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The Structural-Genetic Theory Program as the Fundamental Theory Both of History and of Social Sciences and Humanities

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Abstract

The structural-genetic theory program is an off-spring of Piagetian theory. It has accomplished the task that Piaget had intended to carry out but did not seriously. He wanted to study children to understand better history of mind, science, philosophy, and culture. The new program has shown that world history of culture, society, politics, law, morals, science, philosophy, religion, and arts has gone through the same stages that are known from developmental psychology. Accordingly, psychogenetic advancements have shaped the historical trajectories of these collective systems or societal phenomena. The application of developmental psychology to history sheds also a new light on the rise of modern, industrial society, thus dwarfing competing materialistic, institutional, and economic approaches. It is held that the new program inherits positions provided by Elias, Weber, Wundt, Cassirer, and other classical authors. It cannot only rebuild single humanities and social sciences but can also unify them under one common roof, breaking apart borders previously separating them from each other.¹

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1. Introduction

Current social sciences and humanities base on a systematic error that falsifies a great bulk of their assumptions, ideas, and theories, that damages the very foundations of the whole range of these disciplines and hampers them from making progress of epochal dimensions. The error is defined by the assumption that all humans respectively all cultures and ethnicities manifest the same scale of intelligence, rationality, consciousness, and logic. Societies may differ regarding customs and institutions, but the very nature of the human being and its psyche have not fundamentally changed in history – that is the implicit or explicit assumption these disciplines predominantly follow. Some authors have done everything to misinterpret data and facts in favor of this erroneous assumption and to denounce the competing theories of

developmentalism (Cole y Scribner, 1974; Jahoda, 1999; Maynard, 2008). These theories of universalism (all humans are equal concerning psyche and rationality) and relativism (ethnicities cannot be tested or compared against common standards) can be completely falsified (Oesterdiekhoff, 2017/2).

Of course, there always have been authors challenging this contention, presenting theories that describe major differences between archaic and modern peoples, that is, mental advancements taking place during history. Only those came actually close to the kernel of the hitch that resorted to child or developmental psychology to describe the evolution from archaic, traditional, or primitive psyche to civilized and modern psyche. Every other author (e.g., W. Wundt, E. Cassirer, J. Jaynes, F. Klix, A. Luria, L. S. Vygotski, A. Inkeles, D. Lerner) or approach (e.g., psychometric intelligence research, psychoanalysis, history of mentalities) aimed at describing psychogenesis that ignored this foundation has been doomed to fail or to remain at the surface.

However, even those that recognized the crucial role of child or developmental psychology to describe the psychogenesis of humankind understood only a few pieces of the whole phenomenon. Especially F. Schultze (1900), H. Werner (1948) and J. Piaget (1969, with Garcia 1989) belonged to those having conceived the existence of far-reaching “parallels” between children and archaic adults. It should be added that the sociologist N. Elias based his theory of civilization also on these parallels (Elias, 1994; Oesterdiekhoff, 2000, 2011/2, 2023; Weiler 2011). Piaget has hint at these resemblances time and again in a great many of his publications, covering a wide range of logical, physical, social, moral, and religious phenomena. Nonetheless, he suffered from a severe appetite-aversion-conflict concerning the whole subject, dwarfing amount of time and concentration he devoted to the subject and limiting his insights and understanding of it to a tremendous scale. In fact, he understood comparatively only a little from the whole subject (Oesterdiekhoff, 2016/3).

Piaget’s tries related were mainly followed by Le Pan (1989), Gablik (1976), Dux (1989), and Radding (1985) as they likewise transferred stage theory to history. C. Hallpike (1979, 2004) was then the most decided researcher to apply stage theory to the understanding of ethnicities, to base ethnology, and to reconstruct history of morals. However, all these authors were unable to exploit the richness of this domain and to understand more than the surface of the “parallels”.

It was only the structural-genetic theory program to have recognized the complete identity of the psychology of the child and that of archaic human being, the possibility and necessity to reconstruct the history of humankind that is the history of culture, sciences, philosophy, law, politics, morals, religion, and arts in terms of stages known from children, and that developmental psychology has not only the power to base every single discipline but is also the single possibility to unify social sciences and humanities under one common roof. The structural-genetic theory program is the first approach in the history of these disciplines to have successfully formulated a general theory of them. The program has delivered decisive breakthroughs concerning theory of the human being and of psychogenesis, reconstruction of history, and erecting the general theory of social sciences and humanities, catapulting these three areas to new universes and higher stages of sciences. The program came into being about 40 years ago and has accumulated up to now 14 books and about 130 articles, mostly journal articles. It is in quantitative and qualitative terms the greatest descendant or off-spring of Piagetian theory altogether (e.g., Oesterdiekhoff, 2013/1, 2021).

