

CRITICAL THEORY

SELECTED ESSAYS

MAX HORKHEIMER



CRITICAL THEORY

Selected Essays

MAX HORKHEIMER

TRANSLATED BY
MATTHEW J. O'CONNELL AND OTHERS

CONTINUUM • NEW YORK

2002

The Continuum Publishing Company
370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

The essays in this volume originally appeared in book form in the collection *Kritische Theorie* by Max Horkheimer, vols. I and II, © 1968 by S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main.

English translation copyright © 1972 by Herder and Herder, Inc., for all essays except "Art and Mass Culture" and "The Social Function of Philosophy," which originally appeared in English in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of The Continuum Publishing Corporation.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Horkheimer, Max, 1895–1973.

Critical theory.

Translation of: *Kritische Theorie*.

"Essays from the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*"—Pref.

Reprint. Originally published: New York: Seabury Press, [1972]

Includes bibliographical references.

Contents: Introduction by Stanley Aronowitz—Notes on science and the crisis—Materialism and metaphysics— [etc.]

1. Philosophy—Addresses, essays, lectures.

I. Title.

B3279.H8472E5 1982 193 81-22226

ISBN 0-8264-0083-3 (pbk.) AACR2

(previously ISBN 0-8164-9272-7)

CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION BY STANLEY ARONOWITZ	xi
NOTES ON SCIENCE AND THE CRISIS	3
MATERIALISM AND METAPHYSICS	10
AUTHORITY AND THE FAMILY	47
THOUGHTS ON RELIGION	129
THE LATEST ATTACK ON METAPHYSICS	132
TRADITIONAL AND CRITICAL THEORY	188
POSTSCRIPT	244
THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY	253
ART AND MASS CULTURE	273

PREFACE

I HAVE always been convinced that a man should publish only those ideas which he can defend without reservation, and I have therefore hesitated to reissue these long-out-of-print essays from the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. These early philosophical efforts would require a more exact formulation today. More than that, they are dominated by economic and political ideas which no longer have any direct application; to relate them properly to the present situation requires careful reflection. If I have nonetheless agreed to a reissue, it has been with the hope that the scholarly men who urged it upon me and who are aware of the problems created by the long interval since the original publication will help prevent any ill results. Men of good will want to draw conclusions for political action from the critical theory. Yet there is no fixed method for doing this; the only universal prescription is that one must have insight into one's own responsibility. Thoughtless and dogmatic application of the critical theory to practice in changed historical circumstances can only accelerate the very process which the theory aimed at denouncing. All those seriously involved in the critical theory, including Adorno, who developed it with me, are in agreement on this point.

In the first half of the century proletarian revolts could plausibly be expected in the European countries, passing as they were through crisis and inflation. The idea that in the early thirties the united workers, along with the intelligentsia, could bar the way to National Socialism was not mere wishful thinking. At the beginning of the national barbarism and especially at the time of its terrible sway, the desire for freedom was identical with rebellion against those interior and exterior forces

which had in part occasioned the rise of the future murderers, in part called for it or at least allowed it. Fascism became respectable. The industrially advanced, so-called developed States (to say nothing of Stalinist Russia) went to war with Germany not because of Hitler's reign of terror, which they regarded as an internal affair, but from motives of power politics. Policy both in Germany and abroad was at one in agreement on the Eastern strategy, and therefore hatred of fascism was identical with hatred of the ruling cliques.

Since the years after World War II the idea of the growing wretchedness of the workers, out of which Marx saw rebellion and revolution emerging as a transitional step to the reign of freedom, has for long periods become abstract and illusory, and at least as out of date as the ideologies despised by the young. The living conditions of laborers and employees at the time of the *Communist Manifesto* were the outcome of open oppression. Today they are, instead, motives for trade union organization and for discussion between dominant economic and political groups. The revolutionary thrust of the proletariat has long since become realistic action within the framework of society. In the minds of men at least, the proletariat has been integrated into society.

The doctrine of Marx and Engels, though still indispensable for understanding the dynamics of society, can no longer explain the domestic development and foreign relations of the nations. The impulses that motivate me today as they did in the past are no less opposed to the obviously inconsistent claim to apply aggressive concepts such as class domination and imperialism to capitalist countries alone and not to allegedly communist ones as well, than they are to the correlative prejudices of others. Socialism, the idea of democracy realized in its true meaning, has long since been perverted into an instrument of manipulation in the Diamat countries, just as the Christian message was perverted during the blood-bath centuries of Christendom. Even the condemnation of the United States' fateful invasion of Asia contradicts the critical theory and is for Europeans a case of going along with the crowd, unless those who condemn it also con-

demn the terrible raids men make upon one another with the connivance of the hostile great powers.

In this world, things are complicated and are decided by many factors. We should look at problems from different aspects, not from just one alone. Only those who are subjective, one-sided and superficial in their approach to problems will smugly issue orders or directives the moment they arrive on the scene, without considering the circumstances, without viewing things in their entirety (their history and their present state as a whole) and without getting to the essence of things (their nature and the internal relations between one thing and another). Such people are bound to trip and fall.

The man who thus insists on the need for political thinking is not a democratic parliamentarian, but Mao Tse-tung in his active period. He appeals in turn to Lenin's maxim: "In order really to know an object, we must embrace, study, all its sides, all its connections and 'mediations.'"¹ Narrow-minded agreement with nationalisms just because they use Marxist slogans is not preferable to applauding the might of their opponents.

The fearful events which accompany the trend to a rationalized, automated, totally managed world (including revolts within the military or infiltrations into disputed territory and the defense against these) are part of the power-bloc struggle in an age when all sides have reached the same technological level. The age tends to eliminate every vestige of even a relative autonomy for the individual. Under liberalism the citizen could within limits develop his own potentialities; his destiny was within limits determined by his own activity. That all should have this possibility was what was meant by the demand for freedom and justice. As society changes, however, an increase in one of these two is usually matched by a decrease in the other; the centralized regulation of life, the kind of administration which plans every detail, the so-called strict rationalization prove historically to be a compromise. During the National So-

1. *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, ed. by Stuart Schram (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968).

cialist period it was already clear that totalitarian government was not an accident but a symptom of the way society was going. The perfecting of technology, the spread of commerce and communication, the growth of population all drive society towards stricter organization. Opposition, however despairing, is itself co-opted into the very development it had hoped to counteract. Nonetheless, to give voice to what one knows and thereby perhaps to avert new terror remain the right of a man who is still really alive

Not a few of the impulses which motivate me are related to those of present-day youth: desire for a better life and the right kind of society, unwillingness to adapt to the present order of things. I also share their doubts about the educational value of our schools, colleges, and universities. The difference between us has to do with the violence practiced by the young, which plays into the hands of their otherwise impotent opponents. An open declaration that even a dubious democracy, for all its defects, is always better than the dictatorship which would inevitably result from a revolution today, seems to me necessary for the sake of truth. Despite her adherence to the Russian Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg, whom so many students venerate, said fifty years ago that "the remedy which Trotsky and Lenin have found, the elimination of democracy as such, is worse than the disease it is supposed to cure."² To protect, preserve, and, where possible, extend the limited and ephemeral freedom of the individual in the face of the growing threat to it is far more urgent a task than to issue abstract denunciations of it or to endanger it by actions that have no hope of success. In totalitarian countries youth is struggling precisely for that autonomy which is under permanent threat in nontotalitarian countries. Whatever the reasons offered in justification, for the left to help the advance of a totalitarian bureaucracy is a pseudorevolutionary act, and for the right to support the tendency to terrorism is a pseudoconservative act. As recent history proves, both tendencies are really more closely related to each other than

2. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution/Leninism or Marxism?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 62.

PREFACE

to the ideas to which they appeal for support. On the other hand, a true conservatism which takes man's spiritual heritage seriously is more closely related to the revolutionary mentality, which does not simply reject that heritage but absorbs it into a new synthesis, than it is to the radicalism of the Right which seeks to eliminate them both.

This book is offered as a documentation. In my view, the rejection of idealist philosophy and the acceptance, with historical materialism, of the termination of man's prehistory as the goal to be striven for was the theoretical alternative to resignation in the face of the terror-marked trend to a totally managed world. Metaphysical pessimism, always an implicit element in every genuinely materialist philosophy, had always been congenial to me. My first acquaintance with philosophy came through Schopenhauer; my relation to Hegel and Marx and my desire to understand and change social reality have not obliterated my experience of his philosophy, despite the political opposition between these men. The better, the right kind of society is a goal which has a sense of guilt entwined about it. Since the end of the War, however, the goal has become obscured. Society is in a new phase. The upper stratum is typically represented no longer by competing entrepreneurs but by managements, combines, committees. The material situation of the dependent classes gives rise to political and psychological tendencies which are different from those of the earlier proletariat. Individuals, like classes, are now being integrated into society. In such circumstances, to judge the so-called free world by its own concept of itself, to take a critical attitude towards it and yet to stand by its ideas, and to defend it against fascism, Stalinist, Hitlerian, or any other, is the right and duty of every thinking man. Despite its dangerous potential, despite all the injustice that marks its course both at home and abroad, the free world is at the moment still an island in space and time, and its destruction in the ocean of rule by violence would also mean the destruction of the culture of which the critical theory is a part. To link these essays with my own current position on these matters is one motive for their reissue.

Apart from stylistic corrections and a few omissions the essays are published here in their original form. Except for "Authority and the Family" they all appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, published first at Leipzig, later at Paris. Even after the Institute for Social Studies had, with the help of Nicholas Murray Butler, become connected with Columbia University, New York, where most of the essays were written, the journal continued to be published by Alcan in Paris. Material in the journal was written almost exclusively in German. We were convinced that the German language was in better hands in the small circle of men who made up the Institute than it was in the Third Reich. When the war with France broke out, I wrote to the publisher that we could hardly expect the journal to be published in France any longer; the reply was that Jean Giraudoux, the Minister for Culture, considered it an honor to continue the publication. Only after the capture of Paris were some issues published in English in New York.

The last section of the last article in the *Zeitschrift* deals with society under National Socialism. It reads:

The system of technological rationality as the foundation of law and legal practice has superseded any system for preservation of individual rights and thus has definitely made law and legal practice an instrument of ruthless domination and oppression in the interest of those who control the main economic and political levers of social power. Never has the process of alienation between law and morality gone so far as in the society which allegedly has perfected the integration of those very conceptions.

Otto Kirchheimer, the author of these lines, is dead and the *Zeitschrift* is no longer published. It seems to me that everything depends on these sentences being true of the past but not of the future.

April, 1968

MAX HORKHEIMER

INTRODUCTION

THE new left of the early 1960s was no less imbued with the habits of thought characteristic of the American celebration than its elders. At first it was optimistic about the chances to change society through the application of consistent pressure on the institutions to live up to their pluralistic claims. The crisis of late capitalism was seen as the conflict between the ideology of bourgeois individualism and the reality of the concentration of power in the hands of a few large corporations, the military and the government which they controlled. Since the myth of popular participation was a necessary presupposition of corporate domination, the politics of confrontation were employed to expose the existence of a power nexus which was essentially unresponsive to popular needs. Curiously the new left believed in the viability of democratic institutions. The underlying basis of its politics was the transformation of the content of social life while retaining its ideological and institutional forms. If many radicals had been disabused of the possibility of piecemeal reform, they were firmly wedded to a symbolic politics whose foundation was moralistic rather than Marxist.

The generation which venerated Marcuse was attracted more to his indictment than his analysis. Marcuse asserted the virtual impermeability of the system of domination, save for those assigned to its periphery. Young radicals, out of their own rage against the banality of affluence, had shifted to the margins of society in search of their authenticity in a culture which had reduced their lives to orgies of consumption alternating with somnambulistic acting out of the rituals of middle-class life. In Marcuse, the new left found a critic of society who spoke to their particular oppression, to their own sense of estrange-

ment. He offered a program—resistance and refusal—but one that was never fully adopted by the young left, since it could not face the practical consequences of his doctrine of social and cultural totalization within the framework of technological hegemony. Even amid the tumult of the student movements sparked by the Free Speech movement, SDS and the massive antiwar strikes toward the twilight years of the decade, the student left never generated an intellectual culture.

It is precisely for reasons having to do with the failure of the new left, particularly its attempt to encapsulate radical politics within the categories of pragmatic and other forms of positivist thought, that the publication of Max Horkheimer's seminal work is welcome at this time. Horkheimer is probably the least known to American readers of the three most important representatives of the older Frankfurt school. Marcuse only gained prominence owing to the renewed interest in Marxist ideas during the relatively brief revival of American radicalism. Adorno had established a reputation in the late 1940s with the *Authoritarian Personality*. (This massive study, an attempt to work within the traditions of American academic sociology, dealt with some of the key preoccupations of theorists concerned with the micro-social influences on the rise of fascism in the 1930s.) But Horkheimer's work has not received the attention it richly deserves. Except for two essays reprinted here from the publication of the Institute for Social Research during its wartime American residence, Horkheimer's massive output until now has largely been represented in English by a slim but important book, the *Eclipse of Reason*, published in 1947 and now out of print.

Max Horkheimer became the director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt in 1930. Its early members were among the most important of those who worked within the framework of Marxist theory:* Erich Fromm, Frederick

* Although Horkheimer worked openly within the Marxist theoretical tradition, he himself has never referred to his approach as "Marxist." This reticence is not an attempt to obscure his political position. It derives from the concept of critique employed by Marx himself to distinguish the dialectical method from vulgar (positivistic) philosophy and political economy. Marx's major work, *Capital*, is subtitled "Critique of

Pollock, Walther Benjamin, and Franz Neumann. In 1933 the Institute removed itself to Paris and then came to the United States on the eve of the Nazi occupation of that country. After World War II Horkheimer and Adorno accepted an invitation of the West German Government to return to Frankfurt to resume their studies. Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, Leo Lowenthal and Otto Kirschheimer remained in the United States.

The essays comprising *Critical Theory* contain not only an acute methodological refutation of positivism, according to which the world of appearances constitutes the structure of reality and man can only know that which is given in experience (or representations of experience through linguistic communication); they constitute an effective antidote to the scientific tendencies in orthodox Marxism itself. At a time when the guardians of official Marxist truth were proclaiming the status of its doctrines as an objective science, Horkheimer engaged in a detailed critique both of the objects of traditional scientific theory and of its method.

The task of critical theory, according to Horkheimer, is to penetrate the world of things to show the underlying relations between persons. The appearance of the capitalist social intercourse is that of equal exchange between things. It is the task of critical theory to see "the human bottom of nonhuman things" and to demystify the surface forms of equality. According to Horkheimer, "the social function of philosophy lies in the criticism of what is prevalent." Positivist thought, by accepting the role of science as the careful recording of the facts and limiting its generalizations to the unity of apparent reality, leaves the question of historical development aside and becomes instrumental to the prevailing system of power.

For Horkheimer, critical theory proceeds from the theorist's awareness of his own partiality. Thus theory is neither neutral

Political Economy." His earlier work on political theory is a "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." There may have been another motivation for Horkheimer's refusal to designate himself a Marxist. Marxism had undergone significant permutations in the hands of the Communist left after the Russian Revolution, and he may well have wanted to distinguish his approach.

nor objective. Its partisanship consists in its goals: the reconstruction of society based on nonexploitative relations between persons; and the restoration of man to center place in the evolution of human society as a self-conscious, self-managing subject of social reality. Yet the awareness that the term "critical theory" itself presupposes a definite philosophical standpoint does not imply its one-sidedness. On the contrary, the core of dialectical theory is the recognition that the world of perception is a "product of human activity." The object of cognition is humanized nature and, to that extent, is transformed from a thing-in-itself to a thing-for-us. Following Marx, Horkheimer denies the radical separation of subject and the object of cognition, but he neither subsumes the object in the contemplative subject in the manner of subjective idealism and its modern positivist variants, nor capitulates to the metaphysical idealism of Hegel and Fichte. The acting subject, aware of its own partisanship, is the only way to transcend the enslavement of social theory and practice to "the mere recording and prediction of facts, that is, mere calculation." Horkheimer asks us to "learn to look behind the facts; . . . to distinguish the superficial from the essential without minimizing the importance of either . . ." In short, Horkheimer calls for dialectical thinking as the precondition for the achievement of a rational community.

The subordination of reason to industry beginning in the eighteenth century (its transformation from metaphysics to instrumental rationality) was both a condition for social progress insofar as knowledge became a productive force, and the means by which critical reason was suppressed. As Martin Jay put it: "In rejecting the ontological claims Hegel had made for his philosophy of Absolute spirit, the positivists had robbed the intellect of any right to judge what was actual as true or false."* Thus the submergence of critical reason was a consequence of the achievements of the Enlightenment itself. In purging the metaphysical concepts of essence, soul, transcendent being, God,

* Martin Jay, "The Frankfurt School and the Genesis of Cultural Theory," in *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism Since Lenin*, eds. Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare (New York: Basic Books, 1972), p. 32.

etc., from reason, the Enlightenment paved the way for an empirical science and technology which culminated in tremendous advances in material culture.

The bourgeoisie tolerated critical reason during its revolutionary rise to power against the restrictions imposed by feudal social relations. Once victorious, however, reason could only be tolerated in its quantitative forms—mathematics and science, which became instruments of bourgeois rule insofar as it required the expansion of capital to maintain its hegemony over society. In capitalist society, science was useful to the extent that it was transformed into industrial technique. But empiricism had gone too far. It left thought a slave to the given reality. The bourgeoisie systematically demythologized thought of its feudal inheritance, but it created new myths shrouded in the new absolutism of science.

The two sides of bourgeois thought, positivism and metaphysics, are the unified world view of the bourgeoisie, split according to the prevailing division of labor between science, which serves industry, and religions and secular spiritual ideologies, which serve social domination. On the one hand, positivist thought denies the relevance, if not the existence, of universals. It asserts the rationality of the given surface reality and documents its permutations. On the other hand, metaphysics abolishes the positivist enslavement to the concrete and searches for a teleology to give meaning to human existence. Science offers no transcendent meaning to men; it simply asserts facts. Its immanent viewpoint is the unity of thought with outer reality. Metaphysics is the other side of positivist nominalism. Its universals are abstract. If not God, then the absolute idea informs its search for purpose so resolutely denied by empirical science.

This attack against positivism, so intrinsic to Frankfurt thought, remains the most difficult and the most crucial for the development of critical theory in America. American thought is identical with the most attractive of the positivist doctrines, pragmatism. Pragmatism is the theory of nontheory. Unlike the older positivism, pragmatic philosophy does not even retain the principle of objective truth arising from the correspondence of

generalizations of experience with reality. Pragmatism is the explicit reduction of reason to its instrumental value, carrying the utilitarianism of liberalism to its logical conclusion.

In its most sophisticated form, pragmatism asserts the truth of any proposition in the agreement of qualified scientists about a particular phenomenon. The test of truth is its practical value for the achievement of human ends. Reality itself becomes an object of manipulation through human practice. Since the object of cognition is none other than humanly organized sensations, the question of external reality has no meaning. Thus the problem of the difference between subject and object is thoroughly subjectivized. If positivism eliminated ego by reducing the subject to pure contemplation, pragmatism is closer to the older empiricism by reducing the object to instrumentality.

Unlike the older positivism, which claims the radical separation between value and truth, pragmatism asserts their unity. Subject and object are united and critical theory becomes pure poetry or literature. For pragmatism, there are no transcendent criteria for human action. Such transcendence is attacked as metaphysics, since the values which determine human action are essentially identical to the action itself. Pragmatic philosophy has attempted to eliminate the impractical from thought, to frame questions which have practical consequences and nothing else. Thus it leaves no room for critical theory, which relies on the epistemological premise of objective truth, even if historically grounded.

The thrust of Horkheimer's attack against positivist and metaphysical thought is not even-handed. Clearly, metaphysics, however inadequate for the understanding of the movement of social reality and its transformation, at least understands the discrepancy between appearance and essence, the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete. Dialectical thought begins with the recognition that "the tension between the concept and being is inevitable and ceaseless." Unlike Marx himself, who called for the end of speculative philosophy on the grounds that dialectical science was capable of comprehending essential reality in accordance with the practico-historical activ-

ity of the modern proletariat, Horkheimer cannot abandon philosophy. Philosophy still has a social function consistent with the revolutionary project. The social structure is sufficiently differentiated and "is still imposed on the proletariat from above and by opposition between personal and class interests which is transcended only at very special moments." The proletariat is capable of experiencing the wretchedness of its existence, but the history of the 1930s convinced Horkheimer of the folly of subordinating critical theory to a socialist movement thoroughly enconced in parliamentary struggles within the capitalist state, or to a proletariat that would show increasing evidence of its incapacity to generate a sustained struggle against the authoritarian structures of contemporary society.

This attitude insured a degree of isolation for Horkheimer and others of the Frankfurt school until the 1960s. Tolerated, but largely ignored, by liberal democracy (which became the target of the Frankfurt critique when it showed the convergence of liberal and totalitarian ideologies in the wake of the monopolization of economic life and the reduction of reason to technological rationality), the Institute found itself at odds with the prevalent movements acting in the name of revolutionary socialism as well. Together with Wilhelm Reich, the Frankfurt theorists undertook a merciless analysis of the totality of the rise of fascism to power in Germany, instead of relying on the partial truths of the Communist left.

