THE NORMALISTIC SUBJECT AND ITS CURVES: ON THE SYMBOLIC VISUALIZATION OF ORIENTEERING DATA

TRANSLATED BY MIRKO M. HALL

Jürgen Link

First, a current discursive event that deserves to be called more than simply "molecular": on September 2, 2000, the (Springer) *Bildzeitung* headlined its issue with a downward-moving grey, white, and red serpentine curve that illustrated the rate of the euro from its beginning at \$1.18 to its then current position at \$.90. On the curve, three small golden-blue euros, in each of which a crack is forming, roll into the valley of the curve—at the bottom a large euro pathetically explodes into six fragments (after waiting undamaged and predominantly golden at the beginning of its ride in the upper left). The background is pitch black and carries the text: "So many men who introduced it failed in work and life"—and in the large bold print typical for the *Bildzeitung*: "Curse over the Euro?" Finally, we see four face portraits alongside the curve with block texts like "Shot himself dead;" "4 years imprisonment;" "Corruption, resignation;" and "Agonizing death from cancer."

We are dealing with a discursive event to the extent that the *Bildzeitung* has for a long time resisted the general trend of the German and international print media of disseminating the "normalistic curve-landscape." In the following paper, I would like to follow this landscape with several thoughts. Only very recently did the *Bildzeitung* begin to publish selected economic data and popularity tests in the form of curves. For decades, other publications regularly disseminated the infographs of the agency Globus Kartendienst or those of other partly homespun productions. Since the 1990s at the latest,

these presses published complex curve-landscapes in all of the eco-
nomic pages at least, from which they spread out into other columns.
Ernst Schulte-Holtey has shown that entirely new media like *Focus*
and *Die Woche* originated in the nineties in Germany, and were con-
sciously conceived—at least subdominantly—as "publications of
curve-landscapes."[1] If one inquires about the possible reasons for the
reservation of the *Bildzeitung*, one could cite the traditional credo of
many pop journalists more than reasons of cost. These journalists
shun all statistics because of their mathematical connotations and
because they believe that only large photos of individual people can
make possible a heartfelt identification. Since its beginning in 1986,
the surprising success of the American illustrated newspaper *USA
Today* shows that this credo cannot certainly be absolute or even
generally true: with this publication, we are dealing—very much like
Focus and *Die Woche*—with a distinct publication of curve-landscapes
with large infographics like the euro curve. These infographics appear

The front page of the famous German "political tabloid" *Bild* shows the plunge of the euro during
the year 2000. It asks: "Curse of the Euro?" showing the photos of four leading politicians commit-
ted to the creation of the single European currency who were jailed for corruption, committed sui-
cide, or died.

on the front page of almost every economics section and on many front pages of the general news. Hence, processes of subjective identification can also take place with curves that condense statistical knowledge, an idea that the editorial staff of the *Bildzeitung* was the last to grasp. Interestingly, this insight could have come through another field entirely, one apparently very far away from economics and politics: in any case, for some time now the *Bildzeitung* has also subscribed to the trend that originated in the United States of representing the horoscope in the form of a curve. Here, the curve (swinging simply between "+" and "-") shows one's relative degree of "happiness." Such a procedure naturally rests on the presupposition that the "normal" reader already lives "in a curve-form"—that is, the reader perceives its existential *feeling* like an economic rate between ups and downs.

The euro curve is a regression curve, that is, a negative *growth* curve. It is explicitly mythologized in the version of the *Bildzeitung*: A curse that hovers over gold and money has been known from the beginning in Western modernity and especially since Richard Wagner—actually the four leading European politicians function under this curse as modern Nibelungen. However, as the examples of both *USA Today* and the horoscope curve show, such a mythologizing act of a traditionalistic type is obviously not necessary to subjectivize curve-landscapes and, in an emphatic sense, to make the curve-landscape consumable for subjects. A "dramatically" falling curve (as it is called) is already explicitly anthropomorphic—just like a steeply ascending one. The euro curve can also be interpreted as fatal without recourse to a traditional myth—and precisely as a *crash*: here, modern recipients think less of Icarus than of a contamination out of *airplane* and *computer*. This modern collective symbolism[2] (as I call it) generates entirely spontaneous *modern* myths, whose special nature I will later address more closely. These myths have a much greater *impact* on the modern public than archaic ones. The *crash* curve of the euro concretely signals the danger of denormalization: such a *crash* appears to be no longer normal. But as we all know from our everyday experiences, the criterion of normality is the deciding criterion of orienteering in modern Western societies—just as its deciding borders are limits of normality, that is, borders between the normal and

IHR GLÜCKS-HOROSKOP

17. März 2001
Schauspieler
Kurt Russel,
„Fisch", wird heute 50.

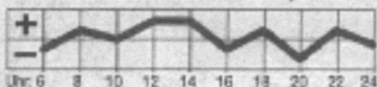Glücks-Karve für alle, die heute Geburtstag haben

Mär Apr Mai Jun Jul Aug Sep Okt Nov Dez Jan Feb
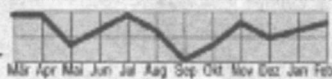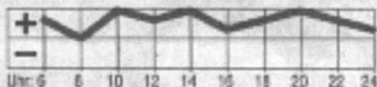

WIDDER — Warten wird belohnt
21.3.-20.4.

