



The *Double-bind* as the Functional Equivalent of Contradiction in Social Research Methodology¹

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ABSTRACT: The article attempts to compare two methodological figures whose core is a logical contradiction: *double-bind*, introduced by Gregory Bateson, which appeals to Russell's theory of types, and Hegel's logical form of contradiction, work with which assumes a culture of movement in contradiction and the skill of solving it. Both methods proved very productive in a wide range of methodologically anti-Weberian socio-anthropological studies of the twentieth century in the West and in Russia, and both were enacted at a crucial moment in modelling the most complex transdisciplinary phenomena. Among them a therapy of mental pathology (G. Bateson) and learning of the deaf-blind (A. Mescheryakov-E. Ilyenkov), creativity (N. Elias and E. Ilyenkov), social power relations linking human individuals as having a social nature (the Marx's in origin concept of "aperto homine" by N. Elias and Marx's "ensemble of social relations" by E. Ilyenkov), ambivalence of practices of presenting oneself to others (by I. Hoffmann) and contradictory nature of the ideality as a representation (by Ilyenkov). Analyzing the methods of research work that prescribes *double-bind* or contradiction as a philosophical category, the author traces what differences at the "output" the difference of these approaches leads to at the "input." The decisive difference is that a methodology that treats *double-bind* only negatively limits its analysis to the mechanisms of social production of evil, while a methodology of contradiction resolution demonstrates the ability to raise and address questions about the social production of creative individuality or high cultural patterns.

KEYWORDS: Homines aperti, double-bind, power-balance, contradiction, schizophrenia, typhlo-surdopedagogy, power of judgment, talent, creativity.

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Introduction: *Homo Clausus* vs *Homines Aperti*

There is no recognized “central theory” in sociology, as N. Elias’s supporters call it (Quilley and Loyal 2004, 76), but there is, as an asymptote, the idea of disciplinary unity. Only a theory for which the opposites “sociogenesis’ and ‘psychogenesis’ are always intertwined” (Mennell 2015, 553) could claim to correspond to it, i.e. to be a disciplinary integrator: otherwise, it could not cover the entire breadth of the sociological subject field. In its absence, this role is fulfilled by a whole host of studies that gravitate towards this asymptote. Paradoxically, as a rule, studies of this kind are borderline and interdisciplinary, i.e. they do not fit in one way or another into institutional, external to the subject-matter disciplinary corridors. Stephen Quilley and Steven Loyal describe this multiplicity as embodying “greater international, interperspectival and intergenerational continuity of theorizing and research” (Quilley and Loyal 2004, 2) and include in this continuity “specifically, the Marxist and Weberian historical sociology of capitalism(s); the tradition of symbolic interactionism associated with George Herbert Mead through to Herbert Blumer and Erving Goffman; and in France, the tradition that eventuated in the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his school” (ibid.).

I would like to add to this list some of Gregory Bateson’s works, for example, studies on schizophrenia (Bateson 1972, 172; 253), since he seeks to describe pathogenic behavior not as having an individual-biological source, but as appropriate in a certain social situation and, therefore, having a social genesis, which is clearly in line with the “central theory” approach.

It is not difficult to see that, since all the mentioned studies share the premise of the inseparability of psychogenesis and sociogenesis, and it is opposed to methodological individualism and goes back to Hegel’s and Marx’s understanding of human as *Gemeinwesen* or “ensemble of social relations,” all these studies in one way or another objectively gravitate towards the ideal of *homines aperti* as opposed to *homo clausus* (Elias 2012, 126), critically disengaging (though not always consistently) from the closed, solitary individual of the Cartesian attitude, whether the latter appears as *homo oeconomicus*, *homo sociologicus*, or other similar ways.