For Horkheimer, the explanation for the rise of fascism which relied on the particular capitalist response was necessary but insufficient. Such an explanation ignored the historical character of institutions, that is, the dialectical relationship between the past and present. World Marxism was content to explain the rise of facism as a result of a coup d'état by the bourgeoisie. Explicitly it denied the continuity of ideologies and social structure between the Weimar and the fascist eras. Nor did Marxist orthodoxy have a conception of the relevance, to the rise of fascism, of institutions (such as the family) which both mirror the totality of bourgeois social relations and prepare children to take their place within the prevailing social division of labor.

Horkheimer shows how the patterns of authority characteristic of the sphere of social production are reproduced in the configuration of family life in the person of the father. Indeed, the contradiction of the family is its socially reproductive function, on the one hand, and its role as protector of children and adults from vicissitudes of the wretchedness of social life, on the other. But, as Horkheimer shows, the role of the family as refuge cannot overcome its predominant role within the authoritarian structure of capitalist society.

The eventual defeat of fascism did not alter the fundamental outlines of the Institute's analysis. Since the development of fascism had not been regarded apart from the emergence of capitalist world hegemony or as an isolated political event located within a specific historical context, there was no reason to believe the end of fascism signaled the eclipse of authoritarian social formations or modes of thought. On the contrary, the work of Adorno and Horkheimer during the postwar period (cf. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,* *Eclipse of Reason*) retains the essential configuration of the analysis and extends it to the new conditions of the postwar era. The totalitarian state may have been smashed, but its social roots remained intact. There was no cause for celebration as the socialist and working-class movements returned to their old stands of reformist politics.

Thus explanations for the rise of fascism—and other forms of authoritarian politics which are confined to the political or economic sphere—have failed to comprehend the process of social reproduction that underlies the institutions of daily life and their relations to commodity production. Horkheimer rejects the dualism inherent in such views, showing instead that the relationship between the traditional family and the maintenance of capitalist society is mutually determining. It is the conjuncture of the development of capitalist monopoly and the authoritarian ideologies and institutions of liberal capitalism which make the deformation of the whole social structure possible.

While orthodox Marxists have always denied that fascism was a mass movement that included substantial segments of the

* Herder and Herder, 1972.

working class. Horkheimer provided a theory to explain what actually occurred. True to the character of his social analysis (whose first task is to be critical of itself), Horkheimer insisted on examining the actual historical and political situation of the proletariat rather than relying on ideological apriorism. The social practice of the proletariat was at variance with the hypostatized view of it put forward both by Lenin and Georg Lukačs. Horkheimer found the working class and its organizations increasingly encompassed by the authoritarian institutions of late capitalism. Not only was bourgeois liberalism stripped of its critical sensibility, but so was the proletarian movement. The emergence of commodity exchange and the reduction of all cultural forms (including thought) to the cash nexus had deep impact upon the working-class and socialist movements.

Orthodox Marxism was the adjustment of socialist doctrine to reformist practice. Its theory exhibited two conflicting features: on the one hand, insofar as the labor and socialist movements were able to make real gains within the framework of the capitalist work place and the bourgeois state, theory became the handservant of the new strategy of incremental change. Theoretical issues were largely confined within the limits of problems of strategy and tactics. On the other hand, Marxist theory showed the mark of a new revolutionary metaphysics. It apocalyptically predicted inevitable breakdown of the system. The reduction of theory to a predictive natural science was epitomized by the exact positive study of political economy. Orthodox converted Marx's own concept of critique into a set of eternal propositions about the coming capitalist crisis. The parliamentary parties which fought for proletarian interests within the framework of bureaucratic capitalism became imbedded in practicing politics as the art of the possible even as they held high their red banners of revolution.

The resurgence of radicalism in the 1960s once again brought to the fore the themes enunciated by Horkheimer and Marcuse. Against the old left, the new left made the link between liberalism and authoritarianism that had been submerged by the Communists. The 1964 and 1968 conventions of the Democratic

Party showed the steadfast refusal of the liberal-labor coalition to confront the central issues of the war and civil rights or to transform the governance of the party in accordance with the doctrines of participatory democracy. The new left refused to suppress its critique of the Party's liberal wing because it did not want to make a "coalition with the marines"—a slogan which summarized the insight that the difference between the authoritarian state and its liberal opposition was miniscule. For a time, a guidepost for new left politics was its rejection of the lesser evil and its attempt to totalize its opposition to bureaucracy and domination. In the most available representative of the Frankfurt analysis of late capitalism, Marcuse, it found an eloquent theoretician.

The problem of building a social movement in America, capable of projecting goals which distinguish the present from the future, is intimately bound to the forms of thought within which political and social discourse is carried on. Americans, even the radicals, are suspicious of theory. No country in the capitalist world has made more of a fetish of science, conducted politics as the art of the possible, and relegated intellectuals to professional servants of the social system than the United States. Marcuse's thesis that technological rationality has been transformed into a kind of domination in which critique is not only foreclosed by the very successes of the repressive system, but appears absurd to the underlying population, seems to have been refuted by the insurgent new left of the 1960s. However, the action critique of modern American society and culture failed to extend to the cognitive spheres. One-dimensional thought persists in the new radical orthodoxies. The young left has not been sufficiently critical of its own theory or practice to escape the power of ideologies and institutions reinforced by prevailing social practice. Horkheimer's essay "Authority and the Family" warns us against inferring total collapse of social institutions as a result of evidence that the rationality of domination is not eternal, but is subject to the crisis inherent in the dialectic of historical development. Even though there are moments when the decline of the economy and its consequent impact on social

INTRODUCTION

institutions makes possible the readiness of large sections of the underlying population to revolt against established authority, "such moments are rare and brief: the decaying order is quickly improved where necessary and is apparently renewed; the periods of restoration last a long time, and during them the outmoded cultural apparatus as well as the psychic makeup of men and the body of interconnected institutions acquire new power."

We are witnessing the truth of this statement today. The weakness of bourgeois institutions such as the family and schools, so evident in the 1960s, is now in the process of repair. Their new strength builds, in part, on the decline of the new left—a movement without theory, a rebellion without awareness either of its traditions or interests. Horkheimer's invocation that critical theory and the application of dialectical reason to the analysis of events is the prelude and the concomitant of a movement for social liberation is an appropriate lesson for our time.

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

CRITICAL THEORY

NOTES ON SCIENCE AND THE CRISIS

1. IN the Marxist theory of society, science is regarded as one of man's productive powers. In varying ways it has made the modern industrial system possible: as condition of the general flexibility of mind which has developed along with science over recent centuries; as a store of information on nature and the human world, which in the more developed countries is possessed even by people in the lower social classes; and, not least, as part of the intellectual equipment of the researcher, whose discoveries decisively affect the forms of social life. In so far as science is available as a means of creating social values, that is, in so far as it takes shape in methods of production, it constitutes a means of production.

2. The fact that science contributes to the social life-process as a productive power and a means of production in no way legitimates a pragmatist theory of knowledge. The fruitfulness of knowledge indeed plays a role in its claim to truth, but the fruitfulness in question is to be understood as intrinsic to the science and not as usefulness for ulterior purposes. The test of the truth of a judgment is something different from the test of its importance for human life. It is not for social interests to decide what is or is not true; the criteria for truth have developed, rather, in connection with progress at the theoretical level. Science itself admittedly changes in the course of history, but this fact can never stand as an argument for other criteria of truth than those which are appropriate to the state of knowledge at a given level of development. Even though science is subject to the dynamisms of history, it may not be deprived of its own proper char-

acter and misinterpreted for utilitarian ends. Of course, the reasons which justify rejecting the pragmatist theory of knowledge and relativism in general, do not lead to a positivist separation of truth and action. On the one hand, neither the direction and methods of theory nor its object, reality itself, are independent of man, and, on the other hand, science is a factor in the historical process. The separation of theory and action is itself an historical phenomenon.

3. In the general economic crisis, science proves to be one of the numerous elements within a social wealth which is not fulfilling its function. This wealth is immensely greater today than in previous eras. The world now has more raw materials, machines, and skilled workers, and better methods of production than ever before, but they are not profiting mankind as they ought. Society in its present form is unable to make effective use of the powers it has developed and the wealth it has amassed. Scientific knowledge in this respect shares the fate of other productive forces and means of production: its application is sharply disproportionate to its high level of development and to the real needs of mankind. Such a situation hinders the further development, qualitative and quantitative, of science itself. As the course of earlier crises warns us, economic balance will be restored only at the cost of great destruction of human and material resources.

4. One way of hiding the real causes of the present crisis is to assign responsibility for it to precisely those forces which are working for the betterment of the human situation, and this means, above all, rational, scientific thinking. The attempt is being made to subordinate the more intense cultivation of such thinking by individuals to the development of the "psychic" and to discredit critical reason as a decisive factor except for its professional application in industry. The view is abroad that reason is a useful instrument only for purposes of everyday life, but must fall silent in face of the great problems and give way to the more substantial powers of the soul. The result is the avoidance of any theoretical consideration of society as a whole. The

struggle of contemporary metaphysics against scientism is in part a reflection of these broader social tendencies.

5. Science in the pre-War years had in fact a number of limitations. These were due, however, not to an exaggeration of its rational character but to restrictions on it which were themselves conditioned by the increasing rigidification of the social situation. The task of describing facts without respect for nonscientific considerations and of establishing the patterns of relations between them was originally formulated as a partial goal of bourgeois emancipation in its critical struggle against Scholastic restrictions upon research. But by the second half of the nineteenth century this definition had already lost its progressive character and showed itself to be, on the contrary, a limiting of scientific activity to the description, classification, and generalization of phenomena, with no care to distinguish the unimportant from the essential. In the measure that concern for a better society, which still dominated the Enlightenment, gave way to the attempt to prove that present-day society should be permanent, a deadening and disorganizing factor entered science. The result of science, at least in part, may have been usefully applied in industry, but science evaded its responsibility when faced with the problem of the social process as a whole. Yet this was the foremost problem of all even before the War, as ever more intense crises and resultant social conflicts succeeded one another. Scientific method was oriented to being and not to becoming, and the form of society at the time was regarded as a mechanism which ran in an unvarying fashion. The mechanism might be disturbed for a shorter or longer period, but in any event it did not require a different scientific approach than did the explanation of any complicated piece of machinery. Yet social reality, the development of men acting in history, has a structure. To grasp it requires a theoretical delineation of profoundly transformative processes which revolutionize all cultural relationships. The structure is not to be mastered by simply recording events as they occur, which was the method practiced in old-style natural science. The refusal of science to handle in

an appropriate way the problems connected with the social process has led to superficiality in method and content, and this superficiality, in turn, has found expression in the neglect of dynamic relationships between the various areas with which science deals, while also affecting in quite varied ways the practice of the disciplines. Connected with this narrowing of scientific purview is the fact that a set of unexplicated, rigid, and fetishistic concepts can continue to play a role, when the real need is to throw light on them by relating them to the dynamic movement of events. Some examples: the concept of the self-contained consciousness as the supposed generator of science; the person and his world-positing reason; the eternal natural law, dominating all events; the unchanging relationship of subject and object; the rigid distinction between mind and nature, soul and body, and other categorical formulations. The root of this deficiency, however, is not in science itself but in the social conditions which hinder its development and are at loggerheads with the rational elements immanent in science.

6. Since around the turn of the century scientists and philosophers have pointed out the insufficiencies and unsuitability of purely mechanistic methods. The criticism has led to discussion of the principles involved in the main foundations on which research rests, so that today we may speak of a crisis within science. This inner crisis is now added to the external dissatisfaction with science as a means of production which has not been able to meet expectations in alleviating the general need. Modern physics has in large measure overcome within its own field the deficiencies of the traditional method and has revised its critical foundations. It is to the credit of postwar metaphysics, especially that of Max Scheler, that it has once again turned the attention of science as a whole to numerous neglected areas and prepared the way at many points for a method less hindered by conventional narrowness of outlook. Above all, the description of important psychic phenomena, the delineation of social types, and the founding of a sociology of knowledge have had fruitful results. Yet, leaving aside the fact that essays in meta-

physics almost always presented as concrete reality something called "life," that is, a mythical essence, and not real, living society in its historical development, such essays in the last analysis did not stimulate science but were simply negative towards it. Instead of pointing out and finally breaking through the limitations science had put upon itself by its narrow concentration on classification, metaphysics identified the very inadequate science of former times with rationality as such; it denied even judgmental thinking and abandoned itself to arbitrarily chosen objects and to a method cut completely loose from science. A philosophical anthropology arose which, in its independence, absolutized certain characteristics of man; to critical reason it opposed an intuition which rejected all restraining scientific criteria and trusted unquestioningly in its own clarity of vision. Metaphysics thereby turned its back on the causes of the social crisis and even downgraded the means of investigating it. It introduced a new confusion of its own by hypostatizing isolated, abstractly conceived man and thereby belittling the importance of a theoretical comprehension of social processes.

7. Not only metaphysics but the science it criticizes is ideological, in so far as the latter retains a form which hinders it in discovering the real causes of the crisis. To say it is ideological is not to say that its practitioners are not concerned with pure truth. Every human way of acting which hides the true nature of society, built as it is on contrarities, is ideological, and the claim that philosophical, moral, and religious acts of faith, scientific theories, legal maxims, and cultural institutions have this function is not an attack on the character of those who originate them but only states the objective role such realities play in society. Views valid in themselves and theoretical and aesthetic works of undeniably high quality can in certain circumstances operate ideologically, while many illusions, on the contrary, are not a form of ideology. The occurrence of ideology in the members of a society necessarily depends on their place in economic life; only when relationships have so far developed and conflicts of interest have reached such an intensity that even the

average eye can penetrate beyond appearances to what is really going on, does a conscious ideological apparatus in the full sense usually make its appearance. As an existing society is increasingly endangered by its internal tensions, the energies spent in maintaining an ideology grow greater and finally the weapons are readied for supporting it with violence. The more the Roman Empire was threatened by explosive inner forces, the more brutally did the Caesars try to revitalize the old cult of the State and to restore the lost sense of unity. The ages which followed the Christian persecutions and the fall of the Empire supply many other frightful examples of the same recurring pattern. In the science of such periods the ideological dimension usually comes to light less in its false judgments than in its lack of clarity, its perplexity, its obscure language, its manner of posing problems, its methods, the direction of its research, and, above all, in what it closes its eyes to.

8. At the present time, scientific effort mirrors an economy filled with contradictions. The economy is in large measure dominated by monopolies, and yet on the world scale it is disorganized and chaotic, richer than ever yet unable to eliminate human wretchedness. Science, too, shows a double contradiction. First, science accepts as a principle that its every step has a critical basis, yet the most important step of all, the setting of tasks, lacks a theoretical grounding and seems to be taken arbitrarily. Second, science has to do with a knowledge of comprehensive relationships; yet, it has no realistic grasp of that comprehensive relationship upon which its own existence and the direction of its work depend, namely, society. The two contradictions are closely connected. The process of casting light on the social life-process in its totality brings with it the discovery of the law which holds sway in the apparent arbitrariness of the scientific and other endeavors. For science, too, is determined in the scope and direction of its work not by its own tendencies alone but, in the last analysis, by the necessities of social life as well. Despite this law a wasteful dispersal of intellectual energies has characterized the course of science over

the last century, and philosophers of the period have repeatedly criticized science on this score. But the situation cannot be changed by purely theoretical insight, any more than the ideological function of science can be. Only a change in the real conditions for science within the historical process can win such a victory.

9. The view that cultural disorder is connected with economic relationships and with the conflicts of interest that arise out of them says nothing about the relative reality and importance of material and intellectual values. It does contradict, of course, the idealist thesis that the world is the product and expression of an absolute mind, for it refuses to consider mind as separable from historical being and independent of it. But we can regard idealism as essentially consisting not in such a questionable metaphysics but in the effort to develop effectively the intellectual capabilities of man. If so, the materialist thesis of the nonindependence of the ideal order corresponds better to such a conception of classical German philosophy than does a great part of modern metaphysics. For the effort to grasp the social causes of the stunting and destruction of human life and effectively to subordinate the economy to man is a more appropriate task for such striving than is the dogmatic assertion of a priority of the spiritual without heed to the course of history.

10. In so far as we can rightly speak of a crisis in science, that crisis is inseparable from the general crisis. The historical process has imposed limitations on science as a productive force, and these show in the various sectors of science, in their content and form, in their subject matter and method. Furthermore, science as a means of production has not been properly applied. Understanding of the crisis of science depends on a correct theory of the present social situation; for science as a social function reflects at present the contradictions with society.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

MATERIALISM AND METAPHYSICS

INVESTIGATION of European philosophical views since antiquity led Dilthey to the insight that every metaphysician aims at establishing a unified and universally valid system but that not one of them has ever succeeded in taking a single real step in this direction. Consequently, when he himself undertakes to distinguish types of world view, he stresses the subjective character of the division he adopts. His conviction of the impossibility of a universally valid system prevents him from making any metaphysical claim even for the orderly arrangement of individual systems.

The statements in the context of which Dilthey's typology becomes really significant aim, of course, at embracing the totality of being, just as do the metaphysical systems on which his typology imposes an order. In keeping with his conviction about the constancy of human nature and the unchanged identity of the world, Dilthey thinks that all the world views and the systems in which they are formulated emerge from "life," as varying answers to the single enigma of being. And just as philosophy, in distinction from scientific investigation, is always concerned with this "enigma of life, . . . with this total reality, so complicated and mysterious,"¹ so Dilthey himself regards the problem of what I am to do in the world, why I am there, what my destiny in it is to be, as the problem which "most concerns me."² His own efforts, too, are marked by the

1. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Die Typen der Weltanschauung und die Ausbildung in den metaphysischen Systemen*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, volume 8 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1931), pp. 206-7.

2. Dilthey, *ibid.*

three traits he regards as characteristic of the philosophical (really, the metaphysical) mind: self-reflection, that is the consistent and radical questioning of subjective and objective data; the integration of all knowable reality into a unified whole; and the attempt to provide an ultimate and intrinsic foundation for the universal validity of knowledge.

Even if Dilthey avoided any development of his position into a full metaphysical system, his analysis of world views nevertheless does not proceed simply from the intention of clearly isolating some elements that are important in the theory of history. Rather his work, like religion and metaphysics, is to lead him to the "significance and meaning of reality as a whole."³ Every system, according to Dilthey, gets entangled in antinomies, and only historical awareness can "sunder the last chains which philosophy and the investigation of nature cannot break." But this liberating awareness

at the same time restores to man the unity of his own soul and the insight into the interconnectedness of all things, which, though unfathomable, nonetheless reveals itself to us as living beings. For our consolation we may venerate in every world view a fragment of the truth. The course of life may indeed confront us only with particular aspects of this unfathomable interconnectedness. But if the truth of the world views which express these aspects takes vital hold of us, then we may peacefully surrender to it: truth is present in them all.⁴

In the historical and psychological typology of world views as presented by Dilthey and Jaspers, bourgeois liberalism voices its critique of the claim to absoluteness made by its own thinking. The equality of rank given to various metaphysical ideas and the awareness of their radical historical conditioning are proof of a high degree of detachment from the power of categories originally absolutized by bourgeois liberal thought. This is true even though the historical relativity of the various philosophical systems was realized not through knowledge of the social conditions governing their elaboration but with the help of hyposta-

3. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

4. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 223; cf. p. 271.

tized concepts of man, life, personality, and creative development. But, in this partial liberation from the particular ideas of the past, the forms of world view and their transformations were themselves now clothed in the glorious garments of the metaphysical process.

All the attitudes, representations, efforts, and thoughts that have arisen in the minds of men as they attempt to comprehend the world in its totality cannot be pure illusion. At one time they were powerful forces and, for the most part, they keep recurring in typical ways . . . Such ideas may be false, illogical, and deceptive, but the human soul is so constituted that it expresses itself in them. It experiences something and elaborates it in such a way that these objectifications have been, and are today, recognized as apt expressions and evident revelations of it.⁵

Now that faith in the absolute validity of any developed system had disappeared, the whole series of cultural forms, their rhythm, interdependence, and regularities, became the instrument of intellectual formation.

In this capacity the history of intellectual culture took over hegemony from the earlier systems and schools. The only real change was that now there was an indifference to the particular content of the ideas themselves. With the diminishing expectation that reality could be reasonably shaped, that is, in accordance with general needs, within the framework of the existing order of things, it became less and less important to distinguish between the divers constructions of the best possible world which earlier systems had projected as the rational essence of experienced reality. The unbridgeable gulf between reality and reason brought into disrepute any attempt to equate the two philosophically or even to relate them to each other by the concept of task.