Liebe: Ihr langes Warten wird endlich belohnt. Sie erleben herrliche Abendstunden. **Geld:** Jemand möchte Ihnen jeden Wunsch erfüllen. **Astro-Tipp:** Nutzen Sie den Abend für einen Theaterbesuch. ☎ 0190/24 23 01*
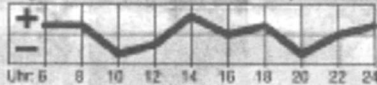
Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

WAAGE — Zärtlichkeit zaubert
24.9.-23.10.

Liebe: Sie setzen heute auf Zärtlichkeit. So verzaubern Sie den Partner. **Geld:** Rechnungen sollten Sie jetzt sehr genau prüfen. **Astro-Tipp:** Jemand in Ihrer Nähe spielt nicht immer mit offenen Karten. ☎ 0190/24 23 07*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

STIER — Sehnsucht nach Freiheit
21.4.-20.5.

Liebe: Sie sehnen sich nach mehr Freiheit. Ihr Partner wird das verstehen. **Geld:** Absoluter Glückstag. Sie können mit einem Geschenk rechnen. **Astro-Tipp:** Vermeiden Sie juristischen Streit. ☎ 0190/24 23 02*
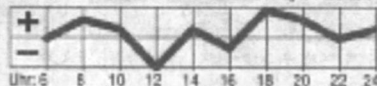
Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

SKORPION — Zeit zum Denken
24.10.-22.11.

Liebe: Jemand hat eine wichtige Nachricht für Sie. Nehmen Sie sich Zeit, darüber nachzudenken. **Geld:** Lassen Sie sich doch mal einladen. **Astro-Tipp:** Sie sollten nicht jedes Wort auf die Goldwaage legen. ☎ 0190/24 23 08*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

ZWILLINGE — Fleiß lohnt sich
21.5.-21.6.

Liebe: Auf einen ganz bestimmten Menschen wirken Sie absolut unwiderstehlich. **Geld:** Ihre Kreativität und Ihr Fleiß zahlen sich bald aus. **Astro-Tipp:** Auch Sie sind nicht unbegrenzt leistungsfähig. ☎ 0190/24 23 05*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24
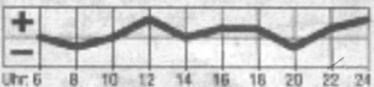
SCHÜTZE — Anruf erwartet
23.11.-21.12.

Liebe: Jemand wartet sehnsüchtig auf Ihren Anruf. **Geld:** Vermeiden Sie Flüchtigkeitsfehler. Es könnte teuer werden. **Astro-Tipp:** Wenn Sie einen Wohnungswechsel planen: Jetzt ist die Zeit günstig. ☎ 0190/24 23 09*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

KREBS — Kuss muss sein
22.6.-22.7.

Liebe: Ein zart hingehauchter Kuss kann den Partner sehr glücklich machen. **Geld:** Mit Ihrem Scharfsinn entlarven Sie die Schwächen eines Vertrages. **Astro-Tipp:** Sie brauchen jetzt sehr viel Vitamine. ☎ 0190/24 23 04*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

STEINBOCK — Betörender Charme
22.12.-20.1.

Liebe: Ihr Charme und Ihre Schönheit sind betörend. Die Herzen fliegen Ihnen zu. **Geld:** Eisenhart vergleichen Sie die Preise. **Astro-Tipp:** Sie sollten bei einer Debatte nicht zu ungeduldig sein. ☎ 0190/24 23 10*

Uhr: 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24
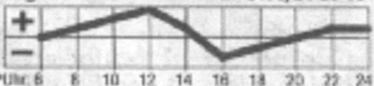
the abnormal. In such societies, doubt-free "needs for action" [*Hand-lungsbedarf*] are only established in cases where a limit of normality is exceeded.

Hence, the modern drama of the euro curve lies very simply in the question of whether the euro has already fallen short of or whether it approaches its lower limit of normality. Here, questions about the chances of normalization hang together automatically: can a so-called *bottom building* succeed, and where, and when?[3] In this context, the information about the four politicians is of course entirely relevant and precisely as the (so-called) "psychological factors" of the trends of curves. I will return to this.

For the moment, I must present the concept of "normalism" in the tightest condensation:[4] Under "normalism," one understands the entirety of all discursive as well as practically intervening procedures, dispositives, instances, and institutions, through which "normalities" are produced and reproduced in modern societies. The dispositives of large-scale data processing are especially constitutive of normalism, that is, statistical dispositives in the widest sense: the level of data collection includes the dispositive of polling, the level of evaluation includes the dispositive of mathematical-statistical distribution theories, and the level of practical intervention includes all dispositives of social redistribution. Here, the normalities that are produced and reproduced are fundamentally characterized by "averaged" distributions (i.e., a wide middle "normal range" with a thick composition and two generally symmetric "abnormal" extreme zones with a thin composition). These distributions approach more ideal-typically[5] a "symbolic Gauss-like distribution." According to this account, these dispositives of a regular, systematic, and all-encompassing data processing represent the historical a priori of normalism, which correspondingly would have first originated in the eighteenth century. In connection to Foucault, I use the paradoxical term *historical a priori* in the sense of the emergence of a fundamentally culturally constitutive complex of knowledge that was not previously available and that opens many new possibilities for a long-lasting epoch (*longue durée*). Hence, in a cultural-historical view, my thesis implies that it is worthwhile not to forcibly equate modern "normalities" with universal "custominariness," "ordinariness," and "everyday-ness," but rather to denote their cultural-historical specificity or to

single this specificity out. "Normalities" would then be specific to the extent that they are not typically put into place merely spontaneously nor as the result of explicitly normative prescriptions, but rather as the result of the targeted "normalizations" of disturbances of specific dynamics of modern growth—whereby these disturbances are decoded on the basis of the all-encompassing and continuing statistical data processing that results in the specific courses of curves that signal "denormalization." Such an example would be the creation of "normal" demographic, economic, or psychic "growth" through each specific "normalizing" intervention. I will address this more concretely in the following pages. Moreover, the previous example would have made clear that the concept of normalism fundamentally relates to sociocultural (and not to "natural") "normalities." If, from the outset, biology and especially medicine have played a constitutive role in normalism, then the concept also stresses precisely the dominant cultural dimension of biological and medical "normalities." This concept is also critically opposed to the conception of "natural normalities" in the spirit of ideological criticism.

