ‘list’ of alternative behaviors, nicely linked to a largish list of perceptual cues” (124).

According to Dennett, the need for a more direct, easily transformable representation of one’s own and other beings’ behavior could appear only when those cue-based “lists” began to grow exceedingly complex, which could be only the result of the need to cope with an accordingly complex environment. Let us observe that Dennett’s argumentation – resting, by the way, on a strong foundation provided by data from various kinds of research – perfectly fits the (pre)

62 The view of intentionality is that which, on first glance, strongly differs Dennett’s concept from another, very popular one (especially among psychologists), developed by John R. Searle (1994). Both outstanding philosophers of mind take as their point of departure the assumption lying at the foundation of evolutionary psychology, namely that human brains are the product of evolutionary processes that concluded in the late Palaeolithic. However, whereas Dennett sees intentionality merely as a certain stage in the development of animate minds, Searle perceives it as something inherent only to humans, in contrast, for example, to artificial intelligence. Differences in the “frame of reference” assumed by the two thinkers, and in the distribution of emphasis – Searle focuses on “phenomenological properties” of mental states considered from the perspective of individual emotionality, whereas Dennett assumes the position of an outsider observing species-specific behavior – lead to a certain divergence in the very understanding of the concept of intentionality. This, in turn, results, in the exaggeration of differences between the theories of these two authors.

historic sequence of anthropogenesis as reconstructed by Guille-Escuret (and described in the section above). The increasing complexity of the environment, which the former assumed, would correspond to the process that preceded the moment of “social breakaway” – the process that, according to Guille-Escuret, consisted in “combining” the germs of language with early tools. Therefore, if – as Dennett puts it – “thinking – our kind of thinking – had to wait for talking to emerge, which in turn had to wait for secret keeping to emerge, which in turn had to wait for the right complexification of the behavioral environment” (130), it was in the period of the Great Leap that the volume of new information increased rapidly. This bulk of information was “encoded” in new tools, and was related to the means of their creation and use. This could be the “secret” that accelerated the development of language and consequently contributed to the shaping of early modes of thinking.

According to Dennett, the use of tools was the primary factor in the transformation of people from “Popperian” beings whose “internal environment” was still constructed by perceptual representations – which nevertheless already allowed for reviewing a range of alternatives, equipping those beings with some degree of intentionality (as in the case of animals) – into “Gregorian” beings that use the outside environment as a source of various “devices” that help them in improving their efficiency, raising precision in testing hypotheses, and making decisions, ultimately turning them into truly intentional actors. Among those “devices,” the earliest ones were tools. Using a handheld hammerstone not only required intelligence from those individuals who “invented” ways of using naturally formed stones or forming them to better fit in their hands but also increased, in turn, the intelligence of all its potential users because every tool contains accumulated information about the actions it makes possible and relations it can help establish. However, it was language that proved to be the most powerful “device.” It immensely boosted the ability to represent the external environment in the “internal” one of individual psyche, as well as increased people’s capability of establishing cooperative interdependencies among themselves.

Still, neither the invention of ever more perfect tools nor the development of language has introduced any significant changes to the human *brain*. As we have already noted, most researchers investigating this phenomenon assume that the formation of the human brain as a specific “mental organ,” which began with the increase of its volume, actually concluded in the late Palaeolithic. Therefore – as Dennett writes – although “[o]ur brains are modestly larger than the brains of our nearest relatives [...], this is almost certainly not the source of our greater intelligence” (134). Not even the biggest brain is capable of storing all the potential information preserved in language and tools. According to Dennett then,

“[t]he primary source [...] is our habit of *off-loading* as much as possible of our cognitive tasks into the environment itself [...] into the surrounding world, where a host of peripheral devices we construct can store, process, and re-present our meanings, streamlining, enhancing, and protecting the processes of transformation that *are* our thinking. This widespread practice of off-loading releases us from the limitations of our animal brains” (134–135; emphasis preserved).

