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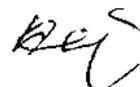
2004.06.21

Dear Richard:

It is high time to give you a commentary to your festschrift article for Felix Geyer, entitled „Thinking about Experience and Action". What myself I'm thinking of your excellent reflections will you find in the enclosure. Since my e-mail is now under suspicion of being virus-infected I'll not take the risk to distribute the virus among my addressees and send the paper, therefore, with regular mail.

I hope that your mediating / moderating activity in Croatia has been successful. I wish you and Elishka, also in Ruth's name, a splendid summer time and remain with kindest personal regards, cordially as ever,

Yours,



Enclosure <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The enclosure to this letter is Professor Alfred Locker's last substantive communication to me. Shortly after it was written he became ill and unable to write. He has died on 12 February 2005.

His photograph and partial bibliography is posted at <http://www.richardjung.cz/bert2.pdf> and the obituary I wrote for *Kybernetes* at 2005b.

He intended to publish a version of the enclosed commentary on my manuscript as a review of my "Thinking about experience and action" published in *Kybernetes*, 35, 3/4, pp. 347-359 and posted as 2004b.

**RICHARD JUNG:**

**„Thinking about Experience and Action"**

This is a condensed version of a life-long executed work; it cannot be briefly refereed. In the foreground stands the Theory of Action which the author tries to elaborate along strict conceptual distinctions. Some of these distinctions are really marvellous and immediately evident. A good example is the distinction between „res agens" and „res movens". Whereas the former is seen to act in its own semantic space, the latter is simply factually completely grasped and does not need any further interpretation. The same good distinction refers to „Idios" and „Xenos"; the former being the I itself, i.e. the Self (i.e. subject), the latter is something alien to the former, but may also act in the form of its prescribed conduct, whereas the former obviously exerts an action „in itself" (or „by itself"), being — in my view — self-determinant, as against the other-determinant of the „Xenos". The relation between the Selves and the world (including the Others) takes place as actions in a semantic space. This is very strongly and intuitively evident, but for the following topics it must be admitted that I possibly could have fallen prey to a misinterpretation, due to the difficulty of the problems outlined. However, it must be acknowledged that the whole treatise is characterized by a strict and stringent *conceptualization* whereby the author sagaciously performs several distinctions according to dichotomies, trichotomies and other thought operations able to lay bare his scientific edifice.

His aim is to construct a *Unified Theory of Action* for which he uses a method he calls phenomenological systems analysis; the former being seemingly more or less abstractly carried out, the latter obviously in relation to imaginatively tinted ref-

lections. On the other hand part of the theory is connected with functional analysis in the sense of modern physics. Another problem deals with groups of identifiable individuals, a third one with the action of collectives, i.e. aggregates where not all of the individuals involved can be identified. These foundations and the conceptual elaborations lead to a General Theory of Action. Here again phenomenology becomes important, whereby physiological and / or psychological systems are to be distinguished where the one species of systems is studied under the auspices of *energy*, the other conceived as permanently standing under the influence of *meaning*. The decision to be made between the two is primarily an epistemological, not an ontological one. But it is obvious that *ethical* considerations are implicitly contained in them (however, towards the end of his essay, J. quotes the categorical imperative expressly).

The author tries to visualize his approach by *tables* where combinatory operations and other methods, e.g. delinations ranging towards n-tupels etc, describe the cooperation and the combination between systems, their correspondences and rule transfer procedures becoming operative whenever physiological and psychological systems are to be compared.