What I call the "curve-landscape"—that is, the totality of infographics in the service of data processing—is perhaps the most important dispositive of normalism. The founding year of the curve-landscape could be considered 1786, when William Playfair's *The Commercial and Political Atlas* was published with the first modern infographs of *growth* curves and landscapes of even more competing curves. When concerned with essential elements, the euro curve of the *Bildzeitung* represents a mere reproduction of these infographs. The history of infographs is only beginning to be researched and still promises many interesting discoveries.[6] I must limit myself here to the current synchrony, which one can grasp as a mature dispositive, especially since the deployment of computers.

If we ask ourselves what above all characterizes normalistic data processing and curve-landscapes, then it is the homogenization of objects, which again produces comparability and quantifiability on a mass basis. This process is borrowed from physics, so that Adolphe Quételet (also an important name in the history of infographics) could speak of a *"Physique sociale."*[7] The early demographic, anthropometric, and economic curve-landscapes deal with the data processing of homogeneous mass events like births, deaths, suicides, body

sizes, and so on. The more large-scale this process is, the better the mathematical-statistical analysis grasps the data, with its determination of averages, distribution properties, breadth of dissemination, and development trends over time. Since Quételet had reduced his data on soldiers—through massive manipulations—to the formula of normal distribution (i.e., the Gauss curve),[8] this very curve appeared as the royal road in most of the newly constructed curve-landscapes— above all, regarding the corporeal and intellectual achievements up to Binet and his "intelligence quotient." Darwin's cousin Francis Galton, one of the most important theorists and practitioners of normalism in the belle époque before and around 1900, indeed saw in normal distribution a "cosmic" in-surance [Ver-sicherung][9] against every form of chaos and anarchy:

> I know of scarcely anything so apt to impress the imagination as the wonderful form of cosmic order expressed by the "Law of Frequency of Error." The law would have been personified by the Greeks and deified, if they had known it. It reigns with serenity and in complete self-effacement amidst the wildest confusion. The huger the mob, and the greater the apparent anarchy, the more perfect is its sway. It is the supreme law of Unreason. Whenever a large sample of chaotic element are taken in hand and marshaled in order of their magnitude, an unsuspected and most beautiful form of regularity proves to have been latent all along. The tops of the marshaled row form a flowing curve of invariable proportions; and each element, as it is sorted into place, finds, as it were, a pre-ordained niche, accurately adapted to it.[10]

Here, the normalistic statistical scientist, Galton—in terms of the subjective application and mythologization of the curve-landscape— does not fall short of the Bildzeitung. Certainly the Gauss curve was— at least in that weakened form, which I call the "symbolic Gauss-like curve" [Gaußoidkurve]—more likely capable of being implemented in static conditions of data than in powerfully dynamic ones. However, the most important function of normalism, which is only a fundamentally modern occurrence, might lie precisely in the orienteering in-surance against the inherent risks of the hyperdynamic trends of curves that are frequently described as symbolically "exponential." Galton was absolutely fixated on the forced growth of human faculties and was for this reason so interested in geniuses and ingenuity. In his speculative studies on the heredity of faculties,

Galton came upon the regression curve of ingenuity, which subsequently tended to revert first-class faculties to the average in inheritance. Since that time, one can say that both theoretical and practical normalism in all normal-fields search primarily for the conditions and regularities of *normal growth*, even if an enduring exponential growth should not be possible. In the service of this search, there is, finally, everything that concerns tinkering with curve-landscapes.

If it is true that the normalistic curve-landscape prepares the quasi-physical and apparently high-grade "objective" conditions of data for highly "subjective" application and orienteering of modern individuals (particularly, orienteering for action), then its constitutive structure appears to be based on a polar tension: between reification and personal existence, between masses and individuals, between natural-scientific laws and free decisions or elective actions. This tension appears at first glance nearly unresolvable—the contradiction seems impossible to mediate. From a statistical perspective, the "fate" of a specific individual "atom" is indeed absolutely uninteresting. Francis Galton constructed a simulation apparatus (the famous "Galton board" [Quincunx]) by which—through a sieve-like labyrinth of nails that are arranged in regular succession, and through which a ball deviates with equal probability to the left or right—the normal distribution of the mass of a ball is illustrated.[11] In my study, I have suggested expanding the "Galton board" to a general normalistic redistribution simulator called a "Galton sieve."[12] In all these models, individuals are represented through homogenous balls; these models are only interested in mass fate: According to the laws of probability, a specific percentage of the balls will fall into a marginal position that symbolizes "abnormality," while the vast majority of the balls will find themselves situated within the middle *normal range*. Therefore, from an objective perspective, each individual *random walk* of each arbitrary ball is always already "in order." However, the situation will be different if we proceed to the subjective interior perspective of a specific concrete ball, as it can be simulated by literary or filmic narrations, for example. Then a *random walk* that ends in a marginal position represents the stressful fate of a possibly tragic process of *dropping out* like that of Franz Biberkopf in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. This text is exemplary of a dominant and fascinating

type of modernity that concerns a large identity-forming power, which I have analyzed as a narration type of the *(not) normal ride*.[13]