Let us dwell for a moment upon this statement, as it has extremely far-reaching consequences for the understanding of socializing processes, which are the subject of this chapter, and which are assumed – either implicitly or explicitly – to be the foundation of all sociological concepts. After all, if neither intentionality nor intelligence are “natural” properties of the human mind, codified in specific features of the human brain, it means not only that we have to question the vision of man as the culmination of the “March of Progress,” and therefore as the “natural” (i.e. having inborn properties) “ruler of all creation,” but also – and perhaps primarily – that we need to ask about the mechanisms of shaping those properties, whose existence is not undermined here because they are well documented in various kinds of research. Although the first conclusion is important mainly because of our own feelings, and can be thus left without commentary, the question that arises from it has a fundamental significance for all considerations of how human beings and societies function.

Dennett’s answer to this question is relatively simple: “Every human mind [...] is a product not just of natural selection but of cultural redesign of enormous proportions” (1996, 153). The basic tool for this transformation is language itself, which we acquire during childhood. It constitutes one of those “peripheral devices” that allow the human mind to acquire its unique properties. However, language is not the only tool used to externalize representations of reality produced by our actions. “We keep ‘pointers’ and ‘indices’ in our brains and leave as much of the actual data as we can in the external world, in our address books, libraries, notebooks, computers – and, indeed, in our circle of friends and associates. A human mind is not only not limited to the brain but would be severely disabled if these external tools were removed [...]. Furthermore, [...] the more intimately familiar you become with the peripheral objects thanks to your practice in manipulating them, the more confidently you can then do without them, sucking the problems back into your head and solving them in an imagination disciplined by its external practice” (144–145).

Dennett’s answer is seemingly obvious, even banal, because it refers us back to one of the axioms of sociology, namely the belief that human actions are culturally conditioned. However, let us draw attention to the fact that this belief in no way undermines the aforementioned assumption about the special properties of

the human mind and its “natural” predisposition to acquire and produce knowledge.⁶³ The only caveat is that this knowledge may be culturally differentiated. Meanwhile, in Dennett’s theory the specifically human intentionality and intelligence are in no way a “natural” property of humankind, but rather appear as derivative of the *usage* made by individuals of culture understood as exteriorized and accumulated information, something like an enormous social repository of memories, holding all kinds of products of human actions.⁶⁴ This means, in turn, that if we want to answer the question about what contributed to human development, we first need to answer another question – one about the kinds of mechanisms that allow people to make use of culture.

Scholars started to search for answers to this question only in the 1990s, when many publications appeared which shed new light on how the human mind operates. One such study is *Descartes’ Error* by Antonio R. Damasio (1995), which discusses the results of research on the functioning of patients with reduced sensibility due to frontal lobe damage from an accident or surgical intervention. These findings unequivocally confirm that despite not having lost any degree of their social knowledge, those people nevertheless were severely impaired in terms of their ability to make rational decisions. Although in laboratory conditions they were capable of logically analyzing problematic situations presented to them in test exercises, and proved able to arrive at all possible options to act, they were at the same time unable to select from these options one they would consider to be the best course of action. Generally, it could be said that due to the inability to feel emotions, the internal decision-making mechanism was damaged to such an extent that the patients’ behavior became “silly and

63 One typical example of such thinking is Piaget’s 1920s theory of cognitive development (cf. e.g. 1979), in which the movement through individual stages, characterized by the growing complexity of the mind’s intellectual functions, occurs as if automatically and without any relation to cultural differentiation. Such a conceptualization implicitly assumes the intervention of mechanisms that have a biological basis. This theory was questioned from two positions. First, many experiments have confirmed that Piaget did not appreciate enough the actual cognitive skills of children (cf. e.g. Pinker 1998, 302–342); second, that he did not recognize the influence of the social environment on cognitive development (cf. e.g. Vygotsky 1994; Greenfield & Bruner 1966; Scribner 1979; Tomasello 1999). Social sciences’ attachment to the vision of mankind as the “crowning of evolution” is most distinctly confirmed by the fact that despite criticism and Piaget’s later attempts to soften his “biological universalism” (1979), his theory is still quoted in contemporary psychology handbooks in its classical form.

64 The consequences of such an understanding of culture is discussed in the next chapter.

irrational,” especially in situations involving personal and social dimensions. As a result, they have become unable to effectively function in society.