2. Archaic and modern human being

Social sciences and humanities need to know structures, main traits, and interna of human psyche as they manifest in culture and history, when they want to study human behavior, societies, and cultures. The most fundamental study of human psyche requires recourse to stage theory – a provision to generate fundamental research and knowledge concerning society and culture. Some Piagetian researchers had at least a hunch of this insight, albeit not distinctly formulated, when they started Piagetian cross-cultural psychology (PCCP). This branch of psychology originated in the 1930s and had its peak between 1950 and 1990, with more than 1.000 studies conducted, covering almost every culture and world region.

From the onset they discovered that archaic ethnicities remain stuck in the preoperational stage or in the concrete-operational stage, and do not reach the formal-operational stage. The latter one is liable to emerge only for people living under the influence of modern, industrial culture. This result was evidenced right across the whole range of logical, physical, social, and moral issues (e.g., Freitag, 1983; Havighurst y Neugarten, 1955; Dennis, 1943; Hallpike, 2004; Kearney et al., 1973; Dasen y Berry, 1974; Dasen, 1977; Kelly, 1977; Luria, 1982; Mogdil y Mogdil, 1976, vol. 8; Peluffo, 1962, 1967; Tulviste 1979).

PCCP accepted these results and took them for granted by 1975 roughly. Afterwards, these data happened to be ignored, falsified, and misinterpreted by the rising influence of universalism and relativism as described in the introduction.

However, neither the treacherous relativists nor the serious realists were capable to understand the pertinence of the data garnered. PCCP had actually found the data to formulate a general theory of psychogenesis, that what Comte, Elias, Werner, Habermas, and Piaget had intended to do - and nobody in the field even grasped that! In his own comment on PCCP Piaget (1974) even did not mention that field research has now proved of his early assumptions and has contributed to his main idea of using child psychology to describe the history of mind, sciences, and philosophy! He even after 1974 declared time and again that he is required to resort to the scrutiny of children to do the job instead of understanding that PCCP can study adults living in disadvantaged or traditional milieus to investigate archaic adults and psychogenesis! The recourse to substitutes is however superfluous when there are survivals available – nobody understood this simple matter of fact, at least Piaget himself!

C. Hallpike (1979) was the first to deliver an comprehensive overview on PCCP, to draw some first theoretical consequences, and to apply its results to base ethnology and to improve social sciences generally. He went into the right direction and presented the first breakthrough concerning the scrutiny of the “parallels” since 1926, since the seminal contribution of H. Werner (1948).

The structural-genetic theory program discerned that the lower stages cover the entirety of archaic psyche and that the adolescent stage of formal operations evolved late in history, characterizing the main patterns of the psyche of the modern human being as it inhabits and carries modern, industrial society. The new program described that everything that defines the psyche of the child has its counterpart in archaic psyche and that there is no gap between the psyche of the child and that of archaic human being. The “parallels” cover the whole range of psyche and worldview, leaving no space

for exceptions or gaps. Hallpike, however, deliberately refused to accept that the nature of the child is the formula to understand the nature of archaic human being, thus ignoring the quintessence of the whole research.

In the following I would like to give a very short overview concerning the “parallels”. Both children and archaic adults do not master hypothetico-deductive or syllogistic conclusions, their failure resulting from the same factors, indicating the lack of the adolescent stage (Luria, 1982; Cole y Scribner, 1974; Oesterdiekhoff, 2022; Piaget, 1959/1; Hallpike, 1979; Tulviste, 1979). Children very young and archaic people on especially low stages have only slightest abilities concerning counting and computing numbers if at all (Everett, 2008; Lévy-Bruhl, 1985; Oesterdiekhoff, 2011/1, 2013/1, 2018/2; Schultze, 1900). Children and archaic adults usually do not develop categories such as causality, chance, necessity, possibility, and probability upon the concrete-operational stage but remain stuck in the preoperational stage with this regard. They especially misinterpret causality in terms of intentions and actions, ignoring the concept of chance. More, they view possible or probable outcomes as those originating in moral or mystical, that is: necessary decisions (Evans-Pritchard, 1978; Hallpike, 1979; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923; Oesterdiekhoff, 2011/1, 2013/1; Peluffo, 1962; Piaget, 1969, y Inhelder 1975).