One can regard the normalistic curve-landscape—understood as the totality of infographics in which the objective conditions of data are symbolically subjectivized—as a kind of semi-finished product of the above-mentioned type of narration. Therefore, the question can be asked: how, in detail, does this transfer of the objective into the subjective proceed? Already, mathematical curves can convey anthropomorphic connotations of an aesthetic kind—as soon as we are dealing with statistical curves with social, medical, psychological (and so forth) object relations, there automatically exists a massive overdetermination through the system of the currently dominant collective symbolism in whose field the entire curve-landscape functions. On the basis of Freud's dream theory, one understands "overdetermination" as multiple determinations or the multiple symbolic function of a pictorial or textual element—that is to say, a kind of polyphony. Since the collapse of the East Bloc and the subsequent unprecedented and almost exponential market boom, we are accustomed to the bombardment of phallically stretched arrows of growth in nearly all contexts. These arrows (which can also be realized as upward-stretched thumbs) condense the normalistic signals that radiate from clearly ascending growth-curves. They thereby connect a semantic function of information (for example, "The T-stock has risen") with an affective function of appeal to the subject ("I can feel a winner"—or, also: "Now I'll finally pull myself together and buy stocks so that my mood will likewise rise sharply"). I also characterize this concretization of the symbolic appeal by the receiving subject as a "pragmatic application by the subject," whereby the symbolic complex of text and picture serves as a model that is "taken into the inner self" or "introjected" (Freud) by the receiving subject. This subject never receives mere "facts," as the relevant media would like to think, but rather simultaneously receives (so to speak) psychodynamic prostheses: The application of ascending curves expresses itself as euphoric-optimistic and those of falling curves as a feeling [*Stimmung*] of the subject that has a depressive-pessimistic nuance. Discourse analysis is able to reconstruct in detail what the media vaguely characterizes as the "psychology of economics" or claims
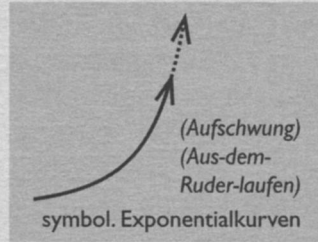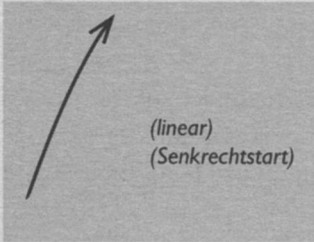
from a purely empirical standpoint in polls about the current distribution of optimism and pessimism of a population.

Examples show further typical elements of collective symbolism. Under this, I would like to understand the totality of all forms of "figurality" [*Bildlichkeit*] of a culture—hence, not only symbols in the sense of Goethe and Freud, but also allegories, emblems, illustrative models, comparison, metaphors, metonyms, and synecdoches. In addition to allegories, all other symbolic personifications—including typical friend and foe images—belong to collective symbolism. As understood through my argument, the normalistic structures of data are subjectivized through infographs in many respects. On the one hand, the curves are completed through symbolic figures, that is, subjects with positive and negative appeals of identification. On the other hand, the curves themselves send out positive and negative appeals to the subject in which they mark and offer for "application" zones of supernormal chance, subnormal risks (hence, positive and negative abnormalities) and in-suring normality. To the extent that the figures of the infographs connote both actions and conflicts, and to the extent that the curves connote processes in themselves, both fragments and building blocks of modern myths automatically connect themselves to the collective symbolism.[14] Here, I use the structuralist concept of myth: In the sense of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes, myth is a story with symbolic actors whose fate offers orienteering marks and contributions of meaning for the receiving subject. Hence, we are not primarily dealing with the circumstance that such a myth is fictive or "not based on fact"; rather it concerns myth's function as a model of application. Moreover, I stress the specifying adjective "modern": not just as a "curse" as in the Nibelungen myth, but rather as a "view into the maelstrom of the downward spiral and into the abyss of denormalization." Just as the ancient soothsayers studied the flight of birds, so do modern "analysts" interrogate these curves for specific patterns (mostly simplified with letter forms named "V-formation," "W-formation," "M-formation," and so on), out of which they think they can draw prognoses about normality or the denormalization of future courses. With these prognoses, the meaning of the individual fates of curves is placed in the perspective of the central modern myth of the *endless growing snake* (of *progress*). This myth continually understands temporary

Kurvenlandschaft (›innerer Bildschirm‹)

Normalistische Basis-Kurven

growth-Kurven

(linear)
(Senkrechtstart)