The understanding of the human being as multiple and open to others, *homines aperti*, has convincingly demonstrated its productivity in sociology. But the research programs mentioned above, even without rejecting Marx, are for the most part surprisingly eager to do without

Hegel, perhaps because the theories of the scientific and technological era, emerging as “positive” theories, have countered the speculative fictions of philosophy. This is one of the meanings of the search for a “central theory”: it is “central” also in the Mertonian sense of “mid-level theory,” i.e. empirically valid. In part, this opposition went in line with Marx's critique of Hegelianism, but unlike Marx, who did not discard but refined the Hegelian dialectical method, the critique that came from “positive” scholars threw the baby out with the water of speculation—contradiction as a method, attributing it to transcendentalist tricks against which it was actually directed (Ivashchuk 2020).

The concept of contradiction developed by Hegel is a form of logically legitimate exit beyond the lonely Cogito of the objectifying attitude of the sciences to another subjectivity, and therefore the theory of human as an ensemble of many subjectivities connected in their reproduction by a network of social interaction, is impossible without contradiction as a positive method.

Hence, the question arises: how does one avoid being locked into homo clausus without contradiction?

It turned out that there is a kind of functional equivalent, which is used in one way or another by all the above-mentioned theorists and unites all of them as a common focus around which their search revolves in however elongated and non-intersecting orbits. This equivalent is the double-bind construction introduced by Bateson (Bateson 1972, 14), which became Elias's “Doppelbindung figuration” (in English translations, “Double-bind figuration”) (Elias 1987, 48; 49; 74; 85; Elias 2005, 15; 91–92). First of all, this construction was needed and proved promising for explaining the causes of mental illnesses and the genesis of talent.

The following is an attempt to relate the ways of approaching complex social phenomena, on the one hand, by means of double-bind, and, on the other hand, by means of the logical figure of contradiction. The latter took place in the Soviet Union, where Evald Ilyenkov's and Aleksandr Meshcheryakov's team's searches seem relevant—despite their different disciplinary location—as a parallel, or homology, to Western research.

This comparison will reveal what differences “at the output” leads the difference of hypostases of contradiction—understood as double-bind and as a logical category—“at the input.”

Double-Bind as A Condition for The Destruction of The Human Psyche

Double-bind is a difficult construct to translate into other languages, and it is better to show it on a model. The term was coined by Gregory Bateson in 1956 in a psychiatric study during a multidisciplinary grant project designed to make progress in the treatment of schizophrenia. In this project, the research team led by Bateson generated an etiological hypothesis that incorporated findings that were consistent with “a varied body of data and ideas, with... Our varied experience in anthropology, communications analysis, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis” (Bateson 1972, 205), as well as systems analysis and Russell's theory of logical types.

Bateson suggested that schizophrenia results from the systematic repetition of a situation in which the individual is unable to make vital distinctions between the logical levels of meaning of an utterance: the literal meaning of the speech message and its more general meaning, given not directly but through context. Such distinctions are vital already for animals: for example, in a game it is important for them to communicate to one another that they show their fangs in play, otherwise the game may turn into a deadly duel. This communication, to use the terms of Russell's type theory, takes place at the meta-level. Only access to the meta-level of communication allows us to discern the meaning of speech. And if what is verbally expressed contradicts its meta-level complement, the one to whom such communication is addressed falls into the trap of ambiguity and becomes a victim of double-bind.

For example, for a child who is totally dependent on his mother, it is vital to receive from her trust-building expressions of her love. But at the same time, their communication regularly produces the Russellian paradox of the “barber” who should/should not “shave himself” (Russell 2010, 101)—a situation in which the mother will emotionally withdraw (and punish attempts to get close to her) while insisting that this should be interpreted as an expression of love. The result is two mutually exclusive messages for the child:

“I love you” (a declaration of integration).

“Don't you dare reduce the distance between us” (gesture of rejection)—the message is on a more general, non-verbal level, the difference of levels excludes the contradiction, but the child is not able to distinguish between logical types, and the threat of punishment keeps him on the immediate level.

For the child there is a contradiction that disorients him: the child-victim does not know what the messages addressed to him actually mean and what he is encouraged to do. Going to the meta-level would allow him to discuss and eliminate the contradiction, but it is fraught with punishment, forbidden. The prohibition protects the mother from exposure, who uses the disorienting situation of contradiction to ensure the child's submission.