Both groups have the same attitude towards biological nature and physical environment. They ignore differences between living and inanimate phenomena, assigning life and consciousness also to dead matter. Children on the lowest stage of animistic thinking attribute life, personality, willpower, and capacity to carry out actions and magic to immovable or inanimate matter such as stones, mountains, waters, landscapes, and celestial bodies. The greatest part of archaic humankind shared this preoperational attitude fully, comparable to children aged three to seven. Totemism and nature religion, the worship of these inanimate phenomena, take root in this mentality of the preoperational child. The understanding of differences between living and dead matter is caused by the adolescent stage of formal operations, coming into being historically in the 17th century and biographically in modern teenagers in the second decade of life. The transformation from the divine and unchangeable moral law, governing nature and society likewise, to concepts, expressing distinctions between nature and society, manifest in discriminating concepts such as physical laws, legal laws, moral rules, and customs, provides the establishment of the adolescent stage likewise (Dennis, 1943; Havighurst y Neugarten, 1955; Lévy-Bruhl, 1971; Oesterdiekhoff, 2011/1, 2013/1, 2015/2, 2017/1; Piaget 1959/2, 1969; Tylor, 1871; Werner, 1948).

Children and archaic adults attribute consciousness and humanlike mind to plants and animals. Ancient peoples tend to worship plants and animals as if they were gods or punish them in case of damages resulting from their actual or fancied infringements. It was custom around the globe to try animals of all species in courtyards, to query, accuse, and to punish them, fully insinuating and assuming they had willpower, participation in human society, and moral responsibility to the same rate as humans do (Evans-Pritchard, 1978; Lévy-Bruhl, 1971; Frazer, 1994; Fortune, 1963; Oesterdiekhoff, 2009/3).

Every small child, irrespective of family and socialization background, believes in specters, ghosts, and monsters, due to its developmental stage of psyche and brain. Thus, the child’s psyche accounts to the omnipresence of belief in ghosts right across the whole premodern world, a belief abating and vanishing only in advanced modern peoples (Oesterdiekhoff, 2011/1, 2013/1; Frazer, 1994; Tylor, 1871; Schultze, 1900; Rosengren et al., 2000).

Both groups adhere to magical beliefs and practices. Both insinuate that practically every phenomenon can execute

magical power. Further, that will, words, rituals or invocation of ghosts have the power to materialize any wished occurrence whichever. For example, humans are believed to be able to magic rain, sunshine, fertility of plants, sickness or death inflicted on disliked humans, or whatever, whenever they want to (Evans-Pritchard, 1978; Frazer, 1994; Piaget, 1959/2; Rosengren et al., 2000; Oesterdiekhoff, 2011/1, 2013/1). Magic proves of the childlike mentality of premodern humankind with respect to all manifestations of psyche such as rationality, level of consciousness, sense for reality, sense for possibility and necessity, extent of wishful thinking, and rate of egocentrism.

Accordingly, both modern children by their sixth year and greatest parts of premodern humankind believed in metamorphosis, that is, that cats can transform to dogs, humans to stones, or ghosts in animals whenever they want and within a second, just by magic. Modern children aged seven or eight do not believe this anymore, as modern adult humans reject this belief in metamorphosis, too (De Vries, 1967; Fortune, 1963; Lévy-Bruhl, 1971; Frazer, 1994; Prentice et al., 1978; Rosengren et al., 2000; Oesterdiekhoff, 2020, 2015/2).

Both groups do not discriminate life and matter, psyche and physis, mental and real, subjective and objective. They spiritualize matter and materialize mental phenomena alike, confusing and blurring the borders between them. Only the adolescent stage of formal operations delineates the two groups of phenomena. Accordingly, both groups intermingle words with things, ideas with perceptions, and dreams with real incidents. Conceptual realism is the term that comprises these phenomena. For example, both preschool children and ancient humans conceive dreams as reports of actual occurrences, thus totally ignoring the illusionary and fanciful character of dreams. Both groups think that dreams are perceptions of occurrences or wanderings of their soul through a real world. Ancient humans continue in daytime actions that began in dreams or draw consequences in real life from incidents they allegedly observed in dreams. Thus, dreams can evince truths that are even more reliable as perceptions made awake. Dreams can reveal truths that must be higher estimated than eyewitnesses or rational advice (Piaget 1959/2, Hallpike, 1979; Kohlberg, 1974; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923; Oesterdiekhoff, 2015/2, 2019/1).

Both groups believe in “immanent justice”, praxis of ordeals and hazard games, eternal character of laws and customs, higher value of outcomes compared to intentions, and both groups support severe punishments. Everything Piaget had described concerning the morals of children, has its correspondence in ancient law and morals. Accordingly, the first two stages of moral thought of Kohlberg’s stage theory are those that comprise the moral stages of archaic humans. Empirical surveys evidenced the lack of the higher moral stages four and five in traditional or premodern ethnicities. The first two stages are those of modern children during their first decade, Kohlbergian research thus validating the description of the new theory program (Freitag, 1983; Hallpike, 2004; Kohlberg 1974, y Gilligan, 1971; Havighurst y Neugarten, 1955; Oesterdiekhoff, 2014/3, 2011/1, 2013/1; Piaget, 1932; Snarey, 1985).