(Aufschwung)
(Aus-dem-
Ruder-laufen)

symbol. Exponentialkurven

Regressions-Kurven

(linear)
(Absturz)

symbol. Entropie

S- und Schlangen-Kurven

gelängtes S

(Plafond/Deckel)
(weiche Landung)
(Ende Fahnenstange)

endlose Schlange

(sanfte Welle)
(roller coaster)

horizontale Schlange

Abwärtsspirale
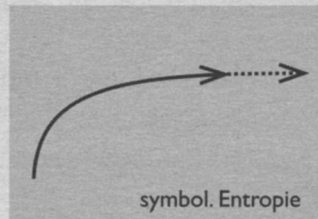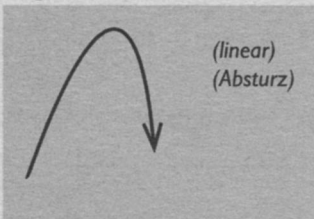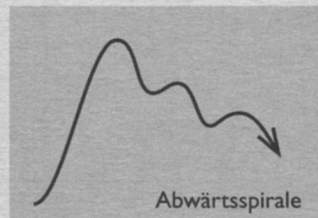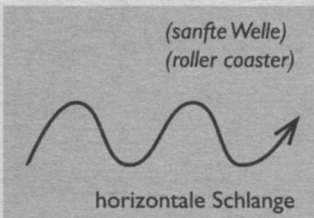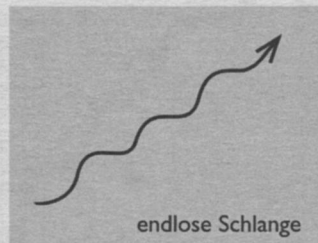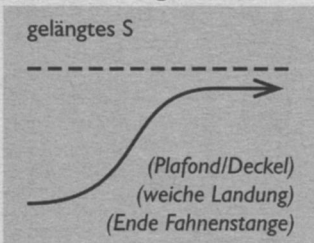
"Landscape of basic normalistic curves" (normalistic "curvescape"?). Growth—
Regression—Logistic curve.

downswings as merely trampolines for large future *upswings* (typical for this are the metaphors of *bottom building*, *resilience*, and *bouncing back* in the American terminology of analysts). The main function of the myth lies, therefore, in the in-surance of a nonetheless resonating fear of denormalization and an irreversible *crash*, as it connotatively radiates out of each longer *downward spiral* (i.e., a longer downward-directed WM-formation).

Especially exemplary for the normalistic subjectivization of objective conditions of data are the representations of subjects that appear to "ride" on curves and that attempt to bend their curves like unruly horses in the desired direction. Typical here is the effort of a subject to again "pull upward" a crashing curve in which a kind of "tug" [*Ruck*] is symbolized (which was made famous through the former German federal president Roman Herzog). This action illustrates most suggestively the influence of a subjective "will" on an objective tendency. If one comprehends the totality of such a subjective *ride on curves* and extrapolates them onto the curve-landscape in

Es geht um die Richtung   waz-Zeichnung: Waldemar Mandze

Former chancellor Kohl, riding a graph of plummeting popularity and trying to bounce back.

its large-scale totality, then normalistic subjectivity stands out as a phenomenon that is "stretched out on curves" and whose subjective fates generate themselves on the basis of occurrences of the curve-landscape (*vertical start, upswing, turning point, tug, downhill run, hard or soft landing, roller coaster, downward spiral, crash, normalization,* and so on). All of these occurrences or fates can be related interdiscursively not merely to economics, but also, in a like manner, to sociocultural and especially psychological normal-fields (i.e., *personal growth*). Thus, this type of normalistic subjectivity lives in its own curve-landscape, which serves as a field for orienteering, exploration, and experience—even as a complete living space and world. In Heidegger, this space is called "care" [*Sorge*] in its ahistorical and anthropological abstraction. In my study, I have assumed that one would have to emphasize the connotation "welfare" [*Fürsorge*] to find again the topicality and historicity of normalism.[15] When one does this, the phenomenon can even be described somewhat more precisely—as I likewise attempt to do here by way of the curve-landscape.

In today's print and electronic visual media, the economic curve-landscapes are arranged with the greatest frequency, exposure, and technical differentiation. On the basis of my research, I would like to venture the thesis that this supposed esoteric art of the "analysts" revolves predominantly around curve-landscapes: to first simulate the most plausible prognostic corridors of a medium-term *normal growth* and, second, to find out (likewise prognostically) the units with the strongest *supernormal growth*. Third, the analysts should naturally serve as an early warning system against risks of denormalization. In this respect, we are dealing with correctly determining the location of the gradient of the medium-term *normal growth,* together with the latitude of its normal corridor for fluctuations upward and downward, so that the amplitudes and patterns of movement of the normal *endless growing snake* can be differentiated from denormalizing deflections. For this purpose, an always more differentiated dispositive serves the field of average growth curves, which are based on different-sized *time windows*. The fundamental dead-end of these dispositives lies in the fact that exponential growth breaks out from the normal snake of growth toward the top; therefore, it would have to trigger an alarm of denormalization—but instead this action must be ritually celebrated with a popping champagne cork.

In my view, I must stress that such economic curve-landscapes always already exceed the special knowledge of a special discourse and convey numerous interdiscursive, and as a rule, collective-symbolic connotations, which then also function very similarly in other fields like social, psychic, and everyday behavior. Below I have summarized the typical collective-symbolic denotations and connotations of today's curve-landscapes.

Concerning noneconomic normalistic curve-landscapes, which are the most interesting under my subject-theoretical premises, I can only briefly discuss here a few examples. The demographic curve-landscapes belong to the oldest and radiate an appeal of power for application still today—above all those of identification and counteridentification, especially in the field of mass migrations. In the individual field, the "figure" [Linie] delivers one of the most important examples of normalistic self-regulation: On the basis of standard and limiting values like "normal weight" and "ideal weight," the

,Schleppern' Kampf angesagt
Rückgang der Asylbewerberzahl reicht Regierung nicht

Asylbewerber in Deutschland

438 200
322 600
256 100
193 100
121 300
103 100
99 700
57 400

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993
INDEX PUNK 7351   ab 1991 Gesamtdeutschland

BONN (ap) Der Rückgang der Asylbewerberzahlen um 56 Prozent als Folge der schärferen Gesetze reicht der Bundesregierung noch nicht aus.