Having analyzed a large number of such cases, Damasio formulates a hypothesis about so-called somatic markers, which – he argues – refer to special kinds of emotions that have been linked, in the process of learning, with foreseeable future effects of certain scenarios describing possible courses of events. His use of the term “somatic” is supposed to emphasize the presence of physiological experiences serving as an “early warning system” that eliminates certain options already at the very onset of the decision-making process, or at least inclines one to perform a more detailed analysis of possible consequences. Thanks to this, somatic markers accelerate decision-making because they relieve us of the duty to analyze all possible ways in which a specific action may be taken. Simultaneously, they allow to hierarchize the pool of all potential decisions.

Some of the markers defined in the above way stem from in-born, primordial emotions, e.g. fear of certain stimuli or their aspects. However, most markers have been formed under the influence of our experience: by linking specific categories of stimuli with specific categories of somatic states. Generally, it could be said that “[s]omatic markers are thus acquired by experience, under the control of an internal preference system⁶⁵ and under the influence of an external set of circumstances which include not only entities and events with which the organism must interact, but also social conventions and ethical rules” (1995, 179). The basic group of stimuli brought under this kind of somatic control is instilled in childhood and adolescence, but the process of developing somatic markers in fact lasts throughout human life.

Damasio’s hypothesis of somatic markers leads to a complete overhaul of the role played by emotions in human actions, as it was assumed in social science. Regardless of the fact that emotions were marginalized for a long time as a field of inquiry (in academic sociology and social psychology alike),⁶⁶ most theories

65 As Damasio writes, “[t]he neural basis for the internal preference system consists of mostly innate regulatory dispositions, posed to ensure survival of the organism. [...] The internal preference system is inherently biased to avoid pain, seek potential pleasure, and is probably pretuned for achieving these goals in social situations” (179).

66 In a relatively new, 600-page-long handbook (Aronson et al 2015) the subject of emotions is discussed on only several pages. The interactionist theory of emotions developed since the 1980s (cf. Turner 2002) has not won greater recognition so far. It was only in the last years of the twentieth century that this topic began to attract greater attention in social sciences, popularized through the concept of so-called emotional intelligence (cf. Goleman 1995) rather than any earlier theoretical endeavors.

subordinated them to cognitive processes. In the frequently quoted “double-factor” theory of emotions (Schachter & Singer 1962; cf. also Aronson et al 2015), emotions – or, to put it in more precise terms, their mental representations, or impressions of emotions – are the effect of intellectual elaboration of the physiological stimuli we experience. A similar perspective can be identified in analyzes that begin from raising the question about the influence of emotions on human behavior – in this case researchers have also focused primarily on how emotions distort perception. In both cases, it is not the emotion but the cognitive schema – at best modified by emotions – that is responsible for the final shape of individual behavior. The results of such research seem to suggest that human beings could just as well do without emotions, or at least that emotions disturb us rather than help in adapting to the surrounding world. In the best case, such results reinforce the popular conviction that emotions make human behavior irrational. Meanwhile, in Damasio’s hypothesis of somatic markers emotions not only cease to be viewed as factors disturbing rational behavior, but become a *sine qua non* condition for the process of taking “intelligent” decisions.

Stanley I. Greenspan goes even further in considering the relationship between emotions and individual cognition to describe the former as the fundamental mechanism of shaping the “fully human mind.” For Greenspan, the significance of Damasio’s markers hypothesis lies primarily in renewing interest in the role played by emotions in the realization of complex intellectual tasks.⁶⁷ At the same time, however, he emphasizes its inherent flaw by indicating that this hypothesis preserves “the historical dichotomy between cognition and affect [...] showing that brain injuries can affect emotions and therefore judgement while leaving critical aspects of cognition unaffected” (Greenspan & Benderly 1997, 7). In his view, preserving this dichotomy does not allow to discern the real role played by emotions in shaping the most fundamental aspects of the human mind.⁶⁸

According to Greenspan, this role boils down to two fundamental ways in which emotions participate in socialization processes. The first is related to the

67 We use the word “renewal” because this topic was already explored at the beginning of the twentieth century by Sigmund Freud, but it was later marginalized in social sciences due to the dominance of research conducted from a cognitive perspective.