The resemblances cover also the forms of religious, moral, political, and legal thinking and worldview. The structural-genetic theory program has collected the “parallels” right across the whole range of mind and world understanding, more than any other author or school had ever tried to. There is no gap between the psyche of the child and that of archaic human being. The identity encompasses even the understanding of smallest and seemingly immaterial phenomena such as the understanding of movements, winds, shadows, etc. (Oesterdiekhoff 2021, 2013/1).

3. Theory of the human being and anthropological conclusions

Stage theory delivers the fundamental theory of the psychogenesis of humankind, the fundamental theory of the psyche of archaic human being and of modern human being (and some intermediate forms) alike. The lower stages, especially the preoperational stage but partially also the concrete operational stage, furnish the key to understanding the psyche of peoples living as hunter and gatherers, as nomadic people, as peasant peoples, and as people inhabiting ancient and medieval civilizations right across the continents until the dawn of modern, industrial society. The adolescent stage of formal operations has been continuously evolving during the past centuries, beginning in smaller circles during the 17th century, disseminating during the 18th and 19th centuries initially in the West, then becoming modal stage in industrial and advanced societies, and finally spreading throughout the globe during the past few generations, with inevitable forerunners and backbenchers. Of course, even in some developing countries presently some percentages of people have not climbed on the adolescent stage but stay still on lower stages. Societies in history occupied as modal stages the stages 2, 3 and 4 respectively, and also intermediate stages and mixtures of two adjacent stages (Dasen, 1977, Freitag, 1983; Mogdil y Mogdil, 1976; Oesterdiekhoff, 2014/2, 2016/1, 2021; Peluffo, 1967).

Stage theory delivers the deepest and most pertinent knowledge possible about humans. It traces information about human values, mind, and worldview down to basic structures of human psyche. There are no psychological phenomena beneath stage structures to whom they could be reduced or referred. Therefore, stage theory has found the deepest ply of psychological phenomena that can be disclosed. The equation child's psyche = archaic human's psyche delivers therefore the deepest foundation of description and explanation. In fact, the structural-genetic theory program is the first theory in the history of sciences that has fully disclosed the truth about humans in history and about the psychogenetic advancement of humankind in history.

When one wants to obtain a full knowledge about ancient Egyptians, Chinese, Europeans, Africans, or Polynesians – one must be educated in developmental psychology and must know that especially the preoperational stage is the key to understanding of these peoples. When one only insinuates that there may be some isolated, modular and dispersed commonalities between lower stage structures and ancient mentalities, without measuring their extent and their depth, as all other Piagetian authors have done, then one has failed in understanding the very nature of the subject. Only the new program has defined that everything that stage theory has figured out to describe children is likewise the main pattern of archaic adults and that archaic humans remain stuck in lower stages concerning every aspect of psyche, consciousness, reason, and world understanding (logic, physics, social affairs, law, religion, morals, and arts) (Oesterdiekhoff 2021, 2016/1). For the first time in the history of sciences, real and irreducible foundations concerning the theory of the human being are released. Stage theory sidelines competing theories of the human being as evolutionary psychology, behaviorism, symbolic interactionism, rational choice, etc. by far as these theories cannot describe main patterns both of archaic and modern human beings.

Archaic adults are even more children than archaic and modern children are themselves! Archaic cultures are extravagant

and blossoming manifestations of the child's stages, whereas the archaic child has not fully developed the child's culture and the modern child is hampered by modern culture to live out its mentality. This seemingly weird thesis can be easily outlined and validated: Children conceive nature in animistic terms but do not adore plants, rivers, stones, and stars as gods. Children believe in magic but do not develop a rich and flamboyant culture with manifold magical practices such as shamanism, witchcraft, and sorcery. Children practice ordeals but do not establish a system of judiciary basing on ordeals as archaic humans have done. This list displaying that archaic adults are more childlike as both archaic and modern children are, could be exceedingly extended. Modern children are blockaded by a culture that forces them to subjugate manifestations of preoperationality and to surmount lower stages alike, whereas archaic adults could live out and exhibit their mentality unhindered – till missionaries and other people arrived, coming from overseas (Oesterdiekhoff 2021).