Selbst bei der Abnahme von monatlich über 30 000 auf rund 14 000 sei die Bewerberzahl noch zu hoch, sagte der parlamentarische Innen-Staatssekretär Lintner im Bundestag. Jetzt müsse es darum gehen, den illegalen Zustrom von Ausländern wirksam zu unterbinden. Nach den Worten von Lintner soll eine weitere Verminde-

rung durch mehr Personal an den Außengrenzen der Europäischen Union und durch Einsatz moderner Technik erreicht werden.

Auch gehe es darum, mit flankierenden Maßnahmen die Tätigkeit professioneller Schlepperbanden zu unterbinden, die aus Gewinnsucht Menschenhandel betrieben.

Der Rückgang der Bewerberzahlen wurde von Sprechern der Koalition ebenso wie der SPD-Opposition als Erfolg des Asyl-Kompromisses bezeichnet.

Taking on the *Schlepper* (a slang and hate word for people who "deal" with illegal immigrants and asylum seekers in Germany).

individual can determine his position in the normal field of bodily appearance as more or less "normal" and, on this basis, then—should the situation arise—attempt to intervene by way of normalization. A large part of health and women's magazines serve this correspond- ing normal field and frequently through the deployment of info- graphics. In this case, it might be quite clear how far the effects of normalistic "objective facts" radiate out into the core of subjectivity (i.e., the feelings of self and self-worth).

Recently, much work has been done on medical curve-landscapes in both a narrow and wider sense, including much already from the theoretical perspective of normalism. As examples, I cite the contri- butions of Sybilla Nikolow and Rolf Parr in a recently anthology from

A   Freitag, 20. November 1981 **WAZ**

Ausländer–Andrang

Ausländer in der Bundes- republik Deutschland in Millionen

1963 — 1,1
1969 — 2,4
1975 — 4,1
1981 — 4,6

Kiel 6
Hamburg 9
Bremen 7
Hannover 10
Bielefeld 9
West-Berlin 12
Duisburg 14
Düsseldorf 15
Köln 15
Bonn 8
Kassel 10
Frankfurt 23
Saarbrücken 6
Mannheim 15
Nürnberg 13
Stuttgart 18
Augsburg 13
München 17

Ausländer- Anteil in Prozent

4,63 Millionen Ausländer lebten Ende Sep- tember 1981 nach Angaben des Statistischen Bundesamtes in der Bundesrepublik Deutsch- land. Ihre Zahl hat sich in kaum 20 Jahren ver- vierfacht. Der jährliche Zuwachs hat sich zwar seit dem Anwerbestopp von 1973 für Arbeit- nehmer aus Staaten, die nicht der EG angehö- ren, deutlich verringert. Trotzdem steigt die Zahl der Ausländer weiter – insbesondere durch nachkommende Familienangehörige und hohe Geburtenrate vor allem der Türken. Sie allein stellen heute mit 1,5 Millionen 33 vH der ausländischen Bevölkerung; es folgen Jugosla-

wen und Italiener mit je 14 vH und Griechen mit sieben vH.

Die Probleme, die sich hinter diesen Zahlen verbergen, werden besonders deutlich in den Großstädten im Süden und Westen der Bun- desrepublik, wo sich die Ausländer konzentrie- ren. In Frankfurt hat der Ausländeranteil die Rekordmarke von 23 vH erreicht, in Stuttgart 18 vH. Es gibt Stadtviertel, wo ganze Straßenzüge nur von Türken bewohnt sind, und Grundschul- klassen, in denen mehr türkische als deutsche Kinder sitzen.

Globus

the Dortmund research group, "Life in Curve-Landscapes—Flexible Normalism."[16] Sybilla Nikolow investigated the curve-landscapes of the hygiene exhibitions in Dresden, which have been very popular since 1900. These exhibitions of subjectivizing curves sought to illustrate, for example, the positive effect of hygiene on infant mortality or on the reduction of epidemics.[17] Rolf Parr shows how fever curves in literature and television series have become the basis of modern narratives and myths.[18] The use of the motif of the fever curve in Thomas Mann's novel, *The Magic Mountain*, is exemplary for the ambivalence of the upper limit of normality and of supernormality between positive increases of intensity (also of affects and "nerves") and the denormalizing *maelstrom* of *addiction* and *morbidness*. This zone of ambivalence between intensification and denormalization through

"First Step into Misery." Graph of registered first users of hard drugs.

addiction is apparently objectively mapped out in many infographs. Such curve landscapes serve normalistic subjects as a means of orien-teer-ing, whereby they weigh a heightened intensity against the risks of denormalization. They can also draw up individual calculations of the positive exploration of limits of normality or in-suring adjusting.

For the historically informed discourse analyst, it is always again odd to see how much the same culture—which has achieved "atom-ization" and "anonymization" through statistical mass distributions, average calculations, and large-scale trends—strives to forcibly re-subjectivize its subjectless breakthroughs. In this way, the dressing up of curves with face portraits is in no way limited to the *Bildzeitung*. In the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, there is a regular column called "Heads Behind the Curves," where the portrait of a manager is al-ways depicted next to the curve of his stock. The context between the curve and the portrait is developed in the text through substantial deployments of collective symbolism. If one grasps these infographic references en masse and in the average, my thesis might be plausi-ble that modern normalistic subjectivity cannot be divided from the respective individual life-curve of a person—be it explicitly tangi-ble in the media or implicitly integrated as a balance of optimism/ pessimism or *winner/loser* into an entirely new type of "inwardness."