The scenarios of schizophrenia then become logically predictable as possible defense strategies of the victim:

a. To perceive and respond only to literally verbalized meaning. This strategy branches into two possibilities.

The first one (a.1) is the exit into paranoia, when the patient begins to see danger in any verbalized content. Then, in defense of himself, the victim will respond by considering only the literal meaning of the statements. Bateson shows what happens as a result by the example: "On a ward with a dedicated and 'benevolent' physician in charge there was a sign on the physician's door which said 'Doctor's Office. Please Knock.' The doctor was driven to distraction and finally capitulation by the obedient patient who carefully knocked every time he passed the door." (Bateson 1972, 231)

Bateson shows that such a reaction is homologous to the reaction of a quite healthy person caught in an uncomfortable situation by a politely veiled question: defending himself he will ignore the implied meaning and answer only the literal one:

For example, one day an employee went home during office hours. A fellow employee called him at his home, and said lightly, 'Well, how did you get there?' The employee replied, 'By automobile.' He responded literally because he was faced with a message which asked him what he was doing at home when he should have been at the office, but which denied that this question was being asked by the way it was phrased. (Since the speaker felt it wasn't really his business, he spoke metaphorically.) The relationship was intense enough so that the victim was in doubt how the information would be used, and he therefore responded literally. (Bateson 1972, 212)

The second possibility (a.2) is when the defense takes the form of a hebephrenic type of reaction: unable to grasp the meaning of metacommunication, the person reacts to all discrepancies with the direct text as unimportant, with laughter.

b. Since one cannot physically leave the situation, one can make up a fantasy world and claim: it is not me (making a punishable attempt,

e.g., trying to incriminate the stronger party), I myself am elsewhere—schism proper, the appearance of other personae in one person.

c. To stop responding to any appeals, pretend not to hear them is the third type of reaction—regression. This is catatonic type of schizophrenia manifestation.

Hence the method of treatment: to help the victim to distinguish the levels of abstraction, to separate the sides of the contradiction between the immediate and the meta-level of communication and to get rid of it as a false threat, laying the blame for his tension on the source of confusion, which in our example turns out to be the “schizophrenogenic mother,” because it was of her contradictory definition of the situation, that the child suffered.

Sometimes the psychiatrists were able to help the victim—arm the child with tools of analysis that led to blaming the mother, and then the breakdown started with the mother. Psychotherapy was spinning in a circle. The way out of it seemed to be family therapy. But after all, the family is not the last instance that generates contradictions. Further sources of maliciousness can be logically traced back to the place of work of family members, employer competition, then to the state, then to international competition, it will transpire that there are simply no healthy individuals among human individuals, the world is a huge mental hospital.

But, if the world could be cured, it would only be at the cost that it also lacks “humor, art, poetry, etc.” because the double-bind theory “does not distinguish between these subspecies” (Bateson 1972, 277) of its subject.

Later psychiatry had to recognize that the hypothesis did not live up to expectations. But despite its lack of success, the hypothesis remains appealing because it does capture something essential and therefore “still offers ongoing insights, cause for reflection, an area and methodology of research, and proposes interventions that dismantle pathology and offer hope of new, more functional pathways.” (Gibney 2006, 48). What exactly does it capture?

Double-Bind as A Condition for The Creation of The Human Psyche

It is better to deal with the double-bind theory by means of a counterexample. As a such counterexample, an exact antitype of Bateson's model, the case of the parents of Yuri Lerner just beckons. Yuri Lerner lost his hearing in early childhood and in 1963 became one of the pupils of the

Zagorsk Children's Home for the Deaf-Blind at the Institute of Defectology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Mikhail Zinovievich Lerner, who came to the laboratory of Aleksandr Luria, on the basis of which this Children's Home was to arise, recalls that at the first meeting, in addition to instructions on how to organize the daily life of the family, Ivan Sokolyansky gave him a categorical instruction:

That parents should try to minimize the manifestation of emotional feelings for the child, refuse any caresses and other forms of showing their love. He kept emphasizing that the child's life would be harsh, difficult and would require him to strain all his inner psychological and mental forces; the child should be prepared for this persistently and uncompromisingly..." (Lerner, 2000)

Meanwhile, the parents needed to explain to the child that their harshness stemmed from their love for him, to make him to follow their difficult assignments. And the case was not limited to one family and one child. The described situation was repeated, and serially, in the so-called Zagorsk experiment. But the theorists who had to deal with it had logical priorities opposite to those of Bateson.