However, children aged three to six cannot survive without assistance, having already problems to cook a food, to brush their teeth, or to make out a tent. Preoperational adults have been able to live in every climate zone, to sustain their livelihood by hunting, gathering, farming, trading, seafaring, etc. Children and archaic adults share common stage structures and therefore main traits of psyche and consciousness but diverge from each other by extent of knowledge and life experience. Archaic adults may stay on stages typical for children aged five or eight respectively, but they stay on these stages not for a year only but for decades. Therefore, they learned from their family and culture a great many of techniques they can apply for their own good. Correspondingly, research discriminates between quantitative and qualitative dimensions of learning. Stages define the qualitative dimensions (common aspects), life experience earmarks the quantitative dimensions (divergent aspects). However, knowledge acquired, and techniques learned must fall into the range of the lower stages. Archaic humans do not learn abilities providing the formal-operational stage (Hallpike, 1979; Oesterdiekhoff, 2016/1, 2021).

Research did not find that archaic humans respectively archaic societies, in which world region ever, established the adolescent stage of formal operations. Thus, the mere phenomenon of the lower stages as modal stage in ancient civilizations proves of the existence of closed developmental windows. Accordingly, there are no reports documenting ancient people to surpass animism, magical beliefs, conceptual realism, etc., at anytime during their adulthood. When they did not develop the adolescent stage in their second decade of life, they didn't usher it in later sections of their life. Developmental windows are open in youth and must be used and exploited then, given sufficient incentives and appropriate cultural background. Only modern, industrial culture can enforce and enable people to attain the adolescent stage. Accordingly, PCCP showed that archaic children, after moving from traditional to modern settlements early in their childhood, develop according to advanced stages, while their counterparts at home do not. Culture and socialization determine if and how developmental windows can be used – not racial or hereditary factors. Primary socialisation by mothers and especially school education ramp up stage advancements, while features of illiterate societies do not force to surmount the child's stages (Mogdil y Mogdil, 1976; Dasen y Berry, 1974; Dasen, 1977; Everett, 2008; Freitag, 1983; Kearney, 1973; Kelly, 1977; Luria, 1982; Oesterdiekhoff, 2013/1, 2011/1, 2016/1, 2021).

4. Psychogenesis, macro-history, and world history

The preoperational stage of archaic human being is the cause and the source of the main features of archaic or ancient systems of culture, worldview, customs, politics, law, sciences, philosophy, religion, morals, and arts. It is not only possible, but it is moreover necessary to refer these collective, social, and cultural systems to certain anthropological stage structures. Only stage theory can provide the full explanation to these systems. Accordingly, hitherto social sciences and humanities have only given incomplete, superficial, or wrong explanations of them, incapable to find the proper key and theoretical foundation. They all have not understood or discovered the very foundation of the main patterns of ancient worldview, politics, law, sciences, philosophy, religion, morals, and arts. They did not understand the very nature of ancient society and culture.

Accordingly, the world history of these collective systems has gone through the same stages as those known from ontogenetic stage theory. They all started in ancient times with the preoperational stage, evolved through the concrete-operational and finally through the formal-operational stage. The preoperational stage has covered the greatest bulk of these collective systems in ancient and medieval times, irrespective of culture, world region, continent, and special time periods. The concrete operational stage may have played some part in some cultures and in some collective systems respectively. Worldview, culture, politics, law, sciences, philosophy, religion, morals, and arts attained stepwise the formal operational stage since the 17th century, ramping up and unfolding this stage to their higher forms during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Or, conversely formulated, the advent of the formal-operational stage transformed the collective systems during the early modern times, thus creating the age of Enlightenment and the modern world.

The collective systems evolved through these stages because nations and peoples carrying and making these systems had evolved through these stages likewise. Had the nations not advanced, the systems wouldn't have evolved, too. It is this dialectic, this circular and screwlike loop between culture and people, that helps explain this progress and advancement. People develop culture to higher forms, and so culture can socialize and enable people to attain higher stages, too. The Hegel-Marx-Dialectic of Sein and Bewusstsein is here helpful to understand the process.

Jean Piaget had written only one monograph concerning the reconstruction of history in terms of stages. He showed that the rise of the physical sciences in the 17th century was the consequence of the emergence of the formal operations, while the previous pre-scientific concepts were shaped by the lower stages (Piaget y Garcia, 1989). S. Gablik (1976) interpreted art history likewise in terms of stages, showing that only since the Renaissance painting developed the concrete operational stage, while ancient and Asian painting never surmounted the preoperational stage. The transformation from "intellectual realism" to "visual realism" takes place in modern children with 9 years of age, in Europe's history during the Renaissance period. The stage of visual realism accounts to the representation of three-dimensional space and drawing using certain perspectives, thus enhancing the realism of depiction exceedingly. D. LePan (1989) reinterpreted the development of British literature from ancient to modern times in terms of stage theory, showing that complex plots, characterized by features such as arousing expectations, describing various locations, presenting manifold storylines, using different times, and describing of motives and inner mental worlds evolved late in literature, providing the emergence of the adolescent stage. C. Radding (1985) applied stage theory to the description of culture of the European Middle Ages, focusing on the study of judicial ordeals, debate of the universals, and authority concepts, while Dux (1989) reconstructed the history of time understandings. C. Hallpike (2004) reconstructed the history of morals in terms of stage

theory. However, he ignored too many phenomena that should have been considered as for example cannibalism, slavery, and punishment law.