In the end, I must briefly state that the subjective character appeal of the normalistic curve-landscape can function within the framework of two ideal-typically discursive strategies in polar oppo-sition. This appeal can first be imperatively directed toward narrow normal values: that is, "authoritarian" (Adorno/Horkheimer), "re-pressive" (Marcuse), "other-directed" (Riesman), and "disciplining-training" (Foucault). Through this discursive strategy, the *normal range* is established as narrowly as possible and is protected against the risks of denormalization through both symbolically and prag-matically robust limits of normality. I am speaking in this case of "protonormalism." Thereby, the symbolic weighting of limits of nor-mality takes place through the articulation of prenormalistic ideolo-gies like those of "natural law." The pragmatic emphasis on limits of normality takes place above all through the link with juridical normativism (excluding specific varieties of "abnormality" as "crim-inal" and confinement behind the walls of jail as real existing limits of normality) or with medical indications in the widest sense (excluding

other varieties of "abnormality" as "intellectually or spiritually devi-
ating" behind the walls of institutions). Hence, the more restricted the
normal range becomes, the "wider" the respective field of "abnor-
malities" must appear.

From a purely theoretical perspective, the principle of constancy
and continuity of the normal curve allows an exactly opposite dis-
cursive strategy: If the transition between normality and abnormality
is continuous, constant, and fluid, then the limits of normality could
also be placed "outside" of the "middle" as widely as possible, and
thereby the normal range would be spread out to the maximum. In
this case, large parts of the protonormalistic "abnormal" allow them-
selves to be completely integrated, while other parts can still be
symbolically included in wide transition zones. A flexible structure
for appealing to the subject corresponds to the strategy I call flexible-
normalistic: The curve-landscape now serves not as an imperative,
but rather as orienteering help for self-normalization. Hence, the sub-
ject is not fixed on pregiven normal values, but rather it can attempt
to profit from the game of statistical compensation. The clash be-
tween both normalistic discursive strategies represents an important
key to understanding the history of normalism, which I cannot ad-
dress here. In rough summary, the flexible strategy in the leading
Western countries after World War II could have reached cultural
hegemony, even though protonormalism still continues to play a role
(since about 2000, protonormalism appears to be playing a larger role
again). Michel Foucault's concept of "normalization," which is indeed
closely connected to "disciplining" and "training," corresponds pri-
marily to protonormalism.

In our infographs, both strategies reveal their difference through
the opposition of either narrow or wide *corridors* for trends of *normal
growth*, as well as between either distinct or blurred markings of the
limits of normality. The first tactic is exemplified by linking threaten-
ing exponential curves with enemy pictures as they usually appear in
the immigration statistics of "rich" countries, for example. Specific
types of "zero solutions" and "stop demands" (like "zero tolerance
of criminality," "zero budget deficit," "zero diet," and "immigration
stop," for example) are in general symptomatic for protonormalism,
which theoretically remains a constant option for normalism in the
future. Frequently, the symbolic opposite pair *hard versus soft* signals

the opposition of both the normalistic main strategies of protonormalism and of flexible normalism: typically protonormalism does not want to acknowledge discussions of *soft* drugs.[19]

Without doubt, one can no longer imagine the media without infographic images of curve-landscapes that already belong to its normality by the extent of their large number. Less banal is my thesis that these images must be characterized more precisely as "normalistic" insofar as we are dealing with socioculturally necessary "nourishment for the modern subject." Through this "nourishment," these subjects are produced and reproduced foremost normalistically so that they can culturally orient themselves and can pursue their own normalization (as it were) in a new variety of "inner direction" that Riesman did not anticipate. Those normal-fields that are currently leading in the curve-landscape are of high relevance for the synchronic and diachronic analysis of contemporary culture—just as the question of where (in each sector) the limits of normality are placed, how they are disputed, and which of the two normalistic strategies is thereby favored. The "normal images" of the curve-landscape are therefore always both the means and the result of the many-stranded processes of normalization—they are, in fact, "normalistic images."
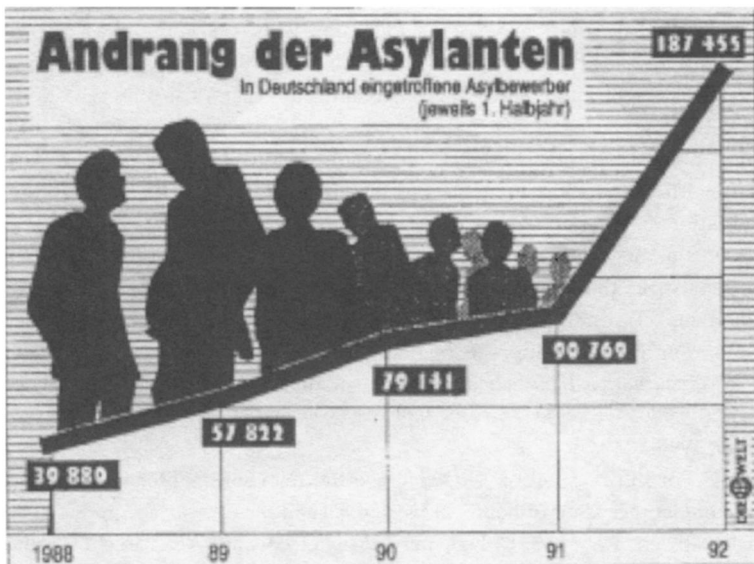
"Rush of Asylum Seekers" ("Asylanten" is a pejorative expression).