The idea of unbroken harmony between reality and reason belongs to the liberalist phase. It corresponds to a social economy marked by a plurality of individual entrepreneurs. The

5. Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (Berlin, 1919), p. 4.

image of their interests as harmonizing and producing a frictionless functioning of the whole economy was applied to society as a whole and to its various social classes. The monopolistic phase goes even further in denying class conflicts, but the struggle in the world market between a few power groups has become so much the principal theme of the period that instead of harmony between individuals, such concepts as tragedy, heroism, and destiny have come to be the main categories for a philosophy of history. The material interests of individuals are considered unimportant, something less to be fulfilled than to be overcome. Yet contemporary philosophy usually does not simply reject the efforts of the past at the construction of rational systems. It praises the creative power and greatness of their authors, the aesthetic qualities in the "mature" unity of their work, and the truth supposedly expressed in every system despite the contradictions between the systems. Thus contemporary philosophy invites us to wonder and reverence before the figures of the past and to a formal belief in greatness, personality, and leadership. Given such a biologicistic and historicistic reduction of differences, contemporary philosophy of course rejects the simple claim of past teachers for the validity of their ideas. Objective testing of the old systems is replaced by reverential empathy and description. In thus transforming the history of intellectual culture into a new metaphysics, philosophy rescues the "unity of the soul" but also bars its own access to important objects for historico-cultural meditation.

In pursuing a metaphysical interest of its own the doctrine on world views looks at all the thought forms which it presents from the same point of view. Consequently contemporary philosophical literature entirely fails to grasp that opposition between two ways of thinking which runs through the whole history of philosophy and which seems in our present historical situation to be the most decisive of all: the opposition between materialism and idealism. This divergence is regarded as a conflict between two metaphysical orientations and is then usually resolved without difficulty on the basis of a modern philosophical problematic. The primary reason for this misunderstanding

is that materialist theory and practice are not approached in the right way. It is true, of course, that most of the philosophical representatives of materialism do not help matters by starting with metaphysical questions and setting up their own theses in opposition to idealist positions. Yet any interpretation of the materialist orientation of thought which sees it primarily as an answer to metaphysical questions will be unable to grasp those characteristics of it which are the most important ones today.

For Dilthey himself materialism is a metaphysics; concretely, a doctrine on the relation between world-ground and world, and between soul and body.⁶ In this he only follows the prevailing philosophical conception of materialism. For several decades, indeed, philosophers have seen materialism primarily as opposed to spiritualism rather than to idealism. But materialism and spiritualism, as "realistic" answers to the question of the nature of the world, are both set over against idealism understood as a philosophy of consciousness.⁷ The historical roots of this terminology may be sought in the twofold struggle of the nineteenth-century French bourgeoisie against feudalism and the proletariat. Materialism is thus reduced to the simple claim that only matter and its movements are real. Whether the attacking philosopher be himself an idealist or a realist, he quickly rejects the materialist thesis. Materialism is understood either as trying to explain everything spiritual, and especially consciousness and reason, as pure illusion (in contradiction to the most instinctive thrust of reason itself) or as trying to derive the spiritual from material process with the aid of artificial hypotheses and questionable appeals to future scientific discovery. Given such an understanding of materialism, it is obviously easy to provide a refutation "to which there is no answer," according to Friedrich Albert Lange, the historian of

6. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, pp. 97ff.

7. Cf., for example, Ludwig Büchner, *Am Sterbelager des Jahrhunderts* (Giessen, 1908), p. 134; Raoul Richter, *Einführung in die Philosophie* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1920), pp. 67ff.; Hermann Cohen, *Schriften zur Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, volume 2 (Berlin, 1928), p. 382; and many others.

materialism. "Consciousness cannot be explained out of material movements."⁸

In German philosophical literature this argument has been tirelessly repeated ever since the debate on materialism of 1854. "It may indeed seem on superficial inspection that certain spiritual processes and capacities can be understood by knowing material brain processes . . . But the slightest reflection shows that this is an illusion," said Du Bois-Reymond in his famous *Ignorabimus* speech.⁹ "For the materialist the psychic must be reduced to pure appearance; but this only leaves us with the problem of how such an appearance could have arisen."¹⁰

There is a great deal to say for the view that accompanying every joy and, generally, every movement of consciousness, there is a closely connected but imperceptible movement of atoms in the cerebrum. But joy *is* not this movement; rather it is only connected with it in some fashion or other. The materialist view that all psychic processes, for example even the emotions, are material movements, is therefore false.¹¹

"In face of our direct experience, which continually teaches us that physical and psychic reality are fundamentally different, the Materialistic position remains a paradox."¹² "Thus all these [materialist] arguments cannot change the fact that the psychic processes we experience are something totally different from anything material."¹³

In fact the theory falls apart at its first step. It cannot only not prove, it cannot even suggest principles for understanding how a process in consciousness could derive from spatio-temporal processes

8. Friedrich Albert Lange, *The History of Materialism*, tr. by Ernest Chester Thomas (3 volumes; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1877-92. 3 volumes in 1, 1925), volume 2, p. 157.

9. *Reden von Emil Du Bois-Reymond* (Leipzig, 1886), p. 123.

10. Oswald Külpe, *Die Realisierung*, volume 3 (Leipzig, 1923), p. 148.

11. Erich Becher, "Eerkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik," in *Die Philosophie in ihrer Einzelgebieten* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 354-56.

12. Wilhelm Windelband, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, tr. by Joseph McCabe (New York: Holt, 1921), p. 113.

13. Wilhelm Jerusalem, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Vienna-Leipzig, 1929), p. 114.

in the nervous system, how even the simplest content of sensation really arises. Between the one and the other there is a gap which is completely impervious to reason, with no connecting link that we can discern.¹⁴

But precisely the derivation of even the smallest glimmer of spiritual vital action from purely material motion is something which cannot be thought, and such a generation of the spiritual by the material can be asserted but not understood . . . as a matter of fact, materialism is in most cases not a consistent monism; in one or other guise a second principle is surreptitiously introduced along with matter in order to explain spiritual phenomena more easily.¹⁵

As against materialism, which he characterizes as a positivism, Jaspers claims: "If I am nothing but nature, nothing but the product of knowable causality, it is not only incomprehensible that I know this nature and use my knowledge to intervene in it; it is absurd that I justify myself."¹⁶ Materialism, then, appears to the philosophers as an obvious metaphysical error which is very easily refuted. The continued attempt to present spiritual processes as material would thus be as senseless as the claim that apples "are a kind of pear or dogs a kind of cat."¹⁷ Erich Adickes was therefore expressing not his own judgment alone, but the judgment of all who discuss materialism in present-day philosophical literature: materialism "is obviously unacceptable because of its superficiality and its inadequacy at the level of basic principle"¹⁸

If amid all the conflicts and changes in philosophy in recent centuries men have continued to repeat the same arguments against so weak a thesis, this is because of the related struggle against certain hateful claims, valuations, and challenges. "Ma-

14. Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1921), p. 100.

15. Max Adler, *Lehrbuch der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* (Berlin, 1930), pp. 78-79.

16. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy I*, tr. by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 233-34.

17. Windelband, *ibid.*

18. Erich Adickes, in *Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, volume 2 (Leipzig, 1921), p. 20.

terialism," in fact, does not mean simply a questionable view of reality as such; it stands also for a whole series of ideas and practical attitudes. These last show up in some materialist theories and in a great deal of other philosophical literature as the consequences of the thesis on the nature of the world as a whole. If the basic materialist position is shown to be untenable, then—according to the prevailing view—the materialist, if he can think clearly, must adopt another metaphysics. His new philosophy may be another variety of realism, for example spiritualism, or it may be an out-and-out idealism.

However inadequate, therefore, materialism may appear to be in comparison with the other possible conceptions of total reality, its most general and comprehensive thesis is taken even by its opponents to be the basis for certain practical consequences and, in fact, for a consistent way of life, just as an idealist metaphysics is the intelligible basis for idealist ways of acting. For example, inconsistency between the meaning of an action as seen by an observer and the materialist position accepted by the agent (in other words, the lack of unity between profession and action) is criticized as a logical contradiction. What holds for idealists holds, it is supposed, for the materialist as well; namely, that "questions of the significance and meaning of the world are decided on the basis of a world-picture, and the ideal, the supreme good, and the first principles for conduct are also derived from it."¹⁹ This characteristic structure of world views, in so far as they "undertake to give a complete answer to the enigma of life,"²⁰ seems in fact to be present in many attempts at a materialist system. But closer inspection shows that the content of materialist theory itself makes any such unified structure impossible. Consequently, criticism of this complex of views and behaviors by an attack on the materialist thesis on the nature of total reality continues to be misdirected, even when the thesis in question receives a more accurate interpretation than is usually given.

Because metaphysics wrestles with the "enigma" of being,

19. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

20. Dilthey, *ibid.*

with the "totality" of the world, with "life," with the "in itself," or however else its object may be described, it expects to be able to draw positive conclusions for action. The reality which it seeks to comprehend must have a structure, and knowledge of this must be decisive for the conduct of human life; there must be attitudes and behaviors which are in consonance with this reality. The effort to make his personal life dependent at every point on insight into the ultimate ground of things marks the metaphysician. It makes no difference whether what he intuits urges him to intense worldly action or to indifference or to asceticism, and whether the demands made on men by reality are presented as identical for all men at all times or as differentiated and changeable.

The metaphysician thus believes that in the being he seeks to discover a basis may be found for shaping the individual's life. This belief finds its clearest expression in directly theological systems. God can require a certain behavior of men; to go against his will is to fall into sin. The theological systems are consistent: only a personal being can make demands, and only a conscious will can be so unmistakably clear that the rightness of a life may be measured by it. A metaphysics which is unclear on its relation to theology usually regards the consonance of the individual's life with the requirements of the absolute not as obedience but as fittingness, authenticity, realism, or, more generally, philosophical wisdom. Dogmatism may not naïvely identify as the supreme good the unconditioned reality which, in distinction from the idealist currents flowing from Kant, it regards as "being." But it does show itself in most systems to be primarily value-oriented: to preserve one's own being or to become what one is are ethical maxims. In so far as the idealist schools just referred to conceive the unconditioned not as being but as source of law, as activity, or as sum-total of free acts, they also exact respect for the meaning of these acts, an adaptation of empirical human life to that intelligible ground of personality which philosophy succeeds in grasping. Ultimate reality is regarded as normative, however, not only in those systems where the religious origins of the dependence relationship still

show in the form which precept takes, but also in all cases where harmony between the individual's existence and its ground as discovered by metaphysics is regarded as valuable. For them, too, the being to which metaphysicians give "the emphatic name of an actual [existence]"²¹ contains rules for such beings as have power to dispose of themselves.

We do not mean to imply that an exact knowledge of matter is without advantage for one who acts. According to the goals he has in view, the materialist will try to gain the greatest possible certainty about the nature of reality. But these goals themselves are not derived from science, even if within the total social process they are conditioned by contemporary scientific knowledge of reality and, more generally, by the present state of productive forces. Knowledge, attained within the framework of a specific kind of social action and specific goals, always interacts with the activity of men; it shares in the shaping of external and internal reality. However, it yields no models, maxims, or advice for an authentic life, but only the means to it; it is not inspiration but theory. Max Scheler, following Plato, rightly describes the metaphysical attitude as "man's attempt to *transcend* himself as a finite natural being, to make himself divine or like God."²² But the reality which the materialist seeks to master for himself is the opposite of divine, and his effort is to direct it according to his will rather than to direct himself according to it.

To the extent that materialists have in fact formulated such definitive statements as that everything real is material, these statements play an entirely different role in their teaching than in that of their opponents. The statements are minimal in content and are a very general kind of extract of experience, not a rule for action. In most nonmaterialist kinds of thought, insights become more meaningful and have greater implications as they become more general, comprehensive, and definitive statements

21. *The Logic of Hegel*, no. 6, tr. by William Wallace from *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (Oxford, 1892), pp. 10-11.

22. Max Scheler, *The Eternal in Man*, tr. by Bernard Noble (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 92.

of principle. It cannot be said that for the materialist the exact opposite is true (this would be the case only in extreme and therefore metaphysical nominalism). But it is true that the measure in which general points of view become decisive for action depends on the agent's concrete situation at any given moment. The attack upon one or other general philosophical thesis as supposedly crucial for the materialist's behavior thus fails to grasp the real nature of materialist thought. The classic materialist thesis, for example, is of such little consequence for decisions in particular matters that some influential materialists of the Enlightenment, for example, and Diderot above all, could vacillate all their lives on this point, without therefore changing the character of their practical attitudes in the slightest.

According to the materialist, knowledge of broad tendencies which point beyond the immediate moment may be as valid as knowledge of particular detail; he can be very critical of the view that science should limit itself to the simple verification of "facts." But, for the materialist, judgments which embrace all reality are always questionable and not very important, because far removed from the kind of activity which generated them. In metaphysical systems, on the contrary, the stress tends to be just the opposite: knowledge of particulars is usually taken simply as an example of knowledge of universals. The materialist regards an error as the more pardonable the further removed it is from the particular circumstances which are of practical importance for him in a given situation; his opponents, on the contrary, are usually the more concerned, the more the error touches on principle. Principle, as we said, can be of very great importance to the materialist too, but the reason for this is not to be found in the nature of the principle as such. The importance arises not from theory alone but from the tasks which at any given period are to be mastered with the help of the theory. Thus, for example, criticism of a dogma of religious faith may, at a particular time and place, play a decisive role within the complex of materialist views, while under other circumstances such criticism may be unimportant. Today the knowledge of movements and tendencies affecting society as a whole is

immensely important for materialist theory, but in the eighteenth century the problem of the social totality was overshadowed by questions of knowledge-theory, of natural science, and of politics. Metaphysics usually has its gaze fixed on "the structural unity of this one, great, unknown reality to whose questions we have no answer,"²³ but for the materialist such a unity is habitually neither starting-point nor goal.

Any treatment of materialism is misguided, then, which is interested primarily in metaphysical questions. Yet the attitude of the materialist to metaphysics may not be reduced to one of general indifference. What we have already said implies that materialist views are incompatible with the idea of an absolute demand made upon man. Such a demand can be viewed as reasonable only where there is belief in an absolute consciousness. In modern metaphysics this absolute demand has been justified by appeals to a particular structure of being (Spinoza) or to the roots out of which thinking emerges (German idealism) or to the "nature of man" (religious socialism) or to a number of other principles. Depending on the social situation within which it is preached, the demand has a very different content, progressive or retrogressive as the case may be. But it always has the function of clothing human, historical, particular purposes with the appearance of eternity and relating them to a reality which is not subject to historical change and is therefore unconditioned. Today the effort is made to demonstrate that the absolute demand is not necessarily connected with acceptance of an absolute consciousness by showing descriptively how the aspect of obligation is present in the phenomena themselves if we penetrate deeply enough into them. Nonetheless all the schools of thought in which an absolute demand made of every individual plays a dominant role have to that extent and for that reason an idealist cast. For the same reason, the struggle today between materialism and metaphysics is above all a conflict between materialism and idealism.

Up to the present point in history the religious and metaphysical grounds of any precepts have been conditioned by the

23. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

struggle between social groups. Ruling and ruled classes alike have not been satisfied to present their claims simply as expressions of their particular needs and desires. They have also proclaimed them as universally binding requirements grounded in transcendent sources, as principles in accord with the eternal nature of the world and man. The situation of the ruled has indeed, at least in modern times, led them not immediately to absolutize their own claims but rather to maintain that reality as given contradicts the principles for which the rulers stand. However, in urging the universal application of the moral principles on which the existing order of things was founded, the ruled have changed the meaning of these principles, without making any new metaphysical justification necessary. The cry during the Peasant Wars that Christianity should be applied gave "Christianity" a new meaning as compared with the current understanding of it. Similarly, the demand that the bourgeois ideal of justice should be universally fulfilled led to the criticism and overthrow of that society of free exchange in which the concept of justice had originally gotten its specific content. To show the contradiction between the principle on which bourgeois society was founded and the actual reality of that society involves bringing out how justice was one-sidedly defined in terms of freedom and freedom in terms of negation, and substituting a positive conception of justice by offering a groundplan for a reasonable society. When the concept of justice thus changes its meaning, we glimpse the historical origins of what was originally proclaimed as an eternal principle, and we understand that that concept was an idea proposed by definite individuals and conditioned by relationships within a class society. Today therefore, the struggle for a better order of things has been cut loose from its old supernatural justification. The theory appropriate to the struggle today is materialism.

But there is still another distinction between the idealism of the ruling classes and that of the social strata which struggle against this rule. A reference to an absolute demand made upon men has a meaning only in so far as the action of men in pur-

suing their worldly interests needs either a correction or at least a justification. The ruled within society sought by such a reference to ground the right to a universal satisfaction of wishes that would be limited only by the state of productive forces. The rulers, however, were bent on justifying the limitation of this right. In their behalf it must be said that such a limitation has been opposed on religious and metaphysical grounds not only where it was really a hindrance to development but even where it was genuinely necessary and fruitful for the general enhancement of human powers. Thus the appeal to an irrational justification proves nothing, of itself, against the rationality of what is being justified.

In any event, the materialist tries to replace the justification of action with an explanation of it through an historical understanding of the agent. He regards the justification as an illusion. Most men down to the present day feel a very strong need for such justification; in important decisions they are not content to rely on their feelings of indignation, compassion, love, solidarity, and so on, but must relate their feelings to an absolute world-order by calling them "moral." But this widespread need does not prove that there is a reasonable fulfillment of it. The life of most men is so wretched, the deprivations and humiliations are so many, and their efforts and success are for the most part so disproportionate, that we can easily understand the hope that the earthly order of things may not be the only real one. Idealism does not explain this hope for what it is but tries to rationalize it. In so doing, idealism becomes the means of canonizing the renunciation of desire which nature and societal situations have forced upon man. No philosopher has seen more clearly than Kant that the acceptance of a transcendent order of reality can rest only on man's hopes. The conclusion "that something is (which determines the ultimate possible end) because something ought to happen"²⁴ is an inevitable one, he says. However he does not simply note the existence of this hope which is

24. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 636.

directed to happiness ("for all hoping is directed to happiness")²⁵, but gives it a philosophical basis; thus his originally rationalist analysis of reason moves notably closer to a dogmatically metaphysical system such as he was opposing.

When the desire for happiness, which life from beginning to end proves illusory, was put aside and hope alone was left, the alteration of those conditions which cause unhappiness could become the goal of materialist thought. This goal took on a different shape in varying historical situations. Given the evolution of productive forces in antiquity, even the materialist philosophers were forced in the face of suffering to elaborate techniques of an interior life; peace of soul is the only resort in the midst of distress when all external means fail. The materialism of the early bourgeois era aimed, on the contrary, at developing the knowledge of nature and attaining new powers of mastery over nature and man. The wretchedness of our own time is connected with the structure of society; social theory therefore forms the main content of contemporary materialism.

The practical requirements of concrete problems affect, in turn, both the content and the form of materialist theory. Idealism understands its various systems to be attempts at answering the same eternal question, the same eternal riddle, and it likes to speak of philosophers conversing with each other across the millennia, because they all deal with the same theme. But the materialist's views are essentially determined by the tasks to be mastered at the moment.

The end and scope of philosophy is, that we may make use to our benefit of effects formerly seen; or that, by application of bodies to one another, we may produce the like effects of those we conceive in our mind, as far forth as matter, strength, and industry will permit, for the commodity of human life. For the inward glory and triumph of mind that a man may have for the mastering of some difficult or doubtful matter, or for the discovery of some hidden truth, is not worth so much pains as the study of philosophy requires; nor need any man care much to teach another what he knows himself, if he think that will be the only benefit of his

25. Kant, *ibid.*

labour . . . The scope of all speculation is the performing of some action, or thing to be done.²⁶

The direction of physicalist materialism in the seventeenth century still allowed the definitive equating of reality and body. Today the analysis of the social process leads us to see an opposition between man and nature and reveals the determinative role which that conflict plays in cultural phenomena. The old equation is not thereby declared invalid; we simply recognize that it depended in its origin and form on the tasks faced by early bourgeois society. Today, however, the fundamental historical role of economic relations is characteristic of the materialist position. In this new context it has become impossible to give any supreme principle as such the final word.

If men change not only nature but themselves and all their relationships, then philosophical ontology and anthropology are replaced by "a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men."²⁷ The possibility of using these results in order to grasp developmental tendencies which point beyond the immediate present does not justify transposing that summing-up into the future. Every metaphysics strives for insight into an essential nature, with the idea that the nucleus of the future is already contained in it; what metaphysics discovers must underlie not only the past but the future as well. But contemporary materialism does not build up supratemporal concepts and abstract from the differences introduced by time. Even the possibility of establishing certain general human traits by considering man in his past history does not lead to a hypostatization of these traits as suprahistorical factors. Society, on which man's existence partially depends, is a totality which cannot be compared to anything else and is continuously restructuring itself. Thus, while the similarity of human traits through the various periods of

26. Thomas Hobbes, *Concerning Body* I. 1. 6, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. by Sir William Molesworth, volume 1 (London, 1839), p. 7.