These studies are sufficient to have proven of the feasibility and reliability of application of stage theory to history. Despite they all have only preliminary character and do not cover even the fields they have investigated to a satisfactory extent. The only comprehensive accomplishment of the task is given by some 800 pages devoted to the full explanation of the history of religion in terms of stage theory, showing that ancestor worship, nature religion, mythology, belief in hell and heaven, etc. are manifestations of lower stages. Disenchantment, rise of invisible and emaciated religion, of agnosticism and atheism expresses then recent establishments of the adolescent stage (Oesterdiekhoff, forthcoming, 2018/3, 2019/2, 2013/1, 2011/1).

Apart from religion, the structural-genetic theory program has reconstructed the history of culture, society, politics, worldview, law, philosophy, sciences, morals, and arts, not in the length of monographs but in that of book chapters and articles respectively. I will give a short overview on the reconstruction work accomplished, documented in 14 books and about 130 articles so far.

The transformation from the magical-animistic worldview to the mechanical and empirical worldview took place during the Age of Enlightenment, abating the belief in witches, sorcerers, and ghosts, in consequence of the emergence of the adolescent stage (Oesterdiekhoff 2020, 2015/1, 2015/2, 2013/1, 2011/1). This again is connected to the rise of the physical sciences during the 17th and 18th centuries, likewise originating in the adolescent stage (Oesterdiekhoff 2017/1).

Ancient philosophy is characterized by animism, magic, artificialism, and theology. Plato's philosophy and Aristotle's physics base on animistic ideas known from stage theory. The child's conceptual realism accounts to Plato's theory of ideas, that spiritualizes matter and materializes ideas likewise, as did the medieval theory of universals. The early modern philosophy, starting with Descartes' discrimination of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, surmounts likewise conceptual realism and magical-animistic worldview, thus eliminating ancient metaphysics both in theory of mind and of universe, being manifestation of the adolescent stage (Oesterdiekhoff 2013/1, 2011/1, 2016/2, y Girndt 2022).

The history of law and jurisprudence also follows stages described by Piagetian theory. The child's belief in "immanent justice", that is belief in the obedience of nature and incidents towards moral rules, explains the ancient and medieval praxis of ordeals and hazard games in courtyards. Older children surmount this belief as did the enlightened humankind since the 14th century, with some survivals remaining up to the 19th century in Europe and in backward regions by yesterday or even today. Medieval humans accused animals before courtyards, corresponding to the preschool child's belief animals have humanlike mental power and participate fully at human society, knowing everything what's happening in family and neighborhood. Ancient humans take laws as divine, holy, and unchangeable, as something made by God and therefore not liable to alternations devised by human decisions. Legal laws have thus some physical features as if they were physical laws, whereas these again are conceived as consequence of obedience to divine ordinances. Stage theory has identified this confusion of morals and physics as manifestation of the child's psyche. Both children and archaic adults tend to "objective responsibility", that is, to focus consequences and outcomes of incidents, overlooking,

underrating, or ignoring motives and intentions. Both ancient legislation and jurisprudence weighs consequences higher than intentions as do children very young. The situation improves when children and jurisprudence establish the adolescent stage (Oesterdiekhoff 2011/1, 2013/1, 2009/3, 2014/3).

Children prefer autocracy and reject democracy not only because they conceive rules as eternal and divine but also in consequence of the greater simplicity of the understanding autocracy and unilinear rulership. The adolescent stage is the prerequisite to the evolution of democracy and liberty rights (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg y Gilligan, 1971). The historical transformation from autocracy to democracy, from political disorder and arbitrariness to the rule of law, and from bondage to liberty rights is caused by evolution of the adolescent stage. The new program is the first theory to have outlined and described these connections at length, thus contributing new foundations to the political sciences (Oesterdiekhoff, 2015/3, 2011/1, 2013/1).