They believed that such a situation could probably cause a mental disorder in the Pavlovian dog (Pavlovian, because only in Pavlov's laboratory is the dog immobilized and deprived of all initiative), but that human being in its proper sense only begins here. Nothing else gives a person an exit to a higher (meta) level; one can get there, as Socrates used to say, only "through the gates of contradiction." Nothing else but this situation makes a human being free, because it is by withstanding the tension of contradiction and resolving it with his own effort (and no one else can withstand the tension of my contradiction) that a human being creates a common world, complicates and enriches its structures.

In this Ilyenkov sees the meaning of the technique that Meshcheryakov came to when he realized that in order to create the human psyche in the proper sense, it is necessary to "sever" the already established connection "between the organism and the objects of its organic needs,"² that "the entire focus lies in... interposing an obstacle that this organism is in principle unable to overcome by moving its body in space—that is, by the means that is in principle accessible to any animal" (Ilyenkov 2007, 89).

2. This translation misses an important terminological distinction: between organic lacks and human needs. The translator has labeled both as "needs." But Ilyenkov always labeled them with different words—organic "нужда" (lack), but human "потребность" (need).

The contact to be ruptured is a vital contact. Ilyenkov characterizes the problem as follows: “either accomplish the transition to the human mode of satisfying organic needs or else perish.” (Ilyenkov 2007, 89). And, as in the situation described by Bateson, both horns of the dilemma are punishable. (1) The rupture of such contact is punishable, since it threatens life and counteracts the desire to preserve oneself. (2) The absence of rupture is penalized by any life situation in the further development of the child, since parental indulgence in helplessness, concern only to preserve the life-supporting bond, when adults become a service appendage of the child, caring for him like a plant, thus turns him into such a plant-like creature. As in Bateson's description, in Meshcheryakov's pedagogy the living being cannot leave the situation of rupture. Moreover, this rupture is not an exceptional or one-time situation, but a systematic way of life.

Thus, we're looking at a double-bind, pure and simple. So, we should expect at the output a psychotic, shouldn't we? But Meshcheryakov's “experiment” yielded exactly the opposite results. We know that Meshcheryakov's team, which included Ilyenkov, succeeded in bringing up fully-fledged, sufficiently independent fellow citizens in conditions that, in the optics of the proponents of the double-bind concept, were exactly the totality of conditions for a psychopathological result (we can add: in an “Asylum” (Goffman 1961)—the Zagorsk boarding school, where the pupils at the initial stage were completely dependent on the staff and the institute as a whole—but they did not remain in this dependence!) What caused this difference in strategies and results?

Double-bind and Contradiction

In the most general form, the answer is as follows: both the significance of Bateson's construct and the difference in the results of its use by Bateson and Meshcheryakov are determined by their understanding of the contradiction and their opposite attitude to it. Bateson's strategy realizes the logic of its prohibition; its appearance is interpreted as a lie that needs to be exposed and eliminated. Therapeutic help from this point of view consists in removing the patient from the situation of contradiction. The Ilyenkov-Meshcheryakov strategy realizes the logic of contradiction as a fundamental characteristic of reality itself and therefore a logical condition of truth in cognition and adequacy in behavior. And this strategy obliges not to take away, but to correctly introduce a student into the situation of contradiction, or rather, to teach him to move within it to find a mediation that will resolve this contradiction.