27. Marx-Engels, *The German Ideology, Parts I and III*, tr. by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 15.

history allows us to form concepts which are important for understanding contemporary social movements, it by no means allows us to interpret these traits as the ground of history in its totality. Understanding of the present becomes more idealist, the more it avoids the economic causes of material need and looks to a psychologically naïve elaboration of so-called "basic elements of human existence."

If materialist theory is an aspect of efforts to improve the human situation, it inevitably opposes every attempt to reduce social problems to second place. The materialist's criticism has been provoked by the recent spiritual trend which hypostatizes the monadic individual and thereby devalues the importance of providing proper economic foundations for society. But it also opposes every attempt to play down the importance of insight into the earthly order of things by turning man's attention to a supposedly more essential order. Especially does the materialist see deception being practiced on men by every type of philosophy which seeks to justify a really groundless hope or even to obscure its groundlessness. For all the optimism he has about changing situations, for all that he treasures the happiness which comes from solidarity among men and work for a changed society, he has a pessimistic streak as well. Past injustice will never be made up; the suffering of past generations receives no compensation. In idealist circles, too, there is a pessimism but it is directed at the earthly present and future, that is, it turns upon the impossibility of a future earthly happiness for the generality of men and is usually expressed as a fatalism or feeling of imminent destruction. The sadness congenial to the materialist, however, concerns past events. He will have nothing to do with general conjectures "that the population of the earth as a whole, under principles prevailing up to now, may have reached a rate of growth which is disproportionate to the amount of food that can be made available by technology, science, and economic progress,"²⁸ with the idea that we may have already

28. Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1926), p. 166.

passed the optimum level of technological productivity, or with pessimistic images of a decadence of the human race, of a "turning point in the life of mankind as a whole and in its aging process."²⁹ Such ideas and images interpret the dilemmas inherent in a form of society which inhibits human powers as a weakness of mankind.

The claim that there is an absolute order and an absolute demand made upon man always supposes a claim to know the whole, the totality of things, the infinite. But if our knowledge is in fact not yet final, if there is an irreducible tension between concept and being, then no proposition can claim the dignity of perfect knowledge. Knowledge of the infinite must itself be infinite, and a knowledge which is admittedly imperfect is not a knowledge of the absolute. Consequently metaphysics tends to regard the whole world as the product of reason, for reason knows only itself perfectly. The secret of metaphysics generally may be seen in the immanent motif which dominates German idealism and is expressed as early as the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely that "nothing in *a priori* knowledge can be ascribed to objects save what the thinking subject derives from itself,"³⁰ in other words, that reason can attain absolute knowledge only of itself. Even empirico-critical philosophy must be accounted a metaphysics in this respect, for it claims that sensation is the true, independent, unconditioned reality, since knowledge of it is immediate, that is, it has itself for its object. Even though the most recent metaphysics expressly questions "the solidity of a definitive knowledge of being,"³¹ it continues to regard absolute consciousness as the reflecting mirror of the innermost reality of being. Knowing and the known are identical in genuine metaphysics; the being of which metaphysics speaks "is constituted by disclosedness (that is, by understand-

29. Scheler, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

30. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the second edition, p. 25.

31. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy*, vol. II, tr. by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 227.

ing).”³² Only in this way can metaphysics, new or old, lay its foundations, however cautiously it may conceive the identity of subject and object.

Materialism, on the contrary, maintains the irreducible tension between concept and object and thus has a critical weapon of defense against belief in the infinity of the mind. The tension is not everywhere the same in intensity. Science, for its part, is a sum-total of efforts to overcome the tension in various ways. But as soon as science bears in mind the subject’s share in the construction of concepts, it incorporates into itself an awareness of its own dialectic. A dialectical process is negatively characterized by the fact that it is not to be conceived as the result of individual unchanging factors. To put it positively, its elements continuously change in relation to each other within the process, so that they are not even to be radically distinguished from each other. Thus the development of human character, for example, is conditioned both by the economic situation and by the individual powers of the person in question. But both these elements determine each other continuously, so that in the total development neither of them is to be presented as an effective factor without giving the other its role.

The same is true of science as a real process. Its concepts are certainly dependent on their objects but at the same time they are conditioned by the subjective factors in research and by the methods used and the direction taken by the theoretical interests of the scientist. Despite the need for science ceaselessly to determine the share subjectivity plays in concept formation and thereby to make allowance for it, it will never succeed in distinguishing subject from object with perfect clarity. Or, what amounts to the same thing, science will never succeed in totally equating knowledge and object, except in sensation, where no concept is involved and where knowledge and reality are immediately identical. The theoretical activity of men, like the practical, is not the independent knowledge of a fixed object, but a product of ever-changing reality. Even in a society that would

32. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 272.

freely determine what it is to be, nature, however gradual the change in it might be, would be a factor militating against such an identification of knowledge and object. Physics is an abstract product of human action and may be related to future experience only as a highly conditional hypothesis, not as the full reflection of a supposed essence of natural history.

The Kantian concept of the infinite task manifests some such awareness. It is to be distinguished from the dialectical conception, however, by the fact, among others, that the fulfillment of the task takes the form of a purely intellectual and rectilinear advance which never reaches the goal but does truly presuppose the goal, that is, the totality "in so far as we may postulate its existence and strive towards it."³³ But, contrary to what this doctrine maintains, the subject-object relation is not accurately described by the picture of two fixed realities which are conceptually fully transparent and move towards each other. Rather, in what we call objective, subjective factors are at work; and in what we call subjective, objective factors are at work. Consequently, for the historical understanding of a given theory we must grasp the interplay of both aspects, the human and the extrahuman, the individual and the classifiable, the methodological and the substantive, and not separate any of these, as realities, from the others. There is no general formula for handling the interaction of the forces which must be taken into account in particular theories; the formula must be searched out in each case.

The investigation of nature, as developed throughout the history of bourgeois society, has acquired its theoretical unification and techniques and may quite rightly be described as a continuous approximation of scientific knowledge to reality. On the other hand, the awareness that such scientific description, along with the categories used in it, depends on the work and concerns of contemporary man, while not limiting the truth of such a claim, does prevent us from using the concepts "approximation" and "reality" as a schema embracing all of history and

33. Hermann Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 532-33.

from perpetuating them in the idea of limitless progress or regress.

In Kant himself the idea of limitless progress is still taken critically for the most part, and means primarily only that there is no definite limit set upon the investigation of interdependent conditions. But his idea of intuitive understanding, though it is "a problem,"³⁴ necessarily leads to the conception of a rectilinear process of knowledge. For, if it is even thinkable that there be such an "*intellectus archetypus*," "although unknowable by us, a supersensible real ground for nature" and that this intellect had "the whole of nature as a system"³⁵ immediately present to it so that no imperfection in its knowledge were possible, then, of course, classificatory science can stick to its course. It may now and then take a few backward steps, but the object which it strives to know cannot be subject to time or to any influence from human actions, among which science itself is to be numbered. According to Kant the necessity incumbent on us men of perceiving realities from within time, that is successively, is not grounded in things themselves but is as it were an infirmity of the finite subject. "Time is . . . a purely subjective condition of our human intuition . . . and in itself, apart from the subject, is nothing."³⁶ Even I myself, according to Kant, am not truly in time, for

if without this condition of sensibility I could intuit myself, or be intuited by another being, the very same determinations which we now represent to ourselves as alterations would yield knowledge into which the representations of time, and therefore also of alteration, would in no way enter . . . Time is not, therefore, something in itself, nor is it an objective determination inherent in things.³⁷

These teachings of Kant are contrary to the dialectical concept of knowledge as a nonindependent process which can be defined only in the context of the dynamism of society.

34. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 328, p. 319.

35. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Part 2, Division 2, no. 77, tr. by J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1892), pp. 324-25.

36. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 35, pp. 77-78.

37. Kant, *op. cit.*, B 54 with note, p. 79.

Concepts like theory and knowledge must, of course, at any given time have a clear meaning, since only when they are described or defined, however inadequately, can they be understood and applied. But dialectical materialism takes such meanings to be abstractions formed within the context of the contemporary situation out of materials supplied by the past, and not fixed, changeless elements on which the future is to be built. The scientific idea of man, as well as nature which is known and to be known by science, are elements in the dynamism of history and will play a role even in the future. But they themselves are determined and altered by the total process, just as much as they in turn, as productive forces, determine and alter it. The application, therefore, of definitions constructed in the context of the contemporary situation or, what comes to the same thing, the contemporary signification of these concepts can some day become meaningless. Consequently, the image of an endless process involving the simple realities "knowledge" and "object" proves to be an hypostatizing of abstract significations. Such absolutizing is the other side of the exaggerated relativization of science by many Kantian and other idealist trends. The transference of temporality to the knowing subject or to the ground of existence deprives science of the possibility of knowing the subject as himself part of history, or it disparages history as being "merely" empirical and as not attaining reality at all. In fact, in order that the science of history, limited as it was to "phenomena," might have the dignity of truth ascribed to it at all, Kant had to relate it to the totality or "in itself" of things by way of the idea of the endless task.

If, however, as is necessarily the case, critical analysis must be brought to bear on philosophical work no less than on scientific, the dogmatic distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself must be surrendered, as must the corresponding distinction between scientific and philosophical concepts. But, in return, knowledge itself now turns out to be a historical phenomenon. In contrast to the use often made of the Kantian criticism by metaphysical world-views, the consistent application of the Kantian critique really leads to the formation of the dialectical

method. Hegel developed it, but he also thought of it as exhausting its virtualities in his own system. He really applies it, however, not to the knowledge of the present but only to theories elaborated in the past. Hegel is an idealist in that he presents his system as absolute, yet he created the conceptual tool for overcoming such a distorted idea. The correct application of the method does not mean simply that the Hegelian system or any of the views prevailing today are to be handled precisely as Hegel handled his predecessors. Rather, they all lose their character of being steps towards the absolute, which earlier doctrines still have in Hegel because of his belief that the dialectic was reaching its goal in him.

When Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels freed the dialectic from its idealist form, materialism achieved an awareness of the ever-changing but irreducible tension between its own teaching and reality, and acquired in the process its own conception of knowledge. Materialism obviously does not reject thinking. Such a step was far from the minds of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century materialists as well. But materialism, unlike idealism, always understands thinking to be the thinking of particular men within a particular period of time. It challenges every claim to the autonomy of thought.

If materialism develops the abstract idea of dialectic just described, if it reflects at all on its position on these general questions, this is due less to its own immanent dynamism than the needs of the critique which metaphysics and its social function provoke. Materialism is not interested in a world view or in the souls of men. It is concerned with changing the concrete conditions under which men suffer and in which, of course, their souls must become stunted. This concern may be comprehended historically and psychologically; it cannot be grounded in general principles. There are indeed comprehensive formulations which are extremely important in materialism. The abstract statements occasioned by its critique of idealism have, however, a purely indirect significance. Metaphysics takes the most general characteristics, the elements as it were, which are common to all men in all times and places and calls them "concrete." It

vies with itself in producing ever new doctrines and schemata for discovering and pointing to this ultimate, original, concrete reality. Materialism is relatively poor in such schemata, because it expects little profit from them for its own purposes. Because of the independent significance it gives the spiritual, idealism busies itself with "continually questioning anew its own presuppositions." But materialism tests its own presuppositions only when the theory that depends upon it runs into real difficulties. In such matters it is much less "radical" than idealist philosophy.

This pragmatic outlook finds expression even in the materialist stand against idealism. It does not attack the idealist system as a whole but only the claim that there is a meaning immanent in events. This meaning would be present not only in explicit interpretations of reality but whenever we speak of an original and normative structure of the world or man. It makes no difference whether this structure be regarded as "object" or as web of realities which precede the constitution of anything as object. An anthropology of this kind must necessarily ignore the fact that the direction of the process of abstraction or discovery, by which knowledge of the underlying structure is obtained, itself belongs to a particular historical situation; that is, it is the product of a dialectical process which can never be broken down into neatly separable subjective and objective elements. If the anthropology did not practice this kind of ignorance, it could not take the result it reaches to be an immediate insight into the ground of being instead of a theory which is aware of the tension just described. The thesis of a meaning or a being that is already realized or to be realized necessarily involves such an hypostatization of knowledge. That thesis and its consequent systematic traits are alien to materialism. But many supposedly materialist doctrines do indeed show these very traits, especially doctrines which to the claim of the originality of matter add a veneration of matter or of what is material, as though what is original or independent deserves therefore a special respect.³⁸

38. Such pantheism, of course, often proves to be an outward garment that is easily put off, as when the brave Vanini says, "Nature, which is God," but adds in brackets "for it is the source of motion" (*De*

Many idealist systems, it must be added, contain a great deal of material knowledge, and the latter represents an important element in scientific progress despite the metaphysical aims of the systems as such. The dialectic itself is idealist in origin, and many schemata of modern metaphysics are of the highest importance as models for judging contemporary man, as "hypotheses," to use Dilthey's term for the systems of the past.³⁹ The idealist character of a work often finds expression in apparent minutiae; for example, in the emotional overtones of the idea of autonomous knowledge, or in the importance given to long-dead philosophers and their problems and the insensitivity to the real wretchedness of today and to its causes. The importance of highlighting these fine distinctions of thought or even of distinguishing between materialism and idealism at all is not to be proved by argument. The importance really emerges when we look at the part played by these currents of thought today. What makes the intellectual difference so important is not that idealism wrongly makes the mind infinite but that in so doing it considers the changing of the material conditions of human existence to be secondary.

Materialism requires the unification of philosophy and science. Of course it recognizes that work techniques differ in the more general pursuits of philosophy and the more limited tasks of science, just as it recognizes distinctions of method in research and the presentation of research. But it does not recognize any difference between science and philosophy as such. This does not mean that the individual contemporary sciences or even their own special self-awareness, that is their theory, are to be taken as embodying the highest degree of insight available today. Because of existing conditions, the prevailing practice of science is in fact cut off from important insights and is outdated in its form. The judgment on how far the total structure of science and the condition of individual sciences correspond to

admirandis naturae reginae deaeque mortalium arcanis, libri quattuor [Paris, 1616], p. 366).

39. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

the knowledge now available is itself a complicated theoretical problem and cannot be decided once and for all.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries science as a whole was built upon a mechanistic doctrine of nature and, in fact, was almost coextensive with this doctrine; consequently the materialism of the day regarded mathematico-mechanistic natural science as the sole knowledge of reality. Its theory of knowledge and its methodology corresponded to this conviction. The physicalist materialism of Vogt and Haeckel in the nineteenth century had, however, already practically given up on the effort to unify philosophy and positive science. The reason is that at that time the mechanistic doctrine of nature was no longer coextensive with the content of science, but had lost a great deal of its importance to social sciences. The latter now became decisive for methodology as well. The monism of Haeckel, derived purely from the natural sciences, is therefore a pseudo-materialism, as is proved also by the fact that it functions as a world view and leads away from historical practice.

When Max Scheler, however, as late as 1926 regarded materialism as "a conception which exaggerates the cognitional value of the mechanistic doctrine of nature" and claims that it "overlooked the sevenfold relativity of the formal-mechanistic view of nature and soul, and thus made the mechanism of nature a 'thing-in-itself,'" ⁴⁰ he obviously misunderstood completely the meaning of the materialist demand that philosophy and science be unified. The real meaning is the exact opposite of any attempt to absolutize particular scientific doctrines. It requires instead that every piece of knowledge be regarded, not of course as a purely arbitrary creation, but as a representation by particular men in a particular society, context, and moment of time, a representation which is a product but can become a productive force in turn. Materialism is not tied down to a set conception of matter; no authority has a say on what matter is except natural science as it moves forward. The results of

40. Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, pp. 299-300.

science, however, are always conditional. This is not only because of corrections which the future will inevitably bring but also because physics, while providing the most generalized formulations of a given society's experience of spatio-temporal events, also carries the mark of its subjective origin and thus an irreducible element of obscurity.

This conception of science distinguishes materialism from the positivism and empirico-criticism of the nineteenth century. Ever since its beginnings in Turgot and d'Alembert⁴¹ during the Enlightenment positivism professed "the dogma of the invariability of natural laws."⁴² It also professed the dependence of man's action on his present knowledge of the natural order but not the dependence of both the order itself and the knowledge of it on man's activity. As a result, despite all its belief in the progress of science, positivism necessarily understood science itself in an unhistorical way. This deficiency persisted, even though the belief, elaborated especially in empirico-criticism but normative for all positivism, that the world is made up of elements, with sensations being "provisionally"⁴³ the ultimate elements, was to be replaced by a more modern outlook. Despite his largely pragmatic conception of science, Ernst Mach's view was very little different from the Kantian when it came to the nonhistorical nature of knowledge. For Mach, too, "the entire passage of time, in fact, is dependent solely on the conditions of sensuous activity."⁴⁴ It does not, of course, follow from this, as many materialist authors believe, that before men came along there would have been no nature—that is, that nature has no history. In the time schema projected by the knowing subject, the genus "man" need by no means have the first place but can very well be introduced after an indefinitely long prehistory. But the claim that time is only in the subject does prevent an equation of

41. Cf. Georg Misch, "Zur Entstehung des französischen Positivismus," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 14 (1899).

42. Auguste Comte, *Discours sur l'esprit positif* (Paris, 1909), p. 22.

43. Cf. Ernst Mach, *Contributions to the Analysis of the Sensations*, tr. by C. M. Williams (Chicago: Open Court, 1910), p. 25; *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* (Leipzig, 1920⁴), p. 275.

44. Mach, *Contributions*, p. 169.

knowing subject and finite man. Empirico-criticism, too, is at one with idealist metaphysics to the extent that it presupposes a subject who is independent of time. The materialist critique, therefore, hits upon an important weakness in this doctrine as well.

There is a further distinction, however, between all materialist and positivist currents of thought. The difference does not emerge very clearly in Mach's work, because, although his subjectivist standpoint obviously did not force him in such a direction, he personally lacked the new scientific modesty when confronted by speculation.⁴⁵ Positivism as such, however, is proud of the fact that it is not concerned with the "nature" of things but only with appearances and thus with what things actually offer to us of themselves.

All sound minds recognize today that our scientific studies are strictly limited to an analysis of appearances with a view to discovering their real laws, that is the constant relations of succession or likeness that exist between them, and that these studies cannot deal with the inner nature of the phenomena or with their cause, efficient or final, or with the essential manner of their coming into existence.⁴⁶

John Stuart Mill, too, in his *Logic* defines bodies as "the unknown external cause, to which we refer our sensations." According to him, "of the nature of either body or mind, further than the feelings which the former excites, and which the latter experiences, we do not, according to the best existing doctrine, know anything . . . As body is understood to be the mysterious

45. Cf. what Henri Poincaré, among others, has to say about such modesty in the informative collection of essays, *Le matérialisme actuel* (Paris, 1918), pp. 50-51: ". . . as long as science is incomplete, there will be a small place for freedom, and even if this place gets smaller and smaller, it will always be enough for liberty to be able to direct the whole enterprise; science, however, will always be incomplete . . . As long as the mind is distinct from its object it will not be able to know it perfectly, since it will never see it except from the outside" (italics added).

46. Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive* (Paris, 1893⁵), volume 2, p. 338.

something which excites the mind to feel, so mind is the mysterious something which feels and thinks."⁴⁷

In maintaining this doctrine of the necessary limitation of knowledge to appearances or rather in degrading the known world to a mere outward show, positivism makes peace, in principle, with every kind of superstition. It takes the seriousness out of theory since the latter must prove itself in practice. If non-positivist metaphysics must exaggerate its own knowledge (since by its nature it must claim autonomy for itself), positivism, on the contrary, reduces all possible knowledge to a collection of external data. In addition, it usually overlooks the contradiction between its own metaphysical description of known reality as appearance and externality, on the one hand, and its ostensible power of prevision, on the other (the latter already containing the undialectical separation of subject and object). "Not to know the true but only the appearance of the temporal and accidental, only what is empty—this emptiness has become widespread in philosophy and is still being broadcast in our time, and even boasts of itself."⁴⁸

This objection of Hegel to the Enlightenment can today be directed primarily against positivism, which of course originated in the Enlightenment. Hegel himself, despite the sound of his words here, did not separate truth and knowledge from the temporal; on the contrary—and this is the secret of his depth of thought—he made knowledge of the temporal as temporal the content of philosophy. His idealism consists in the belief "that to call a thing finite or limited proves by implication the very presence of the infinite and unlimited, and that our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is *on this side* in consciousness."⁴⁹

47. John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, Book I, chapter 3, section 8 (London: Longmans Green, 1949), p. 40.

48. Hegel, Address at the opening of his lectures in Berlin, October 22, 1818, in *Sämtliche Werke* (Glockner Ausgabe), volume 8 (Stuttgart, 1929), p. 35.

49. *The Logic of Hegel*, no. 60, tr. by William Wallace from *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (Oxford, 1892²), pp. 116-17.