Piaget and Kohlberg have described the growth of moral thought in the child, the transformation from a law-and-order to a humane moral. The new program has described that humankind went through the same stages. The transformation from a sadistic to a humane punishment law, from slavery to liberty, and from brutal to humane treatment of strangers is caused by the rise of empathy, conscience, and perspective-taking. The abolishment of ancient arena games and of cannibalism are likewise manifestations of the evolution of morals (Oesterdiekhoff, 2017/3, 2009/2, 2011/1, 2013/1).

The new program has also contributed to the explanation of the history of fine arts and language (Oesterdiekhoff 2018/2, 2013/1, y Hummell 2019).

Accordingly, it is impossible to understand foundations of ancient and premodern societies without use of developmental psychology. They exist and live in totally different mental worlds, disclosable only by application of stage theory. Modern, industrial society evolved resulting from the emergence of the adolescent stage of formal operations. Modern, industrial society is made by the evolution of sciences, industrial technologies, age of Enlightenment, humanism, democracy, and rule of law. These main patterns of modern society are apparently manifestations of the adolescent stage. Industrial technologies could evolve only from the physical sciences, they again emerged from the adolescent stage. Accordingly, sciences, technologies, and economic growth are born in the adolescent stage. Age of Enlightenment, democratic revolution, and humanism took their root likewise in the rise of formal operations. Modern, industrial society manifests therefore a new stage of culture and civilization, a higher stage of rationality and humanism than premodern or traditional cultures. It is born in transformations from the child's stages to those of modern adults, in stage transformations measurable in terms of child psychology (Oesterdiekhoff, 2014/1, 2013/1, 2011/1, y Hummell y Rösen 2020).

5. The structural-genetic theory program, social sciences and humanities

Some Piagetian authors knew only that there are some resemblances between children and archaic adults. They all were not able to furnish the proper foundations, definitions, and delineations concerning these resemblances, and remained necessarily at the surface. They all underrated the role of stage theory in reconstructing history and in yielding the single possible general foundation to all humanities and social sciences (Oesterdiekhoff 2016/3, 2016/1, 2013/2, 2021).

The new program has made the greatest discovery ever attained in the whole history of the human and social disciplines, the discovery of the full childlike nature of archaic human being. Everything stage theory has recognized as pattern of the child's psyche has its full correspondence in the psyche of archaic human being. The similarities respectively the correspondences cover the whole range of psyche, personality, mind, consciousness, and world understanding, leaving no space for any gulfs or gaps. This is surely the strangest, the weirdest, and most remarkable phenomenon in history. Accordingly, modern human being is not a replica of Stone Age human being but a historical exception, a unique and rare form of human existence, continuously and stepwise metamorphosing during the past centuries like a butterfly from a caterpillar.

In fact, the new program has measured and described the huge distance between archaic and modern human beings, the alien and distant traits of archaic human beings. Now the deepest and irreducible foundations of the psychogenetic advancement of humankind can be described. There are no layers beneath those of stage structures anymore to whom this description could be reduced in future. This is the bottom and will remain the bottom. Future progress in sciences, won by neurology or psychology, cannot further reduce stage structures to more fundamental structures because there simply do not exist structures beneath stage structures. The new program has disclosed the truth about the human being as he has existed in history from the Stone Ages to present times. It has furnished the most fundamental theory of the human being, of psychogenesis, and of history of mentalities.

It inherits positions held by Piaget, Werner, Elias, and Comte, who emphasized the role of child psychology, too. It inherits the approaches outlined by Wundt, Cassirer, Jaynes, Frazer, Tylor, Lévy-Bruhl, Gebser, and others, who described psychogenetic advancements without recourse to child psychology. It devastates positions of universalism and relativism that have mostly dominated social sciences, not only in the past 50 years. It completely refutes approaches combined with names such as Lévi-Strauss, Jahoda, Cole, Berry, Boas, Winch, Duerr, and others (Oesterdiekhoff 2017/2, 2015/1).

The new insights do not only revolutionize the theory of the human being but also the theory of history. It has been encompassingly and thoroughly shown that stage theory is the overarching and fundamental theory of the history of society, culture, politics, law, sciences, philosophy, morals, religion, and arts. The fundamental trajectories of these cultural developments are only disclosable by consequent and substantial reduction to stage structures. Other Piagetian authors did not understand that stage theory is the theory to disclose the entirety of these trajectories. There is no full understanding of ancient society, law, sciences, philosophy, morals, religion, and arts when these phenomena are not linked to tools provided by stage theory. The new program furnishes the fundamental theory of world history and long-term social change, including the rise of modern, industrial society (Oesterdiekhoff 2014/2).

Seen from this vantage point of studying history, the new program inherits especially approaches procured by Wundt, Comte, Tylor, Durkheim, Weber, Elias, Gebser, and others, who earmarked already psychological advancements. It dwarfs materialistic positions held by Wallerstein, Sanderson, North, Marx, Jones, and other sociologists and economists prone to the consideration of solely institutional and economic factors.