68 Let us point out here that the difference between the two scholars can be rooted in the methodological differences that underlie the conclusions drawn by them about the mind’s functioning. Damasio studied adults in whom there occurred an actual dissociation of emotions from cognition due to mechanical injuries to those parts of the brain that control emotions, whereas Greenspan studied autistic children whose brains – in the physical sense – were not damaged but did not create certain connections.

shaping of a specifically human intentionality that entails the ability to distinguish emotional signals, to read the others' intentions and communicate one's own, which, in turn, enables one to take deliberate action. Acquired relatively early in the process of socialization, "the intuitive ability to figure out human exchanges, to pick up *affective cues* before any words have been exchanged and understand their significance, eventually comes to function as a kind of sense organ. Indeed, it becomes a sort of 'supersense' that subsumes elements of all the others and lets us make instantaneous assessments and adjustments in our own reactions. It is in fact what makes social life possible" (64–65; emphasis added).

Initially, however, this "supersense" functions on a purely behavioral level, both in terms of emotions felt by children and those experienced by adults. This is the level of mental representations that, together with mastery of language, would be perfectly sufficient to acquire purely "technical" cultural skills in the form of behavioral patterns necessary to satisfy the needs of individuals and enabling them to direct the behavior of others. However, stopping at this level of development would prevent, according to Greenspan, the full development of mind. "Optimal mental development – what we have called mental health – requires a feeling of connectedness with humanity, a well-developed sense of empathy, the ability to express and evaluate abstract concepts (including values such as justice, fairness, etc.), the individual's sense of her place in relation to the larger community, an understanding of consequences, a capacity to weight alternative values and to place her own wishes in the context of other's wishes and needs, and an ability to recognize legitimate authority and limits" (193–194). Here, emotions re-enter the stage, because to master those kinds of skill it is absolutely crucial for the child to have "a warm, close relationship with an adult, one in which communication becomes important enough to provide satisfaction in itself" (77). Without reliable emotional responses from an adult, who helps the child in translating emotions and behavioral stimuli into the language of feelings and motives, those skills might never develop.

Greenspan's findings are complemented in a way by those of Michael Tomasello, who demonstrates, using a series of cleverly designed experiments, that although the cognitive skills of all primates are very similar, it is human cognition that is distinguished by the ability to attain a shared intentionality, understanding others "as intentional and mental beings like the self" (1999, 10). Neither other hominids nor autistic children have similar motivations to share emotional states and establish strictly psychological relationships among themselves, as is the case with most children.

The existence of this "*we-intentionality*" manifests itself at a relatively early stage of the development of human beings ("the nine-month revolution"),

immeasurably increasing the effectiveness of absorbing cultural heritage, and readiness to engage in joint actions. According to Tomasello, this “uniquely human cognitive adaptation for understanding others as intentional beings like the self” (40) triggers processes of cultural learning and internalization, at the same time confirming that “human beings ‘identify’ with con-specifics more deeply than do other primates” (14). Moreover, he is convinced that the specificity of human learning processes, which is supported by emotions, fostered cumulative cultural evolution. “We may conclude, then, that whereas chimpanzees clearly create and maintain cultural traditions broadly defined, these very likely rest on different processes of social cognition and social learning than the cultural traditions of human beings. [...] a crucial difference emerges, and this manifests itself in processes of cultural evolution, that is, processes by which a cultural tradition accumulates modifications over time” (37).

Given all the ways in which the concepts discussed above differ, owing primarily to diverse interests of individual authors, they do form a coherent message. The results of research conducted by Greenspan and Tomasello clearly indicate that *emotional ties* established between the child and its social environment lie at the foundation of the development of the individual mind. Regardless of whether we call it “shared intentionality” or “emotional supersense,” it turns out that the “cultural transformation of the mind” assumed by Dennett takes place by way of incorporating the individual, from the moment of birth, into a complex network of emotional interactions with adult representatives of the same species. Furthermore, it is important that this transformation is inseparable not only from the transmission of various technical skills specific to a given culture – the use of language, tools, and at least some elements of knowledge – but also, perhaps even primarily, from the incessant *emotional qualification* of actions taken by the child. It is highly probable that this process serves as the foundation for the forming of at least some somatic markers, whose existence is assumed by Damasio.

