

**Thomas Eggers**

# Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit durch Sprache im Bereich der Institutionen und der Medien

Übersetzung eines allgemeinsprachlichen Textes aus dem  
Englischen ins Deutsche

**Diploma Thesis**

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# Gliederung

<b>I. . Übersetzung mit Sprachkommentar .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Sachkommentar .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1. Einleitung .....	16
2. Denken – Sprache .....	21
2.1. Sprachliche Zeichen .....	33
2.2. Ungenauigkeiten in der Sprache .....	37
2.3. Bewertung in der Sprache .....	39
2.4. Wirklichkeit .....	42
2.5. Wahrheit / Unwahrheit .....	51
3. Sprache im Bereich der Institutionen .....	57
4. Sprache im Bereich der Medien .....	65
5. Visualisierung und Sprache .....	75
6. Abschließender Kommentar .....	83
Literaturliste .....	86
‘Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit‘ unter dem Aspekt der Hirnforschung .....	89



# I. Übersetzung mit Sprachkommentar

## “The Community and the Institution”

### 34. The Community and the Institution<sup>1</sup>

There are what I have termed “generalized social attitudes” which make an organized self possible. In the community there are certain ways of acting under situations which are essentially identical, and these ways of acting on the part of anyone are those which we excite in others when we take certain steps. If we assert our rights, we are calling for a definite response just because they are rights that are universal – a response which everyone should, and perhaps will, give. Now that response is present in our own nature; in some degree we are ready to take that same attitude toward somebody else if he makes the appeal. When we call out that response in others, we can take the attitude of the other and then adjust our own conduct to it. There are, then, whole series of such common responses in the community in which we live, and such responses are what we term “institutions.” The institution represents a common response on the part of all members of the community to a particular situation. This common response is one which, of course, varies with the character of the individual. In the case of theft the response of the sheriff is different from that of the attorney-general, from that of the judge and the jurors, and so forth; and yet they all are responses which maintain property, which involve the recognition of the property right in others. There is a common response in varied forms. And these variations, as illustrated in the different officials, have an organization which gives unity to the variety of the responses. One appeals to the policeman for assistance, one expects the state’s attorney to act, expects the court and its various functionaries to carry out the process of the trial of the criminal. One does take the attitude of all of these different officials as involved in the very maintenance of property; all of them as an organized process are in some sense found in our own natures. When we arouse such attitudes, we are taking the attitude of what I have termed a “generalized other.” Such organized sets of response are related to each other; if one calls out one such set of responses, he is implicitly calling out others as well.

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<sup>1</sup> See “Natural Rights and the theory of the Political Institution,” *Journal of Philosophy*, XII (1915), 141 ff.

Thus the institutions of society are organized forms of group or social activity – forms so organized that the individual members of society can act adequately and socially by taking the attitudes of others toward these activities. Oppressive, stereotyped, and ultra-conservative social institutions – like the church – which by their more or less rigid and inflexible unprogressiveness crush or blot out individuality, or discourage any distinctive or original expressions of thought and behavior in the individual selves or personalities implicated in and subjected to them, are undesirable but not necessary outcomes of the general social process of experience and behavior. There is no necessary or inevitable reason why social institutions should be oppressive or rigidly conservative, or why they should not rather be, as many are, flexible and progressive, fostering individuality rather than discouraging it. In any case, without social institutions of some sort, without the organized social attitudes and activities by which social institutions are constituted, there could be no fully mature individual selves or personalities at all; for the individuals involved in the general social life-process of which social institutions are organized manifestations can develop and possess fully mature selves or personalities only in so far as each one of them reflects or prehends in his individual experience these organized social attitudes and activities which social institutions embody or represent. Social institutions, like individual selves, are developments within, or particular and formalized manifestations of, the social life-process at its human evolutionary level. As such they are not necessarily subversive of individuality in the individual members; and they do not necessarily represent or uphold narrow definitions of certain fixed and specific patterns of acting which in any given circumstances should characterize the behavior of all intelligent and socially responsible individuals (in opposition to such unintelligent and socially irresponsible individuals as morons and imbeciles), as members of the given community or social group. On the contrary, they need to define the social, or socially responsible, patterns of individual conduct in only a very broad and general sense, affording plenty of scope for originality, flexibility, and variety of such conduct; and as the main formalized functional aspects or phases of the whole organized structure of the social life-process at its human level they properly partake of the dynamic and progressive character of that process<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Human society, we have insisted, does not merely stamp the pattern of its organized social behaviour upon any one of its individual members, so that this pattern becomes likewise the pattern of the individual's self; it also, at the same time, gives him a mind, as the means or