Jung's Cybernetic Phenomenology is a continuation of Parsons' work on systems of meaning and systems of regulations. Parsons' definitions (a) „action is a relation between actor and situation" and (b) „a distribution of energy subject to specific constraints" is the basis for this. It is to be underscored that the def. refuses to accept empirically untenable ideas such as intentionality and goals. It rejects also pre-scientific „romantic" functionalism with teleological fallacies. The functional explana-

tion is on the contrary extremely simple and apparently relies on mathematics. (However, one must not take offense on the fact, that nowhere in Jung's work explicitly appears the problem of freedom; except under the guise of *decision*, and this is very important. Since decision is the ground for performing an act — so-to-say an instance of activation-energy prior to the act itself — the difference in meaning of {2} two terms, being akin towards each other and nonetheless sharply opposing, viz. behavior and acting („Verhalten" and „Handeln" in German) is decisive; and it is contained as two levels, the lower denoting behavior, the higher action, in the concept of Action itself; action can be „handling, „managing" or simply „acting"; There is indeed a realm — so-to-say pre-scientific, a term also used by J., — in which pondering („Erwagen"), judging („Beurteilen") and an anticipatory hypothesis on the possible / probable outcome of the result of acting is the subject matter of reflection pertaining to action as her first elements.

For the Fundamental Problem a *solution* is given; it consists in the answer to the question how an (a) actor and a situation (b) regulates action. For the solution of the problem, the theory provides (a) the conceptualization of boundary conditions that are possible sources of disturbance, (b) the *intervening* variables are analyzed and (c) the set of *essential* variables may assume extremum values that regulate the various processes. From this basis a set of three special theories of action can be developed. The *three* processes are embedded in the common format of the theory but require special mechanisms etc. These special theories refer to (a) orientation, (b) motivation and (c) decision. Each theory employs different explanatory structures and a different principle for regulating the processes. The latter must be specified. The *essen-*

*tial* variables of the three processes (orientation, motivation, decision) express the fundamental properties (J. speaks mainly of propensities, something which shows tendency, not fully accomplished reaction) of action; managing, respectively uncertainty, tension and risk. To comment on this is not difficult: the distinction between variables of first and second rank is common; its application sounds sensible.

The theory will eventually be able to become a theory of integration and disintegration. Again *three* special theories come to the fore, whereby each describes an analytically distinguishable process of action, expressing a different propensity (inclination) of action; the three are not only sufficient, but also necessary for regulating action. An interesting remark is made by J viz. that life would exist if and only if the system is coping with difficulties; this contradicts common opinion — which attributes to „life“ a static character of „Being“ („Seinscharakter“) —, but has a certain justification from an operative point of view: in that to the maintenance of a system as such compulsorily belongs the *conflict* with forces threatening (on the one hand) the system to decay, but re-enforcing it, on the other hand, to gathering all its power together to resist the deleterious influence coming from its environment. (This can be also a matter of „dosis“, it is known that small doses of poisons even further life; so-called Arndt-Schulz-law).

The interplay of the three special processes forms a *general* process; processes of authenticity should outweigh those of inauthenticity; the systemic limits will thus be constituted. Again *two* ways of reducing the discrepancy between the state of the organism and its definition as an actor, for which again *two* ways are proposed.

The outcome of the project leads the author into a Postmodern Systems Theory (which, possibly, has much in common with Alfred's TCST, Transclassical Systems Theory, bearing, however, an ambiguous name in that it could be mixed up with G. Günther's approach). J. sees in his project the world and its system's view generated through life history, he sees its trajectory in physical space time as a *swath* of possibilities (i.e. forms) in a field of indefiniteness. The term „swath" (with the double sense of „Schwade" and „Wickelband", according to the Britannica Dictionary a row or line of cut grass, with the other meaning: „cut a wide swath": accomplish much) is impressive, since it could give a self-description of Richard's work.

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The paper ends with two equally impressive figures the one of which showing the possible transition from the indefinite side of reality to a „bottle neck" of the definite opening again into a novel indefiniteness; the other showing something similar – but not identical – in the swath of relevance, with again this 3step movement. The one deals with the modal status of the actor's epistemic experience, the other with the actor's telic experience (with use of the term „telic" Richard does obviously not mean a contradiction to his criticism, mentioned above, of a teleological world view).

In sum a paper to be judged as imposing life-work having come to fruition. Not only that R.J. is to be congratulated, I may assure him to have much learned from it – with the proviso, indeed, that I did hopefully not somewhere or somehow miss the point.