At the same time, however, these concepts leave us unsatisfied, despite being formulated in the language of universal dependencies. On the one hand, they are strongly tied to normative components of contemporary culture.⁶⁹ On the other

69 This is related in particular to Greenspan’s theory. After all, it is enough to recall what is already known about the treatment of children in various historical periods and in different cultures (Aries 1965) in order to raise doubts about the universality of Greenspan’s claim about the necessity to express “ecstatic admiration” of the infant as a condition of his or her optimal mental development.

hand, they utterly disregard processes of its differentiation, which occur both diachronically and synchronically. By bringing to the fore the adaptive aspect of socialization processes,⁷⁰ they leave aside the question of *historical* variability of human culture. In other words, even though they answer the question about the mechanisms that allow people to make use of culture, they nevertheless fail to address the one regarding the way in which culture is produced by human communities and societies.

Of course, this is not a charge that could be levelled against these particular theories. Still, the very existence of an interdependency between the shaping of individual mind and the requirements of culture – or more broadly speaking, of society – compels us to closely investigate the relationship between two kinds of socializing processes.

2.3 Two dimensions of socializing processes

As Piotr Sztompka notes, “the problem of socialization emerges when we wonder where people obtain knowledge, convictions, skills, rules, norms and values they later use in their actions. In order to act, we all need to have some data, information, behavioral patterns, ideals, models and visions of goals, which guide our actions. Where do they actually come from?” (2002, 390). This question has been variously answered in diverse theories and in different epochs, which does not change the fact that analyzes of individuals’ socializing processes, undertaken in social sciences and indicated by the concept of socialization, usually boil down to analyzing mechanisms responsible for introducing culturally differentiated

70 This, in turn, is particularly visible in Damasio’s theory. Analyzing the relationship between somatic markers created in the process of socialization and the shape of culture, he claims that “[t]he buildup of *adaptive* somatic markers requires that both brain and culture be normal” (177; emphasis added). As an example of the brain’s “abnormality,” he quotes developmental psychopaths and sociopaths, who are “yet another example of a pathological state in which a decline in rationality is accompanied by diminution or absence of feeling” (178). On the other hand, cases like Hitler’s Germany, Stalin’s USSR, China’s Cultural Revolution, or Pol Pot’s Cambodia are in his view an illustration of the situation in which “a sick culture *prevailed* upon a presumably normal machinery of reason” (179; emphasis added). Sharing Damasio’s negative opinion of these particular systems, let us indicate, however, that a naïve belief in the existence of a “normal” culture and a “normal” mind leads to a contradiction within his account: if somatic markers perform an adaptive function in relation to culture, then the latter does not have to “prevail” over anything, and even if it did, it would mean that the sources of these markers are outside culture.

contents into their minds, but entirely pass over the question of the essence of sociality, which is a parallel process. In other words, just like the question “What is society?” has been replaced in sociology with descriptions of how societies function, the question about the real nature of socialized individuals has been obliterated and supplanted by the claim that there is no such thing as a non-socialized individual (*vide* the cases of “wild children”).

Nothing is strange in this because each of these questions concerns a different aspect of the same phenomenon – that of social life. This was particularly emphasized by Durkheim, who wrote that “[o]n the one hand, the individual takes from society the best of himself, everything that gives him a distinctive personality and a place among other beings, his intellectual and moral culture. Take away language, the sciences, the arts, and moral beliefs, and he falls to the level of brutishness. The characteristic attributes of human nature therefore come to us from society. But on the other hand, society exists and lives only in and through individuals. Extinguish the idea of society in individual minds, let the beliefs, traditions, and aspirations of the collectivity cease to be felt and shared by the particular people involved, and society will die” (2001, 257).

However, in order for the idea of society to be upheld by individuals, it had to be formed first. This is the proper significance of the hypothesis of “foundational holism,” for its logical consequence is the statement that the *creation*⁷¹ not only of the social fact but also of *human beings and society took place in the same process* – a singular “cultural Big Bang” occurring in a condensed period, whose effect was the production of a total, symbolic image of the world. Naturally, before this event people already had their specific genetic features (the symbolic two per cent separating humans from other primates), which allowed them to make the transition during the Great Leap: from an existence conditioned by biological mechanisms to one determined by social mechanisms. Nevertheless, since the end of human evolution these features did not significantly impact their behavior for thousands of years. Similarly, one could argue that even though human beings lived in family-centered groups since the beginnings of their biological emergence, this did not turn these groups into societies. Nor does this happen among other social animals, which we call by this name only metaphorically.

71 Naturally, we are not leaning towards some version of creationism here, but wish to emphasize the movement from those forms of pre-human psycho-culture that precede the Great Leap to forms characteristic for contemporary people – forms whose emergence dates back precisely to the time of the Great Leap.