There are a great number of institutionalized responses which are, we often say, arbitrary, such as the manners of a particular community. Manners in their best sense, of course, cannot be distinguished from morals, and are nothing but the expression of the courtesy of an individual toward people about him. They ought to express the natural courtesy of everyone to everyone else. There should be such an expression, but of course a great many habits for the expression of courtesy are quite arbitrary. The ways to greet people are different in different communities; what is appropriate in one may be an offense in another. The question arises whether a certain manner which expresses a courteous attitude may be what we term "conventional." In answer to this we propose to distinguish between manners and conventions. Conventions are isolated social responses which would not come into, or go to make up, the nature of the community in its essential character as this expresses itself in the social reactions. A source of confusion would lie in identifying manners and morals with convention, since the former are not arbitrary in the sense that conventions are. Thus conservatives identify what is a pure convention with the essence of a social situation; nothing must be changed. But the very distinction to which I have referred is one which implies that these various institutions, as social responses to situations in which individuals are carrying out social acts, are organically related to each other in a way which conventions are not.

Such interrelation is one of the points which is brought out, for example, in the economic interpretation of history. It was first presented more or less as a party doctrine by the Marxian socialists, implying a particular economic interpretation.

It has now passed over into the historian's technique with a recognition that if he can get hold of the real economic situation, which is, of course, more accessible than most social expressions, he can work out from that to the other expressions and institutions of the community. Medieval economic institutions enable one to interpret the other institutions of the period. One can get at the economic situation directly and, following that out, can find what the other institutions were, or must have been. Institutions, manners, or words, present in a certain sense the life-habits of the communi-

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ability of consciously conversing with himself in terms of the social attitude which constitute the structure of his self and which embody the pattern of human society's organized behaviour as reflected in that structure. And his mind enables him in turn to stamp the pattern of his further developing self (further developing through his mental activity) upon the structure of organ-

ty as such; and when an individual acts toward others in, say, economic terms, he is calling out not simply a single response but a whole group of related responses.

The same situation prevails in a physiological organism. If the balance of a person who is standing is disturbed, this calls for a readjustment which is possible only in so far as the affected parts of the nervous system lead to certain definite and interconnected responses. The different parts of the reaction can be isolated, but the organism has to act as a whole. Now it is true that an individual living in society lives in certain sort of organism which reacts toward him as a whole, and he calls out by his action this more or less organized response. There is perhaps under his attention only some very minor fraction of this organized response – he considers, say, only the passage of a certain amount of money. But that exchange could not take place without the entire economic organization, and that in turn involves all the other phases of the group life. The individual can go any time from one phase to the others, since he has in his own nature the type of response which his action calls for. In taking any institutionalized attitude he organizes in some degree the whole social process, in proportion as he is a complete self.

The getting of this social response into the individual constitutes the process of education which takes over the cultural media of the community in a more or less abstract way<sup>3</sup>. Education is definitely the process of taking over a certain organized set of responses to one's own stimulation; and until one can respond to himself as the community responds to him, he does not genuinely belong to the community. He may belong to a small community, as the small boy belongs to a gang rather than to the city in which he lives. We all belong to small cliques, and we may remain simply inside of them. The "organized other" present in ourselves is then a community of a narrower diameter. We are struggling now to get a certain amount of international-mindedness. We are realizing ourselves as members of a larger community. The

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ization of human society, and thus in a degree to reconstruct and modify in terms of his self the general pattern of social or group behaviour in terms of which his self was originally constituted.

<sup>3</sup> Among some eighteen notes, editorials, and articles on education attention may be called to the following: "The Relation of Play to Education", *University of Chicago Record*, I (1896), 140 ff.; "The Teaching of Science in College", *Science*, XXIV (1906), 390 ff.; "Psychology of Social Consciousness Implied in Instruction", *ibid.*, XXXI (1910), 688 ff.; "Industrial Education and Trade Schools", *Elementary School Teacher*, VIII (1908), 402 ff.; "Industrial Education and the Working Man and the School", *ibid.*, IX (1909), 369 ff.; "On the problem of History in the Elem-