The new program is the most outstanding follower of Piagetian theory altogether. Piaget wanted to develop child

psychology to avail it for the study of history but faltered in doing so consequently (Oesterdiekhoff, 2016/3). The new program accomplished that what Piaget had intended to do. Not the Neo-Piagetian theories are the heirs of Piagetian theory, it is the new program, a thesis, that Janet and Claparède would have approved of forthwith. Seen from the vantage point of the claim to reconstruct history in terms of developmental psychology, the new program is the direct follower of Wundt's folk psychology because he has done the most with this regard. Seen from the vantage point of sociology, the new program inherits mostly the positions of Comte, Weber, and Elias (Oesterdiekhoff, 2023, 2011/2, 2000). Seen from the vantage point of developmentalism, the new program aligns with the works of Tylor, Frazer, Lévy-Bruhl, and Piaget. These five authors and their approaches are not only the highlights of developmentalism - they are the best social sciences and humanities have to offer during their whole history (Oesterdiekhoff, 2015/1).

Sociological contributions provided by Beck, Bourdieu, Luhmann, Wallerstein, Coleman, etc. are no match for these five main representatives of developmentalism. On the whole, current social sciences and humanities know nothing about the core structures of the human being in history and of the fundamentals of the historical trajectories. Of course, this phenomenon of backwardness is explainable in terms of stage theory, too. Piaget himself explained that the progress of sciences is made by stage advancements (Piaget y Garcia, 1989). Beginners of social sciences, studying historical phenomena whichever, required to hone steadily their understanding, their instruments, and their theories, would finally and invariably land at the new program. The sober and thorough scrutiny for example of animism or of trials against animals leads quasi by itself to stage theory. As to the data available it would have been possible to establish the new program already in 1900, or 1930 at the latest. Why did it need almost a full century more to bring about an author capable to accomplish the task? Of course, the Flynn effect is the sole explanation to the phenomenon. It is an easier thing to develop higher stages (that is what modern human beings have actually done). It is more difficult to create a person to understand just that historical development. The whole affair does not depend on the availability of data, but on the difficulty to attain those high stages that enable to overlook the connections from a high tower. Around 1860, Darwin and Wallace were the only persons to have understood the evolution of life, something most scientists grasped only some decades later. 1905/1915, Einstein was the only one to have understood relativity theory, decades later most eminent physicists knew it and relied on it. Social sciences need more time to evolve and grasp. The structural-genetic theory program on the one side and the rest of social sciences on the other side differ from each other in terms of scientific stages in disfavor for the latter ones.

6. The structural-genetic theory program as general foundation to social sciences and humanities

Social sciences and humanities must cover historical dimensions as their objects studied have evolved during times. They all must face therefore historical changes involving psychogenetic stages. More, they all must study the human being as center of their research. A theory of the human being must be provided when laying the foundations to the echelon of human and social sciences. Some of them use to refer to rational choice, others to symbolic interactionism or interpretative approaches, and still others resort to introspection. Of course, only stage theory provides the full knowledge

about that what the human being was in history. In fact, stage theory can reformulate and revolutionize every single humanity and social science, psychogenesis being the phenomenon that penetrates and dominates them all. Therefore, stage theory sidelines the previous dominant approaches hitherto ruling these disciplines. It has been shown that the new program can rebuild these disciplines on the new pillars.

Moreover, as stage theory is pertinent to every single discipline, it can also debar the borders between these disciplines, showing commonalities between them originating in stage structures. Stage theory can outline that the different disciplines deal with distinct subjects that are nonetheless carried by underlying common structures. Accordingly, stage theory unifies the different disciplines under one common roof, providing them an overarching canopy and a common bottom. The new program is the first theory in the history of these disciplines to have accomplished this task successfully because there does not exist any other theory that could deliver this task. “Competing” theories such as rational choice or system theory or psychoanalysis have not the tool to unify all these disciplines because the range of their assumptions is too narrowly drawn or too superficial. Stage theory, however, delivers the theory of the human being that is required to cover the entirety of these disciplines, and to bring them under one roof. Consequently, the new program sidelines and supersedes theories that groped for general claims such as those of Luhmann, Hegel, Wundt, and Cassirer (Oesterdiekhoff, 2018/1, 2013/1, 2011/1).

Footnotes

¹ This article is the English version of the Spanish article: “El programa de la teoría genético-estructural como teoría fundamental de la historia, las ciencias sociales y las humanidades”, published in *Revista Macrohistoria* 5, diciembre 2023, pp. 75-98.

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