Therefore, the process of “humanizing the human being” and “socializing human societies” cannot be deduced either from unique features of the human mind, or from the existence of any “social instinct” so eagerly invoked by nineteenth-century thinkers. There had to be something else – an additional factor that could “trigger” the potential inherent in the biological equipment of human beings. As discussed above, according to Guille-Escuret it was the moment when people began to combine the use of language with the use of tools⁷² which enforced the unification of various elements of human proto-culture to form a total image of the world. The circumstances accompanying this process triggered the processes of anthropo- and sociogenesis, for it was the *sharing* of meanings contained in the image of the world that gave the human mind its specific features, facilitating mutual reading of intentions and representing them – as Mead stressed – *before* proceeding to act. It not only led human beings out of the world where everything was conditioned strictly by biology, but at the same time offered a basis for the emergence of a collective “We” – a counterpart to Mead’s “general Other.”

Localizing the moment of “foundational holism” *after* the evolution of the human species had ended entails serious consequences for the understanding of socializing processes, both in their collective and individual dimension. The culture produced in the act of foundational holism and later modified in the course of historical transformations, is not just a random assembly of artefacts, symbols and ideas. “‘Culture,’” as Max Weber emphatically put it, “is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process, a segment on which *human beings* confer meaning and significance” (Weber 1949, 81; emphasis preserved). Therefore, the emotional marking of potential actions, which occurs

72 Another immensely fascinating hypothesis was developed by Lewis-Williams (2011), who has indicated the significance of the encounter with Neanderthal groups for humans of the Aurignacian culture during their movement to Western Europe. His argument is largely devoted to proving that the Neanderthals had a different kind of consciousness, which was limited to such cognitive abilities that Gerald M. Edelman (1992) termed “primary consciousness” and which roughly correspond to Dennett’s lower-order intentionality characteristic also for certain species of animals. Lewis-Williams is convinced that, having noticed these limitations, the Cro-Magnon felt “a sense of superiority over the Neanderthals [...] [which] coloured their relationship with them” (2011, 261–262); consequently, this could have contributed to the heightened intensity in exploring their own cognitive capabilities. Still, Lewis-Williams’s hypothesis does not undermine that of Guille-Escuret, but rather interestingly supplements it.

in the process of collective and individual socialization, and guides the “uses” that individuals can make of cultural resources, does not define their personal preferences but establishes *normal* functioning in the world, which they view as something obvious.⁷³ A similar situation is found in the case of “shared intentionality,” which serves as a basis for the development of a sense of collective “We.” Understanding others as “intentional and mental beings like the self” (Tomasello 1999, 10) makes it possible to bind individuals emotionally to the larger collective; however, it also carries the potential to exclude those whose aims, intentions and actions do not fit the pattern we have been trained to endorse in the process of socialization.

It needs to be emphasized that in this account the crucial stages in the process of socialization occur outside conscious control of either the socializing or the socialized. “We learn about empathy and compassion not from what we are told but from how we are treated,” Greenspan notes (1997, 120).⁷⁴ He points out that the roots of morality are located in the pre-verbal stages, which are nevertheless deeply saturated with emotions. They are full of interactions with adults, in the course of which a child becomes aware “of her own and other’s intentions, which take in such basic issues as safety versus danger, acceptance versus rejection, approval versus disapproval, pride and respect versus humiliation” (120). When reacting to children’s behavior, “adults do not devise these gestural interactions randomly. Rather, they base their behavior on their own values and sense of rightness and correctness – on what the smiles, scowls, hugs, shrugs, nods, and angrily turned backs taught in their own experience” (290).

Therefore, “gestural communication imparts basic information about how a society functions” (290). However, if such information remains devoid of the emotional ties established between individuals and their social environment, it can only lead to the development of a technical skill allowing for more or less

73 Weber’s “reference to value” means precisely a system of preferences, which guides individual action. What is worth emphasizing, Weber differentiates in this context between individual values (“egoistic” and oriented at one’s own well-being) and social values (oriented at the good of the community). According to him, the former are typical for the modern order, in which behavior is marked by a high degree of reflectivity. On the other hand, social values accompanied by low reflectivity, i.e. affective ones, are typical for the traditional order. Just like Simmel, Weber argues that in the process of social change there is a visible trend to subdue emotions as a basis for action.