Yet, despite his hostility to it, Hegel is closer to the genuine Enlightenment than positivism is, because he admits nothing to be in principle inaccessible to human knowledge and subject to surmise alone. Positivism, on the other hand, is very conscious of its tolerance in this respect; it even wanted its very name to be interpreted expressly as opposition to the "negative," that is to any denial of such surmise. Sound philosophy, says Comte, leaves aside necessarily insoluble problems but in so doing it remains more impartial and more tolerant than its opponents. It investigates the factors that conditioned the duration and decline of former systems of belief

without ever engaging in any absolute rejection. . . . In this way it renders scrupulous justice not only to various monotheistic systems besides the one which is dying among us today, but also to polytheistic or even fetishistic beliefs, while always relating them to the corresponding phase of the basic evolutionary process.⁵⁰

An historical understanding of these beliefs signifies here simultaneously the recognition of a correlative area of reality which is in principle inaccessible to knowledge and not assumed into the historical dialectic.

Materialism, too, seeks an historical comprehension of all spiritual phenomena. But its insight that there can be no infinite knowledge does not lead to impartiality in the face of a claim by any finite knowledge to be infinite. Thought is recognized to be limited, but no areas are set aside to which thought is not to be applied. This opinion of the positivists is itself in fact a contradiction. That we do not know everything does not mean at all that what we do know is the nonessential and what we do not know, the essential. These faulty judgments, by which positivism has knowingly made its peace with superstition and declared war on materialism, allow us to see that Bergson's depreciation of theoretical thinking and the rise of modern intuitionist metaphysics are a result of positivist philosophy.

Positivism is really much closer to a metaphysics of intuition than to materialism, although it wrongly tries to couple the two.

50. Comte, *Discours sur l'esprit positif*, p. 52.

Since the turn of the century positivism has seemed, in comparison with the reigning metaphysics, not to be "concrete" enough, that is, really, not spiritualist enough. But in fact positivism and metaphysics are simply two different phases of one philosophy which downgrades natural knowledge and hypostatizes abstract conceptual structures. Bergson, like vitalism generally, bases his metaphysics of *la durée* on the doctrine of an immediate datum which is verified by intuition; the only distinction from positivism is that for Bergson this datum is not made up of discrete and detached elements but consists of the intuitively known vital flow of life itself. The metaphysics of the elements, the interpretation of reality as a sum-total of originally isolated data, the dogma of the unchangeableness of the natural laws, the belief in the possibility of a definitive system are all the special metaphysical theses of positivism. It has in common with intuitionism the subjectivist claim that immediate primary data, unaffected by any theory, are true reality, as well as the use of "only" by which both philosophies try to limit any theory of rational prevision (a theory which, we must admit, they wrongly interpret along mechanistic lines).

In their opposition to materialism, therefore, positivism and intuitionism are at one. In fact, if the defenselessness of these philosophies before any and all supernaturalist tendencies may be said to find especially obvious expression in their helplessness in the face of spiritism and occultism, then Bergson even takes precedence over Comte. A philosophy with metaphysical content fills the transcendental regions with its own speculations. Therefore, as Comte says reproachfully, it "has never been able to be anything but critical"⁵¹ towards prevailing doctrines of the afterlife. Bergson must begin, consequently, by expressly assuring us that the transcendence of consciousness is "so probable that the burden of proof falls on him who denies it, not on him who affirms it" and that philosophy leads us "little by little to a state of mind which is practically equivalent to certitude."⁵²

51. Comte, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

52. Bergson, "L'âme et le corps," in *Le matérialisme actuel* (Paris, 1918), pp. 47-48.

Comte, on the other hand, having equated reality with subjective data and mere appearances, is antecedently and in principle rendered helpless before all claims to have experienced the suprasensible.

At the present time it is hardly possible to distinguish between the more positivist and the more intuitionist forms of a philosophy that is marked by such subjection to the occult. According to Hans Driesch it is clear that his teaching "not only is not opposed to the 'occult' but even paves the way for it."⁵³ Bergson does not hesitate to assure us in his most recent book

that if, for example, the reality of "telepathic phenomena" is called in doubt after the mutual corroboration of thousands of statements which have been collected on the subject, it is human evidence in general that must, in the eyes of science, be declared to be null and void: what, then, is to become of history?

and he does not think it impossible "that a gleam from this unknown world reaches us, visible to our bodily eyes."⁵⁴ In fact, Bergson seriously conjectures that such messages from the other world could bring about a total transformation of mankind. The neglect of the theoretical in favor of the bare immediate datum thus wholly robs philosophy of its illuminative effect. "Whenever sensation with its alleged independence is taken as the criterion of reality, the distinction between nature and ghosts can become blurred."⁵⁵

The disciples of Comte, especially the empirico-criticists and the logical positivists, have so refined their terminology that the distinction between simple appearances, with which science deals, and the essential is no longer to be found. But the depreciation of theory makes itself felt nonetheless in very varying ways, as when Wittgenstein declares, in his otherwise first-rate *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*:

53. Hans Driesch, *Philosophie des Organischen* (Leipzig, 1921), p. 387.

54. Bergson *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, tr. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (New York: Holy, 1935; cited from the Doubleday Anchor Book edition: Garden City, N.Y., n.d.), p. 316.

55. Hermann Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*, p. 495.

We feel that even when *all possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course there are then no questions left, and this is itself the answer . . . There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical.⁵⁶

Neither does materialism, as we explained above, believe that the problems of life are solvable in a purely theoretical way, but it also regards it as unthinkable that "after a long period of doubt . . . the sense of life"⁵⁷ could become clear in any other way. If hypostatized in such a way, there is no "mystical" and no "sense of life."

Materialism has in common with positivism that it acknowledges as real only what is given in sense experience, and it has done so since its beginnings. "What we contemplate in mind has its whole origin in sense perception," says Epicurus.⁵⁸ "If you fight against all sensations, you will have no standard by which to judge even those of them which you say are false."⁵⁹ Throughout its history materialism has held to this theory of knowledge, which serves it as a critical weapon against dogmatic concepts. On the other hand, materialism does not absolutize sensation.

The requirement that every existent manifest itself through the senses does not mean that the senses do not change in the historical process or that they are to be regarded as fixed cornerstones of the world. If the evidence of sense experience is part of the grounds for existential judgments, such experiences are far from identical with the constant elements of the world. Theory is always more than sensibility alone and cannot be totally reduced to sensations. In fact, according to the most recent developments in psychology, far from being the elementary building blocks of the world or even of psychic life, sensa-

56. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, tr. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 149, 151.

57. Wittgenstein, *ibid.*

58. Epicurus, in *Die Nachsokratiker*, tr. by Nestle (Jena, 1925), volume 1, p. 183.

59. Epicurus, in *The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers*, ed. by Whitney J. Oates (New York: Random House, 1940), p. 37.

tions are derivatives arising only through a complicated process of abstraction involving the destruction of formations which the psyche had shaped.⁶⁰ Even apart from these two considerations, we must say that eternity cannot be predicated of our sensibility. Like the relation of "subject" to "data," it is conditioned and changeable. Even in the same period of time individual subjects have contradictory perceptions, and the differences are not to be resolved simply by appeal to a majority but only with the help of theory. Sense experiences are indeed the basis of knowledge, and we are at every point referred back to them, but the origin and conditions of knowledge are not identically the origin and conditions of the world.

If positivism agrees with almost every other philosophy against materialism, this is due, it must be admitted, not only to the differences already noted but also to the materialist doctrine on pleasure. We have tried to show that according to materialism a man's actions do not proceed with necessity from some ultimate and absolute position on reality. To ground his decisions the materialist must, of course, appeal to more or less general criteria, but he does not ignore the fact that, given the determinative factors he has adduced, similar decisions can be

60. Cf., for example, Hans Cornelius, *Transzendente Systematik* (Munich, 1916), p. 154: "Instead of a unification, through a 'sensible synopsis of the manifold,' of what was hitherto separated, we have the separation of parts by an effecting of distinctions within the immediately given totality of the flow of consciousness"; Kurt Koffka, "Psychologie," in *Die Philosophie in ihren Einzelwissenschaften* (Berlin, 1925), p. 548: "Sensations, which for so long were the basis of psychology are . . . not the starting points but the end points of a development, the final result of a process of isolation which divided up the natural data; separate structures with a perfected shape which they did not have in their natural state as parts of the initial totality . . . Sensations are thus certainly products of art"; Max Wertheimer, "Über Gestalttheorie," *Symposion* 1, no. 1: We see "that what is primitive, antecedent, really fundamental, has little to do with the late derivative, the cultural product we call sensations." These are randomly chosen passages from relatively recent works. Cf., above all, Kurt Koffka, "Zur Psychologie der Wahrnehmung," *Geisteswissenschaften* (1914), as well as the whole literature on Gestalt theory, where instead of an unsupported philosophical rejection of the doctrine of psychic elements strict proofs of the nonindependence of sensations are scattered throughout reports on experimental work.

expected only in similar psychic situations. These situations themselves have their social and individual conditioning factors, they have a historical dimension, and therefore one cannot deduce, simply from a valid piece of knowledge and without considering the present psychic state of the agent, that a certain action will necessarily follow.

This materialist view has the negative significance that it rejects a metaphysically grounded morality. But in addition it has always meant to materialists that man's striving for happiness is to be recognized as a natural fact requiring no justification. The extent to which a naïve, economically oriented psychology can interpret this striving as a desire for satisfaction of gross material needs has been expounded in detail in the works of Erich Fromm. The structure of needs in various forms of society, in particular social groups, and in individuals is changeable and can be explained only in relation to a specific time and a concrete situation. The known and unknown devotees of the materialist outlook have for centuries given up their freedom and their lives in the struggle for the most varied goals, but especially in solidarity with suffering men. They prove that a concern for personal physical well-being is no more closely associated with this kind of thinking than with any other. In rejecting the illusions of idealist metaphysics they have surrendered every hope of an individual reward in eternity and, with it, an important selfish motive operative in other men.

Repeated attempts to interpret such selfless dedication to the causes of humanity as a contradiction to materialist convictions lack every philosophical justification. What leads to such misunderstandings is the simplistic psychology which lies behind most doctrines that profess an absolute morality. Therefore materialism today says more accurately that all men strive for happiness, not for pleasure, and also that men keep their eyes not so much on pleasure as on what brings them pleasure. Even in simple matters each man is accustomed, as Hegel says of the so-called wise man, "to concern oneself with the matter itself and not with enjoyment, that is, not with the constant reflection on the relation to oneself as an individual, but with the matter

as a matter."⁶¹ Materialism refuses, however, to distinguish between happiness and pleasure, because the satisfaction of desire, unlike "higher" motives, requires no reasons, excuses, or justifications. Justification may indeed be quite appropriate in a particular society for particular actions, but only to a particular authority and not because of some unconditional order of things. To say that men are determined by "elementary reactions of pleasure and pain" is perhaps not a very suitable psychological description, but it does accurately indicate a fact at which the materialist, unlike the idealist, is not scandalized. Although even some otherwise idealist philosophers such as Hegel fully agree with materialism here, this point, combined with the lack of an interpretation of the world in its totality, is a reason why otherwise mutually opposed philosophies agree in reducing materialism to the obviously untenable metaphysical thesis of the exclusive reality of matter and in then easily refuting it.

Contemporary materialism is not principally characterized by the formal traits which oppose it to idealist metaphysics. It is characterized rather by its content: the economic theory of society. Only when the formal traits are abstracted from this content do they emerge as distinguishing marks, such as are regarded as important today, for classifying the philosophical views of the past. The various materialist doctrines, therefore, are not examples of a stable and permanent idea. The economic theory of society and history arose not out of purely theoretical motives, but out of the need to comprehend contemporary society. For this society has reached the point where it excludes an ever larger number of men from the happiness made possible by the widespread abundance of economic forces. In this context is formed the idea of a better reality which will emerge from the presently prevailing state of affairs, and this transition becomes the theme of contemporary theory and practice. Materialism does not lack ideals, then; its ideals are shaped with the needs of society as a starting point and are measured by what is possible in the fore-

61. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, tr. by Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: Kegan Paul, 1892-96), volume 2, p. 269.

seeable future with the human forces available. But materialism does refuse to see these ideals as the foundation of history and therefore of the present as well, as though they were ideas with an existence independent of man. The efforts of idealism in this direction do more honor to history than to the idea. For ideals can become moving forces, in so far as men try to turn them from mere, even if justified, ideas into reality. But history has never ceased till now to be a record of struggles. Even with a view to success in realizing its ideals, materialism refuses to relate "what has happened and its happening now, the unique, accidental, momentary event . . . to an overall context of value and meaning,"⁶² as cultural history does. It can therefore hardly be understood by the latter, any more than by metaphysics generally.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

62. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

AUTHORITY AND THE FAMILY

1. CULTURE

THE history of mankind has been divided into periods in very varying ways. The manner in which periodization has been carried out has not depended exclusively on the object, any more than other concept formations have; the current state of knowledge and the concerns of the knower have also played a part. Today the division into antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern times is still widely used. It originated in literary studies and was applied in the seventeenth century to history generally. It expresses the conviction, formed in the Renaissance and consolidated in the Enlightenment, that the time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the fifteenth century was a dark era for mankind, a sort of hibernation of culture, and was to be understood only as a period of transition. In contemporary scholarship this particular periodization is considered highly unsatisfactory. One reason is that the "Middle Ages" were in fact a time of important progress even from a purely pragmatic viewpoint, since they saw decisive advances in civilization and produced revolutionary technical inventions.¹ A further reason is that the usual criteria for making the fifteenth century a dividing point are partly indefensible, partly applicable in a meaningful way only to limited areas of world history.

In other periodizations the subjective factor is even more evident. The conception which Church Fathers and Scholastics

1. Cf., for example, Lefebvre des Noëttes, "La 'Nuit' du moyen âge et son inventaire," *Mercure de France*, May 1, 1932, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 2 (1933), 198ff.

defended for centuries was dominated by the ideas of the creation of the world, the birth of Christ, and the expected end of the world, although various parts of biblical or secular history were intercalated into the scheme, especially between the first two events. Harking back to Roman historical writing which considered the founding of the city to be a normative event for dividing up history, the French Revolution made its own beginning into the start of a new computation of time. Today this practice has been imitated by regimes that wish to highlight the decisive significance of their own seizure of power. These modern regimes, however, while indeed bringing a reform of the whole apparatus of government, also seek to consolidate rather than reshape important forms of social life, especially the economy, social classification, the conditions of ownership, and basic categories of national and religious life. Consequently, their mere appearance on the scene does not provide the contemporary desire for a valid structuring of history with an adequate point of departure. The traditional threefold division of history corresponded to the state of knowledge and the concerns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, just as the ecclesiastical periodization did to the essentially religious outlook of the Middle Ages. But the purely political periodizations being proposed today, like a whole series of modern attempts by theoreticians of history,² bear the mark not only of historically conditioned interests (which is inevitable) but also of superficiality.

Scientific criticism of the divisions which have been offered, and an increased attention to this problem in general, arose out of the growing conviction that the history of mankind as a whole or at least of large groups of European peoples along with certain parts of Africa, Asia, and America presents even to the more penetrating eye a structured unity and not a disorganized and chaotic series of occurrences. In this view the periods of history are not mere collections of events with an arbitrarily posited beginning and end. They rather stand in contrast to one

2. Cf., for example, Kurt Breysig, *Der Stufenbau und die Gesetze der Weltgeschichte* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1905).

another because each manifests certain structural elements proper to it and proves therefore to have a relative unity. It remains difficult to set precise boundaries, but this cannot obscure the very definite differences between the high points of such periods. Even in other theoretical fields, for example biology, it is easier to describe significant instances from various areas than to pinpoint the transition between them.

The effort to distinguish historical periods from one another by means of characteristic peculiarities has been preceded by research in the various disciplines which deal with life in its historical dimension. The histories of law, art, and religion have sought to establish divisions based on criteria proper to themselves. Apart from some scholars who are content with simple accumulations of facts, the conjecture is rather widely held that the lines of development within these areas do not run without connection between them but rather give expression to a deeper law common to them all. The reason why Auguste Comte's theory of the three stages through which every society of its nature passes must today be rejected is not that the attempt to comprehend great ages of mankind in as unitary a way as possible was a mistaken one. The reason is that the yardstick applied to history was rather extrinsic and derived from an unsatisfactory philosophy. Comte's procedure suffers especially from the absolutizing of a particular stage in natural science or rather from a questionable interpretation of the natural science of his day. His static and formalistic conception of law makes his whole theory appear relatively arbitrary and unconstructive. The physicist in his researches may justly prescind from the historical process. But we expect the philosopher of history and the sociologist to be able to show how their individual theories and concept formations and, in general, every step they take are grounded in the problematic of their own time. Comte, Spencer, and many of their successors are unconscious of these connections and even deny them in their conscious views of science. It is this that makes their periodizations rigid and inconsistent.

The conviction that society has passed through periods, each with its relative unity, that is, through various forms, is not

lessened by the lack of concrete sociological systems to lend support. In Germany the conviction has remained alive since the time of Herder and Hegel, although it has been represented more in critiques by political economists and in large-scale historical writing than in professional philosophy. In his lectures on the periods of modern history Ranke maintains that "apart from certain basic, unchangeable, eternal ideas, for example in the realm of morality, every age has its special tendency and special ideal."³ From the viewpoint of the philosophy of history it was Dilthey who provided the major formulation of the idea:

We can mark off periods within the course of history, in which an intelligible unity embracing everything from the conditions of life to the highest ideas is formed, reaches its climax, and dissolves again. Every such period has an internal structure in common with all other periods, and this structure determines the interconnection of parts, the unfolding and modification of tendencies. . . . The structure of a given age proves to be . . . a coherent association of subordinate connections and movements within the great complex of forces that make up the period. Out of very diverse and changeable elements a complicated whole is formed. This whole now determines the significance of everything that is at work in the period . . . It is here that the task of analysis lies: to recognize in the varied expressions of life a unity of values and purposes. In so far as such unified expressions of life thrust towards absolute values and purposes, the circle is closed within which the men of that age are locked. For the circle contains opposed tendencies as well. We saw how an age puts its mark on these, and on other tendencies as well, and how the dominant trend hinders their free development.⁴

In idealist philosophy the periods originate from the self-revelation of an intellectual being: for Fichte they correspond to a world-plan that is a priori deducible; for Hegel they represent stages of the self-objectivizing world-mind; for Dilthey they express ever new sides of the general nature of man. Materialism, on the contrary, rejects such a metaphysical factor and tries to find an answer by uncovering the economic dynamism which determines the course, development, and decline of each period.

3. Leopold von Ranke, *Weltgeschichte* 4 (Leipzig, 1910⁵), p. 529.

4. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* 7 (Leipzig, 1927), p. 185f.

It tries to comprehend the historical transformations of human nature in terms of the ever-varying shape of the material life-process in each society. Alterations in the psychic structure which characterizes not only individual cultures but even particular groups within a culture are regarded as moments in a process, the rhythm of which has been dictated in history up to now by the development and sudden transformations of man's relationship to nature as he tries to prolong his existence; that is, by economic necessity. In seeking to trace the outlines of this process in which men act with powers that are promoted or hindered or opposed to each other by the very process itself, the materialist view claims to be putting its finger on what Dilthey calls "the unchangeable and recurring factor in the historical process." It regards such an investigation as the primary object of study, on which "depends the answer to all questions about progress in history and about the direction in which the human race is moving."⁵ But the materialist view is not dominated by fatalism, as the idealist theory is. In materialism, individuals and social groups, working and struggling, of course, with such capabilities as previous historical development affords them, have an effect, in turn, on current economic relationships. In idealism, on the contrary, an intellectual force whose essential traits are antecedently fixed is the originator of events; history, consequently, is not a process of interaction between nature and society, already existent and emerging cultures, freedom and necessity, but is the unfolding or manifestation of a unitary principle.

In the diverse views represented in classical German and French sociology and philosophy of history, two points are maintained by all. On the one hand, history has an inner unity, and the broad lines can be drawn which connect the destiny of the present age with that of the most ancient social formations. On the other hand, because his insight is sharpened by his own problems, contemporary man finds in history certain unified structures and distinct periods, each of which puts its characteristic stamp not only on economic relations, law, politics, art,

religion, and philosophy, but even on the individual. The distinction between these segments of history, a distinction which finds expression in man's psychic make-up as well as in his institutions and works, is taken to be a distinction of cultures. The word "culture" here includes those phenomena which under the name of "civilization" are often distinguished from culture in a more restricted sense and which in an especially evident way are derived from and related to life as it is lived in a given society. Both the pragmatic reactions and contrivances of men and the so-called spiritual expressions of the life of peoples and classes show characteristic traits according as they belong to one or other of the great historical complexes which we call periods or stages of development of mankind. By such signs, which form a sort of index, the genuine student of history recognizes the historical location of a particular event or work, somewhat as the biographer of a scholar or poet can determine the period in which a newly discovered sentence of his subject was written.