Moreover, the search for forms of mediation is practiced from the very first jointly divided action, in which the adult, of course, is ready to help in order to achieve the goal of the life-sustaining action, but never hurries to perform the action instead of the child. Meshcheryakov and Ilyenkov emphasize this: not to intercept, but to awaken the child's initiative in a problem situation. It is essential that work in this direction begins with the formation of self-care skills, i.e. from the very beginning the child is helped to achieve autonomy, free movement in the human world. The first actions are carried out as feeding (with a spoon), dressing, etc. of the child with his own hands, and as soon as the individual elements of the skill allow to achieve the result,

... there are the first attempts to make a movement independently... Here it is very important not to miss and not to extinguish these first manifestations of independence... The emerging activity is easily extinguished if the adult himself begins to perform the necessary action for him... and when it is not reinforced by the achievement of the goal... The educator... builds the teaching process in such a way as to give independence to the child in those movements which he has already mastered (Meshcheryakov 1968, 112–14).

Thus, a child who finds himself in the controlled situation of “either accomplish the transition to the human mode of satisfying organic needs or else perish,” is not left disoriented, because the forms, in which he begins to move, simultaneously ensure both his survival and his acquisition of a universal horizon—for the obstacle that broke contact with the prerequisites of life was of such a kind that it was,

... at the same time a bridge or, so to speak, a level crossing between animal and human life activity, and therefore between the biological (animal) and the specifically human form of mind.

Such a bridge-obstacle is any object created by man for man, any artificial tool that man places between himself and an object of his organic needs.

For example—a spoon. A spoon is a pass into the realm of human—social—culture, into the sphere of human life activity and of the human mind.” (Ilyenkov 2007, 89)

From this point of view, double-bind is not at all synonymous with lying in cognition or behavior, how the very choice of the term fixes it; on the contrary, it is a condition for finding the truth and even the whole truth and simply the norm of human life proper. In this point, Ilyenkov and Meshcheryakov's approach reveals the relevance of the Hegelian method, in which contradiction constitutes “the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement; ... the dialectical soul

which everything true possesses and through which alone it is true” (Hegel 2010, 745).

From this point of view, we can see that a contradiction or double-bind does not generate a symptom by itself, but only if the contradiction is cut off from its resolution. Russellian logic, which is good at uncovering contradiction as the origin of subject-matter definition, both in the formation of the psyche and in set theory, does not know how to work with it in the direction of resolution, only how to prohibit it, thus cutting it off from resolution. To take the patient beyond double-bind means to cut him off from the very possibility of being a self-determining, i.e. creative, subject. In other words, it means objectifying him, reducing him to a one-sided thing with a prescribed trajectory. It is impossible to retain the prerogative of self-determination, the specificity of human being (being a subject, not an object), while bypassing the “gate of contradiction.”

The weak link, then, in the Batesonian problem is not the mother’s malpractice (although there are mothers who abuse their power advantage). It is not the mother who puts the child in a situation of contradiction, who is guilty of destroying the child’s personality (this is the situation into which life itself necessarily puts us all), but the socially generated obstacles that prevent us from even approaching the resolution of that situation, that contradiction.

From here, two problems are revealed:

How is the resolution carried out, what allows an individual in a situation of undermining the animal characteristic (i.e. a threat to life) not to perish, not to go into pathology, but to become a full healthy, creative and therefore free human individuality?

This question is answered by Meshcheryakov’s methodology, in which the main thing is the use of organic lacks for the formation of human needs. Through the joint-shared activity of satisfying the organic lack, educators, who in their person embody that organ that is initially missing in the human organism, without which the human child is not even an individual (literally: whole, not falling apart into parts), i.e. simply cannot live, induce the child to master the non-biological forms of satisfying the biological lacks developed by humanity. These forms, integrating the potential person into the community, from the very beginning integrate him into the (other) subject, since the human child, as it turns out, is not such initially. The certainty of these forms and their necessary sequence were revealed, as “in slow motion,”

in the upbringing of a child, in which, because of deaf blindness, nothing is “grafted by itself.”