Notes

Jürgen Link, "Das 'normalistische' Subjekt und seine Kurven. Zur symbolischen Visualisierung orientierender Daten," in *Ganz normale Bilder. Historische Beiträge zur visuellen Herstellung von Selbstverständlichkeit*, ed. David Gugerli and Barbara Orland (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2002), 107–28. All translations of material quoted within the text, unless otherwise noted, are by Mirko M. Hall.

    1. Ernst Schulte-Holtey, "Über Kurvenlandschaften in Printmedien. Am Beispiel der Hamburger Zeitung *Die Woche*," in *Infographiken, Medien, Normalisierung. Zur Kartographie politisch-sozialer Landschaften*, ed. Ute Gerhard, Jürgen Link, and Ernst Schulte-Holtey (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), 93–114.

    2. See Jürgen Link, "Literaturanalyse als Interdiskursanalyse. Am Beispiel des Ursprungs literarischer Symbolik in der Kollektivsymbolik," in *Diskurstheorien und Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. J. Fohrmann and H. Müller (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 284–307; Jürgen Link and Ursula Link-Heer, "Diskurs/Interdiskurs und Literaturanalyse," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 77 (1990): 88–99; Axel Drews, Ute Gehard, and Jürgen Link, "Moderne Kollektivsymbolik. Eine diskurstheoretisch orientierte Einführung mit Auswahlbibliographie," *IASL* 1 (1985): 256–375; and Frank Becker, Ute Gerhard, and Jürgen Link, "Moderne Kollektivsymbolik (Teil II)," *IASL* 22, no. 1 (1997): 70–154.

    3. A corresponding collective symbolism has also entered the German language: "A Workable Soil Has Now Formed on Wall Street" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 11, 2001) or "Searching for the Soil" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 12, 2001). If one looks back to the previous German version of the "soil" symbol (the "soil of legality" [*Rechtsboden*] of 1848 as well as "Blood and Soil"), then this totally virtual "curve of the soil" represents something like a micrological cultural revolution.

    4. For a thorough as well as systematic and historical representation, see Jürgen Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus. Wie Normalität produziert wird*, 2nd ed. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999). One should consult this study especially with regard to the short references to historical developments in the following observations.

    5. Link uses this adverb to refer to Max Weber's "ideal type" (i.e., an analytical construct that helps to ascertain the similarities and deviations of cultural phenomena). Trans.

    6. For the time being, see the references in Edward R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (Cheshire: Graphics Press, 1983) and Thomas Knieper, *Infographiken. Das visuelle Informationspotential der Tageszeitung* (Munich: Fischer, 1995).

    7. For information on Quételet, see the relevant chapter in the standard works of Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett, ed. Robert S. Cohen, intro. Michel Foucault (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston: D. Reidel, 1978), and Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

8. For criticism, see Michel Tort, *Le quotient intellectuel* (Paris: Maspéro, 1974).

9. In hyphenating the term "Ver-sicherung," Link is emphasizing both the noun "insurance" [Versicherung] and the verb "to become safe" [ver-sichern]. Trans.

10. Francis Galton, *Natural Inheritance* (London: Macmillian, 1889), 66.

11. See Joachim Kunert, Astrid Montag, and Sigrid Pöhlmann, "Das Galton-brett und die Glockenkurve," in *Infographiken, Medien, Normalisierung. Zur Kartographie politisch-sozialer Landschaften*, ed. Ute Gerhard, Jürgen Link, and Ernst Schulte-Holtey (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), 25–54.

12. See Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus*, 244ff.

13. See ibid., 57ff., 359ff.

14. For the structure of modern myths and their connection with collective symbolism, see Rolf Parr. The author is a member of the Dortmund research group of the German Research Association named "Life in Curve-Landscapes—Flexible Normalism," where he leads a subsidiary project. The work of this project has considerably influenced the problematic of my contribution here.

15. See Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus*, 289ff.

16. See ibid.

17. Sybilla Nikolow, "Der statistische Blick auf Krankheit und Gesundheit. Kurvenlandschaften' in Gesundheitsausstellungen am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland," in *Infographiken, Medien, Normalisierung. Zur Kartographie politisch-sozialer Landschaften*, ed. Ute Gerhard, Jürgen Link, and Ernst Schulte-Holtey (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), 223–41.

18. Rolf Parr, "Krankenthermometrie und Normalismus. Erzählte (Fieber-) Kurven von Thomas Mann bis zu fieberkurven im Fernsehen," in *Infographiken, Medien, Normalisierung. Zur Kartographie politisch-sozialer Landschaften*, ed. Ute Gerhard, Jürgen Link, and Ernst Schulte-Holtey (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), 243–61. See also the history of the fever curve in Volker Hess's foundational study *Der wohltemperierte Mensch. Wissenschaft und Alltag des Fiebermessens (1850–1900)* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2000).

19. Proclamations of "zero" and "stop" are all antigradualistic confessions of clearly protonormalistic symptoms. In front of me is a youth magazine—entitled "Life in Line" (2000)—from the Austrian province of Kärnten governed by Jörg Haider. In this magazine, Haider strongly avoids any explicit differentiation between "hard" and "soft" drugs; there is also no mention of a softening "pluralistic" standpoint. Above all, it is surely unnecessary to stress on this occasion that the difference between protonormalism and flexible normalism can be decided by mere preferences. Consequently, flexible work hours for many of those affected are supposedly less healthy than those that are fixed (i.e., protonormalistic!)—and whether euthanasia and genetic-technical engineering (i.e., the flexibilization of the beginning and end of life) can produce a happier human society remains to be seen.