None of the great historical complexes remains a fixed structure; between all its subordinate parts and areas there is a continuous interaction which is characteristic of that complex or period. All cultures hitherto known manifest simultaneous and opposed regularities. On the one hand, within a period there are processes which are repeated with a more or less broad similarity, for example the process of mechanical work or the physiological processes of consumption and reproduction, as well as the daily conduct of life under law and the functioning of the apparatus of social intercourse generally. On the other hand, cultures are dominated by tendencies which despite such repetitions are continuously altering the position of social classes in relation to one another as well as the relationships between all areas of life, and will lead finally to the decline or even the conquest of the cultures in question. Even this, however, is not true of all cultures in the same degree. For example, the structure of Chinese society and its accompanying forms of life showed enough stability even in the nineteenth century to put up some resistance to the inroads of the Western European

method of production; the same is true of India. However, for the form of society which is presently dominant in Europe and has extended to America and also left its mark on all the colonial sectors of the world, it is in the highest degree true that despite the uniformly recurring processes within it, inner forces are driving it towards destruction. This particular form of human life in society is obviously in a state of crisis. The whole of contemporary sociology as well as any historical research which cherishes the great historical concerns are seeking a unified theory to account for this interplay of forces. The interplay is taking the form, on the international scene, of a struggle between the great national power-blocs, and, on the domestic scene, of the conflict of social classes. The second of these two antagonisms is dominating European history ever more fully, and obviously plays a key role in the introduction of one or other kind of regime and in the decisions for war or peace. The interaction of the two antagonisms, which itself is conditioned by more profound economic tendencies, is going to decide the fate of our present culture.

Any reflection on culture which at this critical moment can come to grips with the present period and thereby with earlier ones as well, must be concerned with the role of particular cultural spheres and their changing structural interrelationships in the maintenance or dissolution of given forms of society. If the great social unities, especially that of our present experience, develop according to an immanent dialectic, then the forces which have been molded into unity tend to maintain the given way of life by which they are in turn sustained. But they can also work in opposition to each other and to these ways of life and so destroy the unity. If the direction and tempo of this process is ultimately determined by regularities within the economic apparatus of a society, yet the way in which men act at a given point in time can not be explained solely by economic events which have transpired in the immediate past. It is rather the case that particular groups react according to the special character of their members and that this character has been formed in the course of earlier no less than of present social

development. Such a character arises under the influence of all social institutions taken together, and these function in typical ways for each social stratum. The process of production influences men not only in the immediate contemporary form in which they themselves experience it in their work, but also in the form in which it has been incorporated into relatively stable institutions which are slow to change, such as family, school, church, institutions of worship, etc. To understand why a society functions in a certain way, why it is stable or dissolves, demands therefore a knowledge of the contemporary psychic make-up of men in various social groups. This in turn requires a knowledge of how their character has been formed in interaction with all the shaping cultural forces of the time. To regard the economic process as a determining ground of events means that one considers all other spheres of social life in their changing relationships to it and that one conceives this process itself not in its isolated mechanical form but in connection with the specific capabilities and dispositions of men, which have, of course, been developed by the economic process itself. The whole culture, therefore, is caught up in the dynamism of history, and the cultural spheres—customs, morality, art, religion, and philosophy—form, in their interconnection, dynamic influences on the maintenance or breakdown of a particular form of society. Culture at each moment in time is a sum-total of forces at work amid the change of cultures.

The materialist view, then, maintains that cultural arrangements and processes, in all areas of life, in so far as they influence the character and behavior of men at all, are conservative or disruptive factors in the dynamism of society. Either they provide the mortar of the building under construction, the cement which artificially holds together the parts that tend towards independence, or they are part of the forces which will destroy the society. Against such a view objection might well be raised. It is not—the objection would run—the historically developed psychic peculiarities or set of drives characteristic of men in a particular society according to their social group that

determines whether outmoded relations between productive elements are to be maintained and, with them, the social structure built upon them. The decisive factor (within the framework of economic possibility, of course) is rather the State's ability to govern, the organization of its powers, and, ultimately, its physical force. In the history of all developed societies the knowledge and capabilities of men and the corresponding material apparatus of production have been such that only through a characteristic division of men into leaders and followers could the social life-process go on. Even though, at least in periods of growth and flowering, the life of the whole society depended on this division, yet the upper strata of society formed a relatively small nucleus, for which the existing form of society was not only necessary but had become the source of their power and well-being. Furthermore, in so far as previous forms of human life in community conditioned the existence of the whole and its cultural progress, countless individuals, according to their place in the whole, had to pay for such progress with wretchedness that had no meaning for them, and finally with death. If, then, despite this cost, men persevered in a particular form of society, this could only have been by coercion. Why, then, the supposed need for a dynamic concept of culture? Why the supposition of a kind of intellectual cement holding society together, when the cement is at hand in the highly material form of the State's executive power?

This objection is not easily answered. It represents a recall to realism in the face of theories which turn human nature, conscience, or reason, or moral and religious ideas, into stable, independent essences and try to explain the functioning of society by the influence of one or more of them. Such idealistic and rationalistic conceptions of society inevitably fail to solve the problem, and the reason is precisely that they either ignore or at best regard as accidental the connection of lofty ideas with the power relationships in society. Insight, for example, may be an important factor in the development and continuance of society; it may even be the immediate ground of socialization, as

many theories of Enlightenment times or a psychologist like Freud claim.⁶ Yet the whole psychic apparatus of members of a class society, in so far as they do not belong to the nucleus of privileged people, serves in large measure only to interiorize or at least to rationalize and supplement physical coercion. The so-called "social nature" of man, his self-integration into a given order of things, whether the ground of this order be pragmatic, moral, or religious, is essentially reducible to the memory of the acts of force by which men were made "sociable" and civilized and which threaten them still if they become too forgetful. Nietzsche more than anyone else saw what underlies social relationships. That men may pay heed to the insight and promises of other men and the regulations of life in common and may even trust in them at need, is a phenomenon with a frightful history behind it.

"Something is burnt in so as to remain in his memory: only that which never stops *hurting* remains in his memory." This is an axiom of the oldest (unfortunately also the longest) psychology in the world. It might even be said that wherever solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and gloomy colours are now found in the life of men and of nations of the world, there is some *survival* of that horror which was once the universal concomitant of all promises, pledges, and obligations. The past . . . wafts to us its breath, and bubbles up in us again, when we become "serious." When man thinks it necessary to make for himself a memory, he never accomplishes it without blood, tortures, and sacrifice; the most dreadful sacrifices and forfeitures (among them the sacrifice of the first-born), the most loathsome mutilations (for instance, castration), the most cruel rituals of all the religious cults (for all religions are really at bottom systems of cruelty)—all these things originate from that instinct

6. Freud writes in his description of the evolution of culture: "After primal man had discovered that it lay in his own hands, literally, to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another man worked with or against him. The other man acquired the value for him of a fellow-worker, with whom it was useful to live together" (*Civilization and Its Discontents*, tr. by James Strachey [New York: Norton, 1961], p. 46). The decisive cultural step consists in the fact "that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction" (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

which found in pain its most potent mnemonic . . . Alas! reason, seriousness, mastery over the emotions, all these gloomy, dismal things which are called reflection, and all these privileges and pageantries of humanity: how dear is the price that they have exacted! How much blood and cruelty is the foundation of all "good things."⁷

But if past and present coercion plays its part even in the sublimest movements of the human psyche, yet the psyche itself, like all the mediating institutions such as family, school, and church which form the psyche, has its own laws. The role of coercion, which marks not only the origin but also the development of all States, can indeed be hardly overestimated when we try to explain social life in history up to the present. The coercion does not consist simply in punishment for those who violate the imposed order of things. It consists also in the hunger of a man and his family which over and over again drives him to accept the existing conditions for work, among which must be numbered his good behavior in most areas of life. But in the course of development the cruelty and publicity of punishment could be reduced, at least in certain economically well-off periods. In addition, threats of punishment have become increasingly differentiated and intellectualized, so that, in part at least, terror has changed into fear and fear into caution. And as in periods of economic growth and increased social wealth some functions of punishment could be taken over by its positive counterpart, the hope of reward, so too the lords and sentinels who originally, in keeping with primitive traits of the psychic apparatus, were supplemented by an army of spirits and demons, were partially replaced by a divinity or a world of ideas, conceived in brighter or darker colors according to the spirit of the age. All this already means that naked coercion cannot by itself explain why the subject classes have borne the yoke so long in times of cultural decline, when property relationships, like exist-

7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, tr. by Horace B. Samuel in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), Second Essay: "'Guilt,' 'Bad Conscience,' and the Like," section 3, p. 45.

ing ways of life in general, had obviously reduced social forces to immobility and the economic apparatus was ready to yield a better method of production. The historian must here study the whole culture, although knowledge of material conditions is, of course, the basis of understanding.

The complicated historical process in which coercion was partially interiorized was, in addition, not a simple transposition to the intellectual level, a simple registering of terrifying experiences by calculating reason, or a univocal projection of them into the religious and metaphysical sphere. Instead, new qualities arose everywhere in the process. Thus, for example, the relationship of the individual to God was not a matter of pure dependence, even at the beginning. Rather the idea of God provided a framework for the limitless wishes and feelings of revenge, the plans and desires, which have arisen in connection with the struggles of human history. Religion indeed derives its whole content through the psychic elaboration of earthly data, but in the process it acquires its own specific form, which in turn influences the psychic apparatus and destiny of men and is a reality within social evolution as a whole. The same is true of moral ideas, art, and all other areas of culture. Although moral awareness, conscience, and the concept of duty, for example, have developed in intimate connection with coercion and necessities of very varied kinds and are largely to be understood as interiorized force, as external law taken into the psyche itself, yet in the psychic economy of the individual they are in the last analysis specific powers which lead him not only to accept existing conditions but also at times to oppose them. Furthermore, the regulation, for example, of sexual intercourse within the framework of marital union and family was economically conditioned and, in part, the result of fearful coercion. Despite this, the romantic love which arose in the course of such regulation is a social phenomenon which can drive the individual into opposition to or even a break with society. The historically conditioned and not originally "natural" linking of sexuality and tenderness, as well as the friendship and fidelity which become natural to men, are among the cultural elements which play a

specific role in certain social developments. They are a characteristic human trait at a given period and can be generated ever anew by suitable cultural habits while conditioning these in turn. When men are reacting to economic changes, various groups act according to their human characteristics at that point in time, and these characteristics cannot be explained by immediate present circumstances and without a knowledge of the contemporary psychic make-up. But if cultural factors in the social process as a whole (into which they are inextricably interwoven) acquire a proper significance because they operate as characteristic traits of individuals at a given time, all the more do the institutions which are grounded in such traits and help to confirm and continue them have a definite even if relative life of their own. The bureaucracy which operates the State's coercive apparatus has its own interests and power, but so does the staff of any cultural institution in the strict sense.

Culture is today being studied descriptively from the viewpoints of intellectual history and the morphology of cultures. In such study culture is essentially regarded as a unity that is independent of and superordinate to individuals. On the contrary, to regard culture as a dynamic structure, that is, as a dependent but nonetheless special sphere within the social process as a whole, is an approach that is not congenial to a contemplative outlook on history. Such an approach, therefore, is also not equally meaningful in every period. In the struggle to improve man's condition there have been times in which it is of no special practical importance that theory pays heed to all these relationships in only a summary fashion at best. Such are the moments when the economic decline of a specific mode of production has so undermined all the cultural forms which go with it, that the needs of the greater part of society easily turn into rebellion and it takes only the resolute will of progressive groups to win the victory over the naked force of arms on which the whole system at this point essentially rests. But such moments are rare and brief: the decaying order is quickly improved where necessary and is apparently renewed; the periods of restoration last a long time, and during them the outmoded cultural apparatus as well

as the psychic make-up of men and the body of interconnected institutions acquire new power. Then there is need to investigate the culture thoroughly.

How these cultural relationships have their effects which have developed along with the social life-forms and then occupy the scene as a series of routines and as definite characteristics of men, can be studied for very varied times and peoples. We spoke earlier of how the great Asiatic societies, China and India, have managed to resist the invasion of Western European ways of life. This should in no way be taken to mean that no very real conflicts of interest are involved, which must end with the victorious penetration of the superior capitalist mode of production or of some still more progressive economic principle. But the capacity of these cultures for resistance does not find its real expression in their members' belief (a distorted belief for the great majority) that the specifically Chinese or Indian form of production is the most advantageous. Rather, when great masses of people have, against their interests, held fast to their modes of production, a great role has been played by a crippling fear of moving out of the old world of beliefs and ideas which had taken such deep hold on the individual psyche. The culture's specific way of experiencing the world had been built up through simple and recurring tasks and over the centuries had become a necessary element in the life of a society. Without it we could not only not speak of the capacity for resistance of society as a whole; we could not even speak of the peaceful carrying out of indispensable daily arrangements.

In China belief in ancestors is such a cultural factor. Sinologists agree that it has molded the features of Chinese society for centuries. "As a factor in molding Chinese life and thought, it can hardly be exaggerated."⁸ That it could become so stable and strong is due to characteristics of the Chinese mode of production. A single reference will clarify what is meant. Horticulture, which is typical of economic life even in rice-growing

8. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: Macmillan, 1947⁸), p. 633.

areas,⁹ demands an accumulation of knowledge which in the given circumstances could only be gained from long experience. Among other things, an intensive agricultural economy is distinguished from an extensive one by the fact that intensive cultivation of the soil requires very precise and nuanced knowledge for each area, almost for each acre with its special conditions. The elder who through a lifetime has observed the weather, the peculiar traits of each type of plant, their diseases, and so on, becomes for the young man a source of indispensable knowledge. With his accumulated experience the elder is the natural leader in production. Here perhaps we may discern one root of reverence for ancestors. The superiority of living elders over the young as a principle for conceiving the relationship between generations inevitably meant that the ancestors of the living family-head must have been as superior to him in power and wisdom as he now was to his family; the same result followed for the child, in addition, from his veneration for his own father and grandfather. The greatness and holiness of ancestors must have increased rather than decreased with their distance from the present; each must have seemed the more divine, the further back he stood in the long line of ancestors. The reverence and gratitude which the individual thinks he owes his ancestors becomes finally a fundamental trait in his psychic make-up.

Although such a trait emerges from real circumstances and is continually renewed by them, only a rationalistic psychology could believe that, in the history of the society's and the individual's development, there originally existed a clear consciousness of the real reason behind ancestor worship and that later on there was an intentional or unintentional obscuring and falsifying of that reason. On the contrary, the relationships involved in production were originally experienced in religious forms, and these acquired their own meaning and history. The cult of ancestors, which is a living social force affecting each

9. Cf. K. A. Wittfogel, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* (Stuttgart, 1931), pp. 337ff.

person from birth through his education, moral code, and religion, receives its continually renewed motivation not only through the experiences of the child and young man with his own parents and grandparents but also through the extremely varied psychic movements which arise in individuals out of the existing situation and take this particular cultural shape. For example, the idea that the ancestors are powerful people in the other world, too, and can effectively bless, provides men with the possibility of influencing destiny, incalculable though it be. It offers, further, a means of escaping from devastating uncertainty in important decisions: one asks advice of the ancestors by drawing lots before the symbols of their presence. Belief in ancestors allows troubled men to preserve and renew their inner peace. Such a belief, consequently, will in certain circumstances be maintained by individuals and whole social groups for a good time after it has become a hindrance to their material interests. Even after a religion has lost its significance for production, men bear hardships and make sacrifices for it. In China reverence for ancestors is a special hindrance to social progress; it must finally fall victim to modern economic development, but for the time being it complicates the situation. Edward Thomas Williams observes: "This reverence has been an obstacle to all progress. It has not only opposed religious propaganda, but sanitation, plague prevention, and all educational and political reform. Happily now this conservatism is breaking down because family solidarity is being given up."¹⁰

When we turn to the preservation of the caste system in India, the fact that culture has its own role to play in the dynamism of society emerges with special force. It may indeed be that in the historical origins of the castes a relatively natural division of labor or subjection to a foreign conqueror was the most important factor. In any case, however, the organization of parts, which ultimately decided the basic structure of the whole life-process of Indian society, was mirrored in a system of ideas, which exercised a special power not only in the con-

10. Edward Thomas Williams, *China Yesterday and Today* (New York: Crowell, 1923), p. 66.

scious concerns of the upper strata but also in the character of the subordinate lower castes. To illustrate how a cultural form, once widespread, finds ever new resources for resisting change, a brief reference will suffice. "What really raises one's indignation against suffering is not suffering intrinsically, but the senselessness of suffering."¹¹ This circumstance leads, according to Nietzsche, to the rise of religion. The terrible differentiation in ways of work and life, which enables the Indian life-process to succeed, was rendered intelligible by the idea of the transmigration of souls, according to which birth into an upper or lower caste is the consequence of actions in an earlier life. The lowest classes find in this idea a special reason for not wanting any change in the system. In so far as a Pariah can say that he is faithful to the prescriptions for his caste, he hopes that in his next birth he will rise into the Brahman caste and enjoy its privileges. Max Weber writes:

An orthodox Hindu confronted with the deplorable situation of a member of an impure caste would only think that he has a great many sins to redeem from his prior existence . . . The reverse of this is that a member of an impure caste thinks primarily of how to better his future social opportunities at rebirth by leading an exemplary life according to caste ritual.¹²

The fact that the caste system characteristic of Indian economy is experienced as a religious matter not only leads thus to a frictionless integration of the pariahs into the existing process of production. It also motivates the adherence of these individuals to the cruel system as a whole. The continuance, even the eternal duration, of the system gives meaning to their whole existence. If it were to be dismantled in the future, just when they had the prospect of enjoying its advantages, all their merits and sacrifices would have been in vain. This is one of the many reasons why even the lower strata of society can react with fanatical rage to attempts at forcible change and can be easily

11. Nietzsche, *op. cit.*, section 12, p. 55.

12. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, tr. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), p. 121.

roused to react in this way. The ancient religious ideas do an immense amount for them, and the loss of such ideas would mean that the lives of whole generations were a failure and meaningless. Theoretical enlightenment is almost powerless here. Only through daily experience of modern consumer goods and, ultimately, of a more advanced way of life generally will the old ideas gradually change and new concepts of earth and world, birth and death, body and soul win a place.

It would be a mistake to see in religious ideas anything but mediated images of the earthly relationships which are imposed on men by their work. But it is also true, nonetheless, that these ideas have a definite social effect on the psychic development of each individual. Bouglé, in his fundamental studies of the caste system, judges that we may not attribute the establishment of the system to priestly fraud alone, and goes on to say: "It was the practice of worship by small groups in the early familial communities that now prevents the castes from mingling; it is reverence before the mysterious effects of sacrifice that in the last analysis subordinates the other castes to the priestly caste."¹³ But this fact does not militate against the economic interpretation of history, as he thinks. It rather points to a basic feature which dominates Indian history. Bouglé himself saw that the caste system was originally a social principle of extraordinary importance for Indian life and only with the passage of time became a dead weight: "The caste system undoubtedly had the advantage of freeing society from barbarism through the order thus imposed on it. But the system also threatens very quickly to slow down society's progress, and that for a long period, on the path of civilization."¹⁴

The opposition which the caste system, because of its religious backing, offers to the spread of new social forms does not mean that religion is independent of the material life of society. It means only that religion can, like other cultural institutions which have finally achieved stability and strength, either bind society to a given form or disrupt it, that it exercises productive

13. Charles Bouglé, *Sur le régime des castes* (Paris, 1908), p. 82.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

or obstructive functions. The idea of "cultural lag" has its basis here. "Cultural lag" means that at the present time social life depends on material factors and that change occurs more quickly in areas immediately related to the economy than in other cultural spheres. The contemporary situation in China and India, of which we have spoken, does not prove, however, as Ogburn seems to think,¹⁵ that the dependence is occasionally in the other direction. It proves only that the introduction of a new mode of production tends to be hindered initially by cultural factors connected with the old mode, so that conflicts at the intellectual level precede the victory of the new.

As these examples show, a particular culture exercises its power of resistance through the reactions of the men who make it up, and these reactions are characteristic for that culture. As elements in the historical context, these traits belong to the culture; as human characteristics with a relative stability they have become natural. To the extent that they consist not of customs and interests more or less closely connected with material existence but of so-called spiritual ideas, they have no independent reality. Their tenaciousness is due rather to the fact that because of their situation within society as a whole, members of a particular social group have developed a psychic make-up in the dynamics of which certain attitudes play an important role. In other words, the tenacity of these attitudes is due to the fact that men cling to them passionately. A whole system of institutions, itself belonging to the structure of society, interacts with this psychic make-up in so far as it continually strengthens it and helps it spread and, on the other hand, is in turn maintained and promoted by it.

It is therefore understandable that in philosophical and sociological theories cultural institutions are sometimes regarded as expressions of the human psyche, while at other times the shape of the psyche is considered a function of cultural forces. Both viewpoints, the subjectivist-anthropological and the objec-

15. Cf. William F. Ogburn, "Change, Social," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson (New York: Macmillan, 1930), volume 3, pp. 330-34, and other writings.

tivist, have their justification, since at particular periods of history the one or the other element is more strongly to the fore and the interaction of the two is diversely structured. In any case, the preservation of outmoded forms of society, for example, cannot be immediately ascribed to an exercise of naked power or to a deception of the masses concerning their material interests. The fact that both of these occur, as well as the manner in which they occur, are themselves conditioned by the dispositions of men at any given point in history. Thus the preservation of outmoded structures, too, has its source in "human nature."