74 Let us note that this is a kind of a return to an idea developed in the 1950s within the so-called theory of social learning (modelling) associated with two scholars: Albert Bandura and Richard H. Walters (1959; 1967).

effective manipulation of the surroundings in order to satisfy one's own needs. The same view was expressed in slightly different terms by Marcel Gauchet, who notes that socialization involves not only "the incorporation of the habits and rules that make collective coexistence possible" but also "the process through which one learns to *perceive oneself as somebody among others*" (2000, 31; emphasis preserved). In the second meaning, socialization would be about "learning to abstract from oneself that sensitizes us to the public, to objectivity and to universality; it allows us to *adopt the point of view of the collective* and abstract from our particular situation" (31; emphasis added).

Both scholars also claim that the changes occurring in contemporary society significantly limit the chance to develop this kind of emotional ties. For Greenspan, the key characteristic of these changes lies in the increasing impersonality of social life, in which contacts with close people are supplanted by contacts with strangers, while contacts with people in general – by contacts with technological devices. This significantly limits the possibility of individuals entering into the kind of emotional interactions that serve as the condition for realizing the "optimum mental development," which links the more technical skills with those mental properties that allow the individual to unite with a broader community. Gauchet, in turn, assesses that the roots of this deficiency can be located in processes of individualization, which he views as a complex effect of changes in the forms of organizing society. In other words, whereas Greenspan's theory supports the popular thesis about the breakdown of ties in contemporary society, Gauchet's arguments could be directly deduced from Beck's discussion of the process of structural individualization.

Both scholars actually add something to these findings because their discussion of changes in socialization involves a specific differentiation between elements that are part of this concept. This allows to distinguish two basic aspects of it. In the weaker sense, it would be synonymous with "the process thanks to which the individual becomes used to a new way of life in his group and broader society through learning the rules and ideas contained in culture" (Sztompka 2002, 391). This understanding of socialization dominates in contemporary social sciences and academic textbooks.⁷⁵ As Gauchet rightly observes, "[i]n this minimal sense – as adaptation to life with others – the socializing capacity of contemporary families is neither better nor worse than it used to be" (2000, 31). However, both Gauchet and Greenspan link processes of socialization with its second,

75 It seems that also Dennett, in his theory of the mind, focuses primarily on the "efficiency-related" aspect of socialization.

much stronger understanding: socialization as a mechanism not only responsible for the introduction of culturally differentiated contents into individual minds, and the development of methods in which these contents are processed, but also the condition for the development of such attitudes that would facilitate reproducing and sustaining social life by way of tying oneself emotionally to the collective “We.” Without effectively realizing the latter function, socialization may impair the processes of socializing the actions of individuals.

For both authors, it is this deficit in socializing individuals’ actions that endangers the very foundation of contemporary society. Gauchet associates this threat with such transformations of personality that radically complicate, and perhaps even preclude, the realization of the idea of civic duty. In his view, the fundamental property of the contemporary individual is that he “would thus be the first individual to live unaware that he lives in society, the first individual, due to the very evolution of society, able to ignore that he is in society” (2000, 36). For Greenspan, in turn, this threat would be closely linked to the fact that specific properties of the human mind – among which he lists primarily intentionality and the ability to empathize – have their roots in complex, emotional interactions. According to him, contemporary society undermines the very foundation of the human mind by reinforcing impersonal aspects of social life, which may lead to the destruction of the main basis for its achievements.

Perhaps, the proclamation of the end of society is too hasty in both cases. If we are to follow the stronger definition of socialization, understanding it as a process of incorporating the individual into a *network of relations* that constitute a given society, then the decreasing efficiency of that process – emphasized by Greenspan, Gauchet and many others – can simply mean that we are entering a period in which these relationships are radically changing their character. It would not be anything strange because one such transformation already occurred in the history of human societies.⁷⁶ We should rather investigate more closely what creates these relationships and how they correspond to the currently unfolding changes in the forms of socializing processes.

76 What we mean here is, naturally, the transition from the traditional society to the modern one, analyzed by classical scholars in terms of such oppositions as *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 2001) or mechanical solidarity versus organic one (Durkheim 2013).