This is where the “third aspect” of the conversation between Lerner and Professor Sokoliansky comes into play: “labor... should be the core of human existence” (Lerner 2000), as activity in forms that are opposite to animal forms of satisfaction of biological lacks developed by natural evolution. These human forms are not forms which control “the biological life activity of an organism of the species *Homo sapiens*” (Ilyenkov 2007, 9), but forms which control “the highly complex system of external objects that constitutes, to use Marx’s expression, the inorganic body of man” (ibid., 89), of the human ensemble, *aperto homini*, and therefore they “could and can in no way be envisioned in advance by the structure of the internal organs of the human body” (ibid.). These are the forms that free the human individual from the power of natural necessity, because only they make it possible to relate to the world not from the point of view of one’s own organic requirement, but from the point of view of another—any other—person, in other words, in the horizon of the universal, or thinking. Actualizing themselves in one or another historically developed universal way, i.e. in forms that unlock the individuals into universal communication with their fellow human beings and integrate the individuals into their social whole, the human individual is an embodied contradiction, hence a creator, because this individual has to mediate the poles of this antinomy through their own life-history.

The loss of at least one of its sides instead of the unity of creative mediation that holds them together means the degeneration of human behavior into one or another of its perverted forms—pathology, evil, including banal evil. Such a turn of the problem dictates a further question.

What exactly prevents the productive resolution of the contradiction by tightening the double-bind knot pathologically?

The Double-Bind and Figuration Problematics

First among such socially generated obstacles to normal human development is the exclusion of the very possibility of realizing that contradiction is the root of all selfhood, of all resistance to objectification, which becomes destructive only when its normal unfolding and resolution is consciously or unconsciously blocked.

What makes talented and literate theorists (i.e. those who are not cut off from access to the means of obtaining knowledge) deny or ignore

the logic of productive resolution of contradiction and, out of the highest motives, follow and work for the creation of perverted visibility? Bourdieu wrote about it well. He called the scholastic fallacy the social mechanism that the more definitely switches theorists to objectification the higher the theorist is in the hierarchy of his specific field (Bourdieu 2019, 294).

Ilyenkov posed a similar question as follows: what condemns the majority to “the unenviable role of passive material, through the forced formation of which the power and strength (*Macht*) of other individuals—Caesars and Bonapartes, Kants and Newtons, etc... The favorites of fortune—realize themselves” (Ilyenkov 1991, 379). He has only just begun to unravel it, but the compass of his method (the contradiction), like Bourdieu's, points to a kind of universal political economy—the economy of the balance of power or social force (in the terms of Elias and Bourdieu respectively, whose doctrines in this point appear to be interchangeable). In homology with Bourdieu, Ilyenkov pointed to the school as a place where, under “non-normal” social conditions, access to the mastery of certain cultural tools is cut off from a significant number of individuals.

If Bourdieu and Hoffman (Bourdieu 1990; Hoffman 1961) showed that the system of modern educational institutions, for the sake of its own reproduction, involves the audience in the game according to rules that ensure the overweigh of the social power of the institution and the instances that delegate authority to the institutions and their representatives, Ilyenkov (1991) showed how these rules deviate the work of the educational institution from the cultivation of a healthy initiative in the audience to assemble its own self (including in situations where it has been damaged by the forces of schismogenesis), and direct to its objectification. Namely: they cut off the possibilities of autonomous search of resolving the double-bind, in which the audience turn to be involved. They work with it for the sake of inculcating the skill of substitution of the whole contradiction—one of its sides, and it is this substitution that provides the preponderance of power.

Ilyenkov demonstrates this mechanism of deep damage to the psyche practically as a sociologist, on the institutional model available to him at the time—the educational system which adopted the principle of “picture-based learning” (“принцип наглядности обучения”):

Apparent well-being is achieved, but the disease affects more deeply lying – and more important—‘organs of cognition.’ And above all, the power of imagination in its most important function, which Kant called ‘the power of

judgment...’ The school often not only fails to develop this power where it has already somehow emerged, but also actively deadens it...The pupil learns to reproduce ready-made images, already given citizenship in language, in this way. To produce an image—no... the ‘knowledge’ learned at the lesson is imposed on him as a ready-made abstract ‘rule,’ to which he is obliged, must, forced to subordinate his actions within the strictly defined conditions of school tasks in order to achieve the solution of these tasks, often not interesting to him at all.” (Ilyenkov 1991, 383–86)

And moreover, which are not in his interest, for they are rules that teach obedience without thinking—and this is not a miscalculation of the mass school, but its purpose. In fact, these “‘Formulas’ he eventually manages to successfully ‘apply’ only where and when... Life is already organized ‘according to science’” (Ilyenkov 1991, 386)—more precisely, where life is already organized in alien interests—and it is so organized for him at every turn where the power differential deviates significantly from zero, so when he applies these rules successfully, he constrains himself in alien interests.