The term "human nature" here does not refer to an original or an eternal or a uniform essence. Every philosophical doctrine which sees the movement of society or the life of the individual as emerging out of a fundamental, ahistorical unity is open to justified criticism. Such theories with their undialectical method have special difficulty in coming to grips with the fact that new individual and social qualities arise in the historical process. Their reaction to this fact either takes the form of mechanical evolution: all human characteristics which arise at a later point were originally present in germ; or it takes the form of some variety of philosophical anthropology: these characteristics emerge from a metaphysical "ground" of being. These mutually opposed theories fail to do justice to the methodological principle that vital processes are marked by structural change no less than by continuous development. For example, in many social groups, as today among the lower classes and the peasants in many parts of Europe, everything that seems to be human nature or character is so compounded of intimidation, powerless desires, distorted ideas, and oppressive conditions, that radical changes in the economic and social spheres could extinguish and transform within a few years what had previously been regarded as an eternal essence. This does not mean, however, that previous conditions had militated against a supposed "true human nature" which now would come into its own. It means rather that the relationship between the powers and needs of such men, on the one hand, and their way of life, on

the other hand, had become so strained in the course of time that outward change must bring a sudden psychic change in its wake.

The relatively stable system of long-practiced, effortless behavior which men of a particular period and class manifest, the manner in which they accept their situation with the help of conscious and unconscious psychic practices, the infinitely differentiated and continuously revised structure of preferences, acts of faith, evaluations, and fantasies by which men in a particular social stratum come to terms with their material circumstances and with the limitations imposed on their real satisfactions, the set of internal contrivances which despite its complexity is for the most part the daughter of necessity—all this is preserved in many instances only because to leave the old way of life and to adopt a new one, especially if the latter demands increased rational activity, requires strength and courage; in brief, it requires an immense psychic effort. This is also one reason why changes of world-wide historical importance cannot be expected to occur if men must first change themselves. They are usually accomplished by the action of groups in which an established psychic make-up does not play the decisive role and in which knowledge itself has become a vital force. In so far as the continuance of all social forms goes, the dominant force is not insight but human patterns of reaction which have become stabilized in interaction with a system of cultural formations on the basis of the social life-process. Among these patterns of reaction is the conscious and unconscious capacity, which conditions the individual at every step, to conform and to subordinate himself; the ability to accept existing conditions in one's thought and action, to live in dependence on a pre-given order of things and on an alien will; in brief, the existence of authority as an essential factor throughout the whole of human existence. One function of the entire cultural apparatus at any given period has been to internalize in men of subordinate position the idea of a necessary domination of some men over others, as determined by the course of history down to the present time. As a result and as a continually renewed condition of this cultural appa-

ratus, the belief in authority is one of the driving forces, sometimes productive, sometimes obstructive, of human history.

2. AUTHORITY

The simple collection and narration of events is being more and more regarded today as a preparation rather than as the goal in dealing with history. In opposition to the positivist conception of science, there is an ever more decisive acceptance of the demand that the presentation of history should not be a stringing together of isolated facts which represent essentially the subjective capabilities, the taste, and the "outlook" of the historian, but the application of consciously methodical work which rests on theoretical knowledge. To the extent that both these changes have taken place, authority proves ever more clearly to be a dominant category in the historian's apparatus of concepts. It has, in fact, as Hegel says, "much greater weight in determining men's opinions than people are inclined to believe."¹⁶ The great attention presently being given to authority may be conditioned by the special historical circumstances of our time and especially by the rise of the so-called authoritarian forms of the State. But in this historical situation we are nonetheless confronted with a reality that has been decisive in the whole of past history as well.

In all the forms of society which have developed out of the undifferentiated primitive communities of prehistory, either a few men dominate, as in relatively early and simple situations, or certain groups of men rule over the rest of the people, as in more developed forms of society. In other words, all these forms of society are marked by the superordination or subordination of classes. The majority of men have always worked under the leadership and command of a minority, and this dependence has always found expression in a more wretched kind of material existence for them. We have already pointed out that

16. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, tr. by J. Sibree (London: Bell, 1894), p. 437.

simple coercion alone does not maintain such a state of affairs and that men have learned to approve of it. Amid all the radical differences between human types from different periods of history, all have in common that their essential characteristics are determined by the power-relationships proper to society at any given time. People have for more than a hundred years abandoned the view that character is to be explained in terms of the completely isolated individual, and they now regard man as at every point a socialized being. But this also means that men's drives and passions, their characteristic dispositions and reaction-patterns are stamped by the power-relationships under which the social life-process unfolds at any time. The class system within which the individual's outward life runs its course is reflected not only in his mind, his ideas, his basic concepts and judgments, but also in his inmost life, in his preferences and desires. Authority is therefore a central category for history. The fact that it plays so decisive a part in the life of groups and individuals at all periods and in the most diverse areas of the world is due to the structure of human society up to the present time. Over the whole time-span embraced by historical writing, men have worked in more or less willing obedience to command and direction (apart from the marginal instances in which slaves in chains have been whipped into field and mine). Because the activity which kept society alive and in the accomplishment of which men were therefore molded occurred in submission to an external power, all relationships and patterns of reaction stood under the sign of authority.

A general definition of authority would necessarily be almost empty of content, but this is true of all definitions which attempt to capture elements of social life in a way that would be valid for all of history. Such a definition may be more or less apt; it remains, however, not only abstract but distorted and untrue until it is related to all other definitions of social realities. The general concepts which provide a basis for a theory of society can be correctly understood only in connection with all the other general and special concepts in the theory; that is, they can be understood only as elements in a given theoretical struc-

ture. In addition, the interrelationships of all these concepts are continually changing, as are those of the whole logical structure itself to reality. It follows that the concrete (that is, true) definition of such a category is, in the last analysis, the developed theory of society as it operates, at a historical moment, in connection with particular practico-historical tasks. Abstract definitions contain, in unmediated juxtaposition, the opposed elements of meaning which the concept has accumulated due to historical changes. Thus, for example, the nonhistorical and theoretically unelaborated concept of religion embraces both knowledge and superstition. The same holds for "authority."

If we provisionally regard as showing forth authority those internal and external behaviors in which men submit to an external source of command, we can see immediately the contradictory character of this category. Authority-behavior may be in the true and conscious interests of individuals and groups. The citizens of a city in antiquity, defending themselves against a foreign invader's attack, or any community acting according to a plan, act under the sign of authority in as much as the individuals do not at each moment make their own judgment but depend on a superordinate plan (which, of course, may have come into existence through their cooperation). Through whole ages of history, subordination was in the interests of those who were ruled, as is the subordination of a child who receives a good education. It was a condition for the development of mankind's capabilities. But even at such times as dependence was doubtless suitable in view of the state of human powers and of the instruments at men's disposal, it has up to now brought renunciations with it for those who were dependent. In periods of stagnation and retrogression, the acceptance of existing forms of dependence, necessary for the survival of society in its given form, meant for subordinates the continuation of their intellectual and material powerlessness and became a drag on human development generally.

Authority as accepted dependence can thus imply a relationship which fosters progress, is in the interests of all parties, and favors the development of human powers. But it can also sum

up in one word all those social relationships and ideas which have long since lost their validity, are now artificially maintained, and are contrary to the true interests of the majority. Authority is the ground for a blind and slavish submission which originates subjectively in psychic inertia and inability to make one's own decisions and which contributes objectively to the continuation of constraining and unworthy conditions of life. But authority is also the ground for consciously accepted and disciplined toil in a flourishing society. Yet these two kinds of existence differ as sleeping and waking, imprisonment and freedom. Only an analysis of the social situation in its totality can provide an answer to certain questions. For example, does the acceptance of an existing relationship of dependence both in principle and in a submission in daily life, even in one's innermost feelings, really correspond to the state of development of human powers at the time in question? Do men, in accepting a dependent life either instinctively or with full awareness, deceive themselves about the measure of self-development and happiness they can achieve, or do they help to further these goals for themselves and for mankind? Does unconditional submission to a political leader or a party point historically forwards or backwards? The acceptance of rank which was characteristic of absolutism and the subordination of the middle classes to a princely aristocracy were, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even to some degree in the eighteenth centuries, a productive factor in historical development, depending on the situation in various countries. In the nineteenth century, however, such behavior became the mark of reactionary groups.

According as the acknowledged dependence is justified by the objective role of the dominant class or, on the contrary, has lost its reasonable necessity, those who practice it will seem, in comparison with other men of the age, either alert, active, productive, free, and farsighted, or slavish, interiorly dulled, embittered, and treacherous. But even this correlation cannot be applied mechanically. The psychic significance of the acceptance of authority depends on the role of the authority-relationship in its time, on its specific content, and on the degree of

differentiation among the individuals it embraces. Furthermore, conscious acceptance or rejection really does not say much about the effects of the relationship on the interior life of the individual. Some categories of Roman slaves could accept their slavery without their thinking thereby becoming slavish. On the other hand, when the majority of their masters in the time of the Caesars took refuge in a system of military tyrants and submitted to them in cowardly fashion even when they turned out bad, they were already serving notice of their powerlessness on the stage of world history. In any case, the strengthening or weakening of authorities is one of those characteristics which make culture a dynamic factor in the historical process. The weakening of relationships of dependence which are deeply rooted in the conscious and unconscious life of the masses is among the greatest dangers that can threaten a societal structure and indicates that the structure has become brittle. Conscious exaltation of the status quo is evidence that a society is in a critical period and even becomes a "main source of danger."¹⁷ Convulsive efforts to renew and strengthen society, such as the crosses in the Roman arena or the pyres of the Inquisition, signal either the collapse of a social order or a period of stagnation in human development.

Bourgeois thought begins as a struggle against the authority of tradition and replaces it with reason as the legitimate source of right and truth. It ends with the deification of naked authority as such (a conception no less empty of determinate content than the concept of reason), since justice, happiness, and freedom for mankind have been eliminated as historically possible solutions. If we look not so much to Descartes' subjective intention as to his historical effect, this thinker, regarded as creator of the first system of bourgeois philosophy, proves to be a champion in the fight against the principle of authority in any kind of thinking. Buckle, a very perceptive and typical historian of bourgeois society, writes of Descartes:

17. Harold J. Laski, *Authority in the Modern State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 387.

He deserves the gratitude of posterity, not so much on account of what he built up, as on account of what he pulled down. His life was one great and successful warfare against the prejudices and traditions of men. He was great as a creator, but he was far greater as a destroyer. In this respect he was the true successor of Luther, to whose labors his own were the fitting supplement. He completed what the great German reformer had left undone. He bore to the old systems of philosophy precisely the same relation that Luther bore to the old systems of religion. He was the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect.¹⁸

This liberation refers especially to the fight against belief in authority. The mainstream of bourgeois philosophy down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite all its internal contradictions, is marked by a recurring rejection of authority-motivated behavior. The attack of the English and French Enlightenment on theology is not directed, in its greatest representatives, against the acceptance of God's existence as such. Voltaire's deism, for instance, was certainly not insincere. But he could not comprehend the monstrous idea that men ought to acquiesce in earthly injustice; his kindness of heart played tricks on the most acute mind of the century. The Enlightenment was not attacking the claim that God exists, but the acceptance of God on pure authority. Locke, instructor in philosophy to the Enlightenment, wrote: "Revelation must be judged by reason . . . Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything . . . Belief [is] no proof of revelation."¹⁹ In the last analysis a man must apply his own intellectual powers and not be dependent on authority.

In this sense Kant, too, belonged to the Enlightenment. "*Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own reason," is its device, according to him. "Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why, long after nature has freed men from alien guidance

18. Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* (3 vols. London: Longmans Green, new edition, 1894), volume 2, chapter 1, p. 82.

19. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 4, chapter 19, nos. 14-15, in *The Works of John Locke* (London, 1823; reprinted, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1963), volume 3, pp. 156-57.

(*naturaliter maiorennnes*), so many are content to live out their lives as minors and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians."²⁰ For Kant the moral law expresses "nothing else than the autonomy of the pure, practical reason, i.e., freedom."²¹ The whole content of Fichte's philosophy, if we are to take him at his word, consists in a call to be interiorly independent, to put aside all views and behaviors that are based solely on authority. For all bourgeois writers the most contemptuous description of a man is "slave," and this holds especially for Fichte. His stress on interior freedom (still linked with a vehement and rather utopian will to change the world) corresponds to the attitude, especially widespread in Germany, which comes to terms with external oppression by affirming the freedom within one's own heart and by stressing more strongly the independence of the spiritual person, the more the real person is enslaved. When one became too painfully aware of the contradiction between inward and outward, one could effect a reconciliation by bringing the interior self into harmony with outside reality rather than subjecting intractable reality to one's own will. If freedom consists in the formal agreement of outward reality and inward decision, then it has nothing to fear; all that is needed is for each person to accept the historical process and his own place in it. For contemporary philosophy such is, in fact, true freedom: "To accept whatever happens."²²

For Fichte, however, the refusal of authority-based thinking is not converted into an acceptance of reality as given. He defines reason as essentially the contrary of authority. His message that one must be unwilling to submit sounds, admittedly, like mere phrasemaking in comparison with Kant and the French, and his opposition to the existing order of things is already too much a matter of principle to be wholly irreconcilable. All the more clearly, then, at least in his early writings, does the ideal

20. Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in *Werke* (Akademie-Ausgabe), vol. 8, p. 35.

21. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by Lewis White Beck (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), Part 1, Book 1, Chapter 1, no. 8, pp. 33-34.

22. Arnold Gehlen, *Theorie der Willensfreiheit* (Berlin, 1933), p. 133.

of bourgeois thought emerge. "Anyone who acts on authority, necessarily acts without principle." That is "a very important proposition, and it is urgently necessary to present it in its full rigor."²³ The circle of people whom the cultivated man addresses has reached "an absolute unbelief in the authority of the social convictions of their time."

The characteristic mark of a cultivated public is absolute freedom and independence of thought; its outlook is formed by the determination to submit to no authority whatsoever, and in all matters to rely on its own reflection while rejecting without qualification anything which it cannot thus confirm. The cultivated man is distinguished from the uncultivated in this way: the latter thinks, of course, that he has reached his convictions through his own reflection, and so he has; but if you can see further than he, you discover that his ideas on State and Church follow the opinions most current at the time . . . As well-informed inquiry is unqualifiedly free, so must access to such inquiry be open to everyone. If a man can no longer give internal credence to authority, it is against his conscience to believe in it further, and it is his moral duty to join the cultivated public . . . State and Church must allow such cultivated people to go their way; otherwise they would be forcing consciences, and no one could live with a good conscience in such a State or such a Church; for, should he begin to have doubts about authority, he would be helpless to act . . . Both institutions must accept cultivated people, that is, accept what constitutes their very being: absolute and unlimited communication of ideas. Anything that anyone thinks he is convinced of, he must be able to speak of, however dangerous and profligate it may seem.²⁴

Fichte made the relation between reason and authority his criterion for determining the stages of development of mankind. In his *The Characteristics of the Present Age*, he claims that "it is the end of the earthly life of the human race to order all its relations with freedom according to reason."²⁵ He also ac-

23. Fichte, *Das System der Sittenlehre von 1798*, Chapter 3, no. 15, in *Werke* (Medicus-Ausgabe), volume, 2, p. 179.

24. Fichte, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3, no. 18, p. 253.

25. Fichte, *The Characteristics of the Present Age*, tr. by William Smith (London: John Chapman, 1847), p. 44.

knowledges, in this book, that his own principle prevails in the bourgeois world, but maintains that it is distorted in the process. The absence of authority, as found among the bourgeoisie, seems to him a yielding to the popular opinion of the day and thus takes on a two-sided character in his terminology. The initially sharp opposition between reason and authority is increasingly softened by the desire to ground authority in reason. The age of romanticism is beginning, and Fichte's thinking affords room for the polarities or unreconciled contradictions of the bourgeois mind and becomes more and more contemplative. Yet as late as 1815 he defines the "progress of history" thus:

Reason captures more and more ground from faith, until it has wholly annihilated it and taken up its content into the nobler form of clear insight; reason increasingly batters down the outworks of faith and forces it to withdraw into its stronghold in a determined direction and according to a determined pattern . . . We understand a historical age when we can estimate how much the age is shaped by reason and how much by faith, and at what precise points the two principles are in opposition . . . The struggle can only be ended when reason emerges in a fully purified form, that is, eliminates all vestiges of faith . . . Such a development is the very reality of history, which therefore consists of faith and reason, the conflict between the two, and the victory of reason over faith.²⁶

That the struggle against dependence on authority should in modern times change directly into a deification of authority as such is a development rooted in the origins of the struggle. Authority was the basis, in Protestantism, for liberation from papal power and a return to the word. According to Calvinism,

the one great offence of man is self-will. All the good of which humanity is capable is comprised in obedience. You have no choice; thus you must do, and no otherwise: "whatever is not a duty, is a sin." . . . To one holding this theory of life, crushing out any of the human faculties, capacities, and susceptibilities, is no evil.²⁷

26. Fichte, *Die Staatslehre, oder über das Verhältnis des Urstaates zum Vernunftreich*, in *Werke* (Medicus-Ausgabe), volume 6, pp. 539ff.

27. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government* (New York: Dutton, 1910), pp. 119-20.

The independence urged upon men was conceived in an essentially negative way even in secular literature: as a general independence in thought and action from a tradition that had become a straitjacket. The untenableness of medieval systems of property and law became evident in the increasing disproportion between the inadequate results of the feudal mode of production and the growing needs of the masses of people in city and countryside, as well as in the related incapacity of civil and ecclesiastical bureaucracies which had become demoralized as their concerns failed to match the needs of an ever more complicated society. The principle which held sway in this world in decline was that worth depended on pure tradition, that is, birth, custom, and age. That principle was now contested by the rising bourgeois mentality, which instead preached individual accomplishment through theoretical and practical work as a social criterion. But the conditions needed for such accomplishment were not everywhere to be found in the same degree, and so life under the new principle was hard and oppressive despite an enormous growth in the productivity of work. The wretchedness of the masses in the periods of absolutism and liberalism, as well as the hunger that persisted despite a strikingly increased social wealth in the form of raw materials and methods of production, show that the liberation from tradition was in fact limited to a few.

In philosophy this state of affairs finds expression in the abstractness of the concept of the individual, that basic concept of modern thought. The abstractness emerges clearly in Leibniz especially: the individual is a self-enclosed, metaphysical center of power, separated from the rest of the world, an absolutely isolated monad which is made self-dependent by God. Its destiny, according to Leibniz, lies within its own determination, and its stages of development, its happiness or unhappiness, depend on its own internal dynamism. It is responsible for itself; what it is and what befalls it depend on its own will and God's decree. Such a separation of individual from society and nature (closely connected with the other philosophical dualisms of thought and being, substance and appearance, body and spirit,

sense and understanding) turns the concept of the free individual, which is the bourgeois answer to the Middle Ages, into an almost metaphysical essence. The individual is to be handed over to himself. His dependence on the social conditions of real existence is forgotten and he is regarded, even in the days of absolutism but especially after its collapse, as sovereign.

Because the individual was regarded as wholly isolated and complete in himself, it could seem that the dismantling of the old authorities was the only thing required if he was to exercise his full potential. In reality, the liberation meant, before all else, that the majority of people were delivered up to the fearful exploitation of the factory system. The self-dependent individual found himself confronted with an external power to which he must accommodate himself. According to the theory, the individual was not to acknowledge the judgment of any human authority as binding upon him without first subjecting it to the test of reason. In fact, he now stood alone in the world and must adapt himself or perish. The network of relationships itself became authoritative. The Middle Ages had connected the earthly order of things with God's decree and to that extent regarded it as meaningful. In the modern period, on the contrary, all real situations are brute facts which do not embody any meaning but are simply to be accepted. It is evident that class distinctions were not from God; it is not yet recognized that they did arise out of the human process of work. These distinctions and the relations connected with them appear to the sovereign individual, the metaphysical substance of bourgeois thought, to be something alien; they appear to be a self-contained reality, another principle confronting the knowing and acting subject. Bourgeois philosophy is dualist by its very nature, even when it takes the form of pantheism. When it attempts to bridge the gap between self and world by means of thought and to present nature and history as the expression, embodiment, or symbol of the human essence, it is already acknowledging reality as a principle which has its own rights and is not to be regarded as dependent on man and changeable at his will but as meaningful being that must be interpreted and

read like a "cryptogram."²⁸ Authorities are allegedly done away with and then reappear philosophically in the form of metaphysical concepts. Philosophy at this point is only a reflection of what has happened in society. Men have been freed from the limitations of the old, divinely sanctioned property system. The new one is regarded as natural, as the manifestation of a thing-in-itself which is beyond discussion and eludes human influence. Here, then, is a philosophical system in which the individual is conceived, not in his involvement with society and nature, but abstractly and as a purely intellectual essence, a being which must now think of the world and acknowledge it as an eternal principle and perhaps as the expression of his own true being. Precisely in such a system is the imperfection of the individual's freedom mirrored, his powerlessness amid an anarchic inhuman reality which is rent by contradictions.