And it's even convenient for him—this habitus allows, within the allotted limits, for him to reproduce as well, but hardly to evolve. In such training, “A mental apparatus is brought up, with the help of which a person, looking at an object, sees (‘represents imaginatively’) in it only what he already knows from other people's words” (Ilyenkov 1991, 386)—and remains a minor, immature in the Kantian sense, socially incompetent, a “formless mass” “which does not know what it wills” (Hegel 2001, 227; 243) and only can obey.

After the impact of this mechanism of mass social disempowerment, which individuals encounter as children, the processes that distort the power of judgment—analyzed by H. Arendt (1964), Z. Bauman (2000), C. Milgram (1974), and F. Zimbardo (2008)—find fertile ground, without which they could not take hold. This leads us to assume that for Ilyenkov, school is not merely an institution available for study; it is the arena where the long-term outcome of the historical redefinition of the balance of power is ultimately determined.

Conclusion

Finally, we should note that the double-bind construct has evolved from a situation of communicative trap (in Bateson's case) to a figuration (in “postphilosophical sociology,” beginning with Elias), which shows signs of a positive generating model that brings it closer to Il'enkov's understanding of contradiction. Although in his later theoretical-knowledge work Elias describes double-bind using the image of Malström's funnel of doom (Elias 1987, 45–46) from E. Poe's short story (Poe 1984), Elias

explicitly reconfigures the Batesonian understanding of double-bind into a driving force of self-complication: in Elias's work, as in the short story, two ways out of the double-bind are possible: the one who succumbs to the animal strategy of self-preservation (i.e. objectifying others) perishes, and the one who manages to break with it is saved. This image makes it clear that, unlike Bateson, in Elias, as Hegel would say, "that contradiction is not all there is to it, and that contradiction sublates itself by its own doing" (Hegel 1991, 187). So, Elias and Ilyenkov move in homology because they move along Hegelian lines. Elias's affinity for these ideas can be traced back to his teacher, the Hegelian Carl Mannheim, whose influence and friendship remained significant throughout his life. For Mannheim;

Hegel's original point of view is still worth remembering in his collectivistic, potentially sociological understanding of ideas." (Mannheim 1962, 59)

The initial phase of this evolution is characterized by the desire to sociologically explain evil in man, to uncover the laws of social production of evil. Such complex phenomena as the creative capacity, the moral "human 'capacity to distinguish right from wrong'" (Bauman 2010, 211), are declared as ready-made, prior to sociality, so that "Every society encounters this capacity in a ready-made form just as it encounters the human biological constitution, physiological needs or psychological inclinations. And it... tries to suppress or utilize it for its own purposes" (Bauman 2010, 212).

In the logically more accomplished second phase, "adequate" sociological theory formulate the task to systematically "articulate the social character of mental processes" (Mannheim 1956, 52) of the highest complexity—"momentous events or 'representative' manifestations of culture" (ibid.). The most daring project of this kind is probably Elias's "Mozart" (Elias 2005) which, both in the formulation of the problem and even in the choice of the "representative" event of culture converges with Ilyenkov's search for philosophy deployed in the ideal as an "ensemble of social relations" (the theme about Mozart appears in Ilyenkov's polemic with Dubrovsky). In both cases there is on the one hand, a request for a holistic grasp of the "human condition" and, on the other hand, an implication that the function of a "central theory" capable of such an understanding does not have to be embodied by a single theory. Additionally, the entirety of these theories does not need to be confined to a rigid bureaucratic disciplinary framework.

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Biography

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