The proud claim that no authority is to be recognized unless it can justify itself to reason proves to be a flimsy one when the categories of such awareness are subjected to internal analysis. The seeming validity of the claim can be shown to derive in two ways from the underlying social reality. It springs in every case out of the obscurity of the production process in a bourgeois society, but acquires a different meaning in the life of each of the two social classes involved. The independent entrepreneur is regarded in a free-trade economy as independent in his decisions. What wares he produces, what kind of machines he uses, how he combines the talents of men and machines, where he decides to build his factory: all this seems to depend on his free decision, on his breadth of vision and creative energy. The importance assigned to genius and to qualities of leadership in modern economic and philosophical literature derives from the situation just described. "I insist . . . emphatically on the importance of genius, and the necessity of allowing it to unfold itself freely both in thought and practice," says John Stuart Mill,²⁹ and he adds the widespread complaint that society does

28. Cf. Karl Jasper, *Philosophy*, vol. III, tr. by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), ch. 4, pp. 113-208.

29. Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

not allow genius enough free play. This enthusiasm for genius, which has since become a characteristic of the average man's consciousness, could help increase the influence of the great economic leaders because in the present system economic projects are largely a matter of divination, that is, of hunches. For the small-scale businessman the situation today is still what it was for the whole class of businessmen during the liberal period. In his planning he may indeed draw on earlier experience and find assistance in his own psychological sensitivity and his knowledge of the economic and political scene. But when all is said and done, the real decision on the value of his product and thus of his own activity depends on the market and necessarily has an irrational element, since the market in turn depends on the working of conflicting and uncontrollable forces. The manufacturer in his planning is as dependent as any medieval artisan on the needs of society; in that respect he is no freer, but the lack of freedom is not brought home to him, as it was to the artisan, by the wishes of a limited and set body of customers or in the form of a demand for service by a lord of the manor. The manufacturer's dependence is expressed, instead, in the salableness of his wares and the profit he seeks, and shows its power over him when he balances his accounts at the end of the business year. The exchange value of the product also determines its practical value to the user, inasmuch as the material composition of the goods being sold is in a measure predetermined by the raw materials needed, the machinery of production which must be kept in repair, and the men required to run the machines. In other words, the value of the wares expresses ascertainable relations between material realities. But in the present order this connection between value and society's needs is mediated not only by calculable psychic and political factors but also by a sum-total of countless uncontrollable events.

The classical period of this state of affairs passed with liberalism. In the present age, marked as it is by the struggles of great monopolies rather than, as formerly, by the competition of countless individuals, the individual capacity to make correct guesses about the market, to calculate and speculate, has been

replaced by the extensive mobilization of whole nations for violent confrontations. But the small businessman passes on his own difficulties, in intensified form, to the leaders of the industrial trusts. And if he himself must continue to maneuver amid oppressive circumstances in order not to go under, then such leaders, he thinks, must be geniuses to stay on top of the heap. They may learn from personal experience that what they must develop in themselves is not the spiritual qualities of their predecessors but the ruthless steadfastness required if an economic and political oligarchy is to rule the modern masses. In any event, these leaders do not consider social reality to be clear and comprehensible. On the one hand, the population of their own country and all the hostile power-groups make their presence felt as dangerous natural forces which must be restrained or cleverly manipulated. On the other, the mechanisms of the world market are no less perplexing than more limited forms of competition are, and the leaders accept and even promote the belief of their class that to be a master of the economy takes the instincts of genius. They too experience society as a self-contained and alien principle, and freedom for them essentially means that they can adapt themselves to this reality by active or passive means, instead of having to deal with it according to a uniform plan. In the present economic system society appears to be as blind as subrational nature. For men do not use communal reflection and decision to regulate the process by which they earn their living in association with others. Instead, the production and distribution of all the goods needed for life take place amid countless uncoordinated actions and interactions of individuals and groups.

In the totalitarian state the heightening of external oppositions has only seemingly relaxed those within. In fact, the latter are simply covered up in all sorts of ways. Now as formerly, though now awareness of it is suppressed, the war-and-peace politics of Europe is still dominant, even if when dealing with economic problems concern for the system as such takes precedence over economic motives in the narrower sense and lends politics for the moment the air of greater consistency and unity.

History in the modern era is not like a planned struggle of mankind with nature and the uninterrupted development of all its aptitudes and powers, but like a meaningless ebb and flow to which the individual, according to his class situation, can respond more or less shrewdly. At the heart of the freedom and seeming originality of the entrepreneur, whose calling contributes to the heightening of his authority, there is adaptation to a social situation in which mankind does not control its own destiny, subjection to a purposeless process instead of rational regulation of it, dependence on an irrational condition of society which one must try to profit by instead of shaping it in its totality. In brief, within this freedom there lurks an originally inevitable and now retrogressive surrender of freedom, an acceptance of the blind power of chance, a long since discredited authority-relationship. This dependence of the entrepreneur, arising out of the irrational character of the economic process, is manifested in a helplessness before deepening crises and a universal perplexity even among the leaders of the economy. Bankers, manufacturers, and merchants, as the characteristic literature of recent centuries shows, have completely divested themselves of humility. But simultaneously they have come to experience social reality as a superordinate but blind power and, contrary to medieval practice, have allowed their relationships to other men to be ruled by a faceless economic necessity. Thus a new and powerful authority has come into being. In decisions on the fate of men, the hiring and firing of the laboring masses, the ruin of farmers over whole sectors of the world, the unleashing of wars, and so on, caprice has been replaced not by freedom but by blind economic necessity, an anonymous god who enslaves men and is invoked by those who have no power over him but have received advantages from him. Men in power have ceased to act as representatives of heavenly and earthly authority and consequently have become mere functions of the laws inherent in their power. It is not their boasted inner decision that motivates the apparently free entrepreneurs but a soulless economic dynamism, and they have no way of opposing this state of affairs except by surrendering their very existence.

The fullest possible adaptation of the subject to the reified authority of the economy is the form which reason really takes in bourgeois society.

As the role of the entrepreneur in the process of production shows how illusory the philosophical rejection of authority was, so too does the life of the worker. It is well known that the worker became acquainted only late in history with the idea of external freedom in the sense of a free choice of calling, and even then under severe restrictions due to poverty. In the first half of the fifteenth century, when the economy was shifting to cattle-raising, the landowners drove their tenants from the land by force and trickery. Thus, they liberated the workers in a negative way, that is, they stripped them of every means of earning a living. But in the circumstances of European history such a liberation did not mean that the worker could now choose his own place and type of work. The mass executions of tramps in this period introduce the long history of the free worker's wretchedness. From the end of the seventeenth century on, when factories, which had existed in Italy as early as the thirteenth century, gradually acquired importance alongside home industries, they were places of horror. Their usual connection with orphanages, asylums, and hospitals did not mean that the place of work was simultaneously a hospital but rather that the hospital became a workplace and that men died of toil rather than of illness. The doctrine that the isolated individual determines his own destiny showed its full social implications only in the 1830s in liberal England, but it had already found clear enough expression in previous centuries in the mercilessness with which men were forced to labor in mines and factories. Antiquity and the early Middle Ages were periods of cruelty, but with the increasing need for workers in the growing economy of free exchange, the compulsion upon the masses to submit to killing labor was rationalized into a moral imperative. Correspondingly, measures were taken not only against the poor but against all helpless people: children, the aged, the ill. The 1618 edict of the Great Elector on the establishment of houses of correction, spinning rooms, and factories in which all men

without work, along with their children, should be gathered, by force if necessary, was aimed not only at strengthening the textile industry but also at habituating shrinkers to work.³⁰

Such a move is typical of the mentality of the time, but the mentality persisted through the eighteenth century. "Frederick the Great regarded it as so important for children to be kept busy, that during a stay at Hirschberg in Silesia in 1766 he offered to send the merchants a thousand children, ten to twelve years old, to be used for spinning. The refusal of the offer aroused his deep displeasure."³¹ He sent orphans to a businessman who complained of the quality of workers imported from Holland and Denmark. In 1788 children from the Potsdam orphanage were transferred to another manufacturer. France, England, and Holland regarded it as thoroughly permissible to use children from the age of four on as workers in home industries and factories generally, and, obviously, to use the elderly and the ill in the same way. Rarely do we come across a law protecting children from the mines. The work day was never less than thirteen hours and was frequently even longer. There was no question of the worker's free choice: workers in the home industries could not work for foreign employers, nor could those in the factories leave their place of work without the employer's permission. When children ran away after being forced into the various workshops, with or without their families' consent, they were recaptured with the help of the authorities. Strikes were severely punished and wages were deliberately kept low, with the approval or even at the express orders of the government. Spinoza's friend and patron, de Witt, demanded an official lowering of wages. The conviction was widespread that as long as a worker had money in his pocket or the smallest credit, he would fall into the vice of idleness, that is, in more realistic terms, he would absolutely refuse to submit to murderous working conditions. Such was the typical

30. Cf. Josef Kulischer, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, volume 2 (Berlin, 1929), p. 151.

31. Kulischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-88; cf. also pp. 115-97 and other economic histories such as those of Herkner, Gothein, and Cunow.

economic thinking of the eighteenth century that it took the progressiveness of a Turgot to criticize seriously the practice of keeping workers in factories against their will, and the whole life experience of a Voltaire to establish the fact that labor can turn from necessity to scourge. "Man is born for action," Voltaire wrote in 1720, "as fire rises and stone falls. To be inactive and not to exist are the same thing for him. The only difference is between peaceful or troubled, dangerous or useful occupations." Fifty years later, he added another sentence to the passage: "Job said rightly: Man is born for sorrow as the bird for flight, but the flying bird can be taken in the snare."³²

Our concern here, however, is not the contradiction between the existence of the masses, who were not indeed serfs but were exploited in the most terrible way, and that doctrine of man's freedom and dignity which was dominant in philosophy ever since Pico della Mirandola's time. We are concerned rather with one element of the work relationship in modern times, namely, the camouflaging of authority as it actually operates for the worker. In the work system which was set up almost everywhere in nineteenth-century Europe, the relation between employer and workers was based on the so-called free contract. Even when workers banded together in trade unions and partially surrendered their own freedom of movement by commissioning their officers to negotiate contracts, the contracts were ultimately the decision of the workers. "The establishment of relations between the independent manufacturers and the industrial workers is, within the limits set by imperial law, the object of free agreement," said the *Trade Regulations of the German Empire* (Para. 105). But the freedom had other and more important limits than those set by imperial law, limits arising not out of nature or the low level of development of human powers but out of the particular character of the dominant form of society, and yet seeming to be unchangeable limits which men could only accept. When both parties in the work relationship passed as free, there was an unwitting abstrac-

32. Voltaire, *Remarques sur les Pensées de M. Pascal*, in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Garnier), volume 22 (1883-85), pp. 41-42.

tion from the fact that pressure to enter into the relationship operated differently on each side. The worker was poor and was competing against his whole class at the national and international levels. Behind each worker waited hunger and misery. His contracting partner, on the contrary, had on his side not only the means of production, a broader horizon, influence on the power of the State, and the whole range of propaganda possibilities, but credit as well.

This distinction between rich and poor was socially conditioned, established and maintained by men, and yet it pretended to be a necessity of nature, as though men could do nothing to modify it. The individual worker was more deeply dependent on the settlement of a contract than his partner and, for the most part, found the conditions already established to which he must adapt himself. The conditions were not by any means arbitrarily devised and dictated by the businessman. On the contrary, the latter could easily point out the limitations he was under to the union officials who sought certain improvements: his ability to compete with other businessmen at home and abroad. This very reference, which the unions had to acknowledge as valid, manifested the essential trait of the dominant system, namely, that the kind and context of work was determined not by the conscious will of society but by the blind interaction of unintegrated forces. This was the trait which determined the businessman's lack of freedom. The distinction between employer and worker lay in the fact that this impersonal necessity (in which, of course, the whole conscious effort of individuals and peoples, along with the political and cultural system, played an important part) represented for the employer the condition for his control and for the worker a pitiless fate. Submission to economic circumstances, which the worker accepted in a free contract, was also a submission to the private will of the employer. In acknowledging the authority of economic facts the worker was in practice acknowledging the power and authority of the employer. To the extent that he accepted the kind of idealistic doctrines of freedom, equality, and the absolute sovereignty of reason which were widely held in the

last century, and to the extent that he felt himself to be free even amid the real conditions that prevailed, his consciousness was in fact the outcome of ideology. For the reigning authorities were not cast down from their place, but had simply hidden themselves behind the anonymous power of economic necessity or, as the phrase was, behind the voice of the facts.

The effort to ground in apparently natural circumstances and to present as inescapable the dependence which men experienced even within a bourgeois society which, until the beginning of its most recent phase, rejected the irrational authority of persons and other forces, provides the conscious and unconscious motivation for part of the literature on cultural history. Submission to an external will is justified, not by a simple acceptance of tradition, but by supposed insight into eternal matters of fact. A typical textbook on national economy has this to say:

In so far as the objective nature of work for an employer has effects that are regarded as or are in fact unfavorable, this is inescapable. As we pointed out earlier, work for another demands in all circumstances a personal subordination, a submission of one's own will to that of a leader or director, and therefore brings with it a distinction of social position that will always be unavoidable. In so far as a large part of such work involves danger to life and health and a greater loss of comfort and well being than other kinds of work do, we are faced with evils (assuming the necessity of work to supply the goods men need) that are unavoidable and must ever be endured by one or other sector of society. There is no work system that can eliminate them.⁸⁸

If books like the one quoted show some friendliness to workers, it usually takes the form of insisting that improvement is surely possible in "many factors which make the work relationship disadvantageous to the worker (external working conditions, place and time of work, wages)." But there is also the presupposition that the connection of leadership with a pleasant

33. E. von Philippovich, *Grundriss der politischen Ökonomie*, volume 1 (Tübingen, 1919), p. 155.

life and work for others with a difficult life, as well as the assignment of the two ways of life to particular social groups, are unchangeable.

In fact, however, this view turns an historical situation into a suprahistorical one. For such a distribution of work and of participation in the gifts of fortune corresponds to a particular stage in the development of human powers and their instrumentalities, and, as history moves on, it loses its productive value. The bourgeois conception of work, according to which subordination is determined no longer by birth but by free contract between private persons and it is not the employer but the economic situation that imperiously pressures men into subordinate roles, had in fact an extremely productive and beneficial outcome. There was objective justification for dependence on an employer and on the social forces behind him, in the form of adaptation to a seemingly purely natural necessity, and for obedience to the person whose wealth made him a leader of production. This state of affairs corresponded to the difference between the capabilities of the undeveloped masses and those of the educated upper stratum, as well as to the fact that techniques for guiding and ordering industry were as yet insufficiently rationalized due to inadequate machinery and an undeveloped system of communication. That men should learn to adapt to a hierarchy was a condition for the immediate growth in productivity that has since ensued and, in addition, for the evolution of individual self-awareness. Consequently the hidden and mediated authority, though for a long time merciless, was yet reasonable in terms of historical development. The irrational shape it took, however, means that it arose not from the historical situation, that is, from the relationship between human capabilities and functions determined in advance by the mode of production, but from objectified anonymous necessity. Such necessity seems to persist when leadership of production by private and competing interests and groups of interests, once a condition of cultural progress, has long since become problematic.

The attitude of the modern period to authority thus turns

out to be less simple than it appears to be in the clear and decisive propositions of many thinkers. The freedom claimed in philosophy is an ideology, that is, a condition that seems necessary because of a specific form of the social life-process. Both the social groups of which we have been speaking could therefore fall victim to it, for each of them, in characteristic ways according to its place in the process of production, was blind to its own unfreedom and to that of the other group. Unfreedom here means a dependence, not grounded in reason, on the ideas, decisions, and actions of other men; that is, it means precisely what bourgeois thinkers objected to about the Middle Ages. One bends to circumstances, adapts to reality. Acceptance of the authority relationship between classes does not take the direct form of acknowledging an inherited claim of the upper classes, but consists in the fact that men regard economic data (for example, the subjective valuations of goods, prices, legal forms, property relationships, and so forth) as immediate or natural facts, and think they are adapting themselves to such facts when they submit to the authority relationship.

This complicated structure of authority had its great flowering under liberalism. But in the period of the totalitarian state, too, it offers a key to the understanding of men's patterns of reaction. Relations of dependence in the economy, which are fundamental for social life, may be fully derived in theory from the State. But that the State itself should be unconditionally accepted by the masses is possible only because such relationships of dependence have not really become a problem for them as yet. Consequently, it is a mistake to try to identify the authority structure of the present period with the relations between leaders and followers and to regard the acceptance of such hierarchies as fundamental. On the contrary, the new authority relationship which is in the foreground of thought and feeling today is itself possible only because that other authority relationship, a more everyday but also a deeper reality, has not yet lost its power. The political leadership is effective because great masses of men consciously and uncon-

sciously accept their economic dependence as necessary or at least do not yet fully realize it, and this situation is in turn consolidated by the political relationship. Once men refuse the de facto relationship of dependence in the economy, once theoretical understanding breaks down the seemingly unconditional economic necessity, once authority in the bourgeois sense collapses, the new authority, too, loses its strongest ideological basis. Therefore an indiscriminate condemnation of authoritarian regimes without regard for the underlying economic structure misses the essential point.

The formation and continuance of irrational authority relationships in undisguised forms is among the factors which strengthen the deeper economic relationship, and the two influence each other. This is already obvious from the spread of Protestantism. The whole political, religious, and philosophical literature of the modern period is filled with praise of authority, obedience, self-sacrifice, and the hard fulfillment of duty. These exhortations, which take on a more austere quality as their addressees' ability to respond to them lessens, are more or less artificially and ingeniously linked with rallying words like reason, freedom, happiness for the largest possible number, and justice for all. Yet in such exhortations the dark side of the reigning state of affairs is manifested. Since the modern mode of production began, it has been found necessary to heighten the already forcible language of economic facts, not only by pressure from politics, religion, and morality, but also by the reverent or ecstatic or masochistic awe men feel before holy and demonic persons and powers. Thus, when philosophy after the First World War was helping prepare the way for the victory of authoritarian regimes, it could appeal to a long tradition. Max Scheler criticized even bourgeois thinkers like Hobbes for trying "to ground the content and essence of 'good' and 'evil' themselves in the norms and commands issuing from authority."³⁴ He himself takes precautions against helping the

34. Max Scheler, "Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 2 (1916), p. 197.

cause of this "so-called ethics of authority" and, instead, directly deifies "the intrinsic moral value of authority." He claims indeed that "in problems of theoretical knowledge there is no 'authority' and any claims to such are rightly to be met by the principle of 'freedom of research.'" But he also maintains that we can gain insight into "moral values and the claims that spring from them" only on the basis of genuine authority, "by *first* accepting such values in practice, without insight and in response to orders from authority."³⁵ Scheler's thinking belongs to the transition from the liberal to the totalitarian form of State. Content and structure of the basic forms of authority is not a theme in the typical philosophers of either period.

Yet the authority relationship shapes the features of the age and the nature of the human types which prevail in it. The present-day form of society, like earlier ones, rests upon its own characteristic relation of dependence. Even the apparently independent vocational and private relationships of men are determined by the dependence which is grounded in the mode of production and finds expression in the existence of social classes. The product of this dependence is the individual who feels himself to be free but acknowledges socially conditioned facts as unchangeable and pursues his own interests in the context of reality as given. Before the bourgeoisie won a share in political power, its outlook stressed freedom and trust in individual reason, out of which morality and the essence of the State could be constructed after the fashion of mathematical projections. In the period of bourgeois dominance, under liberalism, this rationalistic temper gave way to the empiricist. But in the public life of the whole age and in its ideological products, both elements stood more or less unconnectedly together: spontaneity of reason and heteronomy, freedom and blind obedience, independence and sense of weakness, lack of respect and uncritical admiration, intransigence in principle and perplexity in practice, formalistic theory

35. Scheler, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

and mindless accumulation of data. Cultural institutions and activities, church, school, literature, etc., keep such contradictions alive in the character of men. The impossibility of overcoming the contradictions in the given circumstances follows from the fact that individuals think they are acting freely, whereas in fact the basic traits of the social order remain uninfluenced by such isolated beings. Men therefore continue simply to accept and confirm where they might be shapers, and to do without the freedom they need ever more urgently, namely, to regulate and direct the social work process and thereby human relations generally in a reasonable way, that is, according to a unified plan in the interests of the generality.

A good instance of the liberal, as he still exists in a relatively strong bourgeois community, presents a picture of freedom, openness, and good will. He knows himself to be the very opposite of a slave. Yet his sense of justice and his clarity of purpose operate within definite limits set by the economic mechanism and do not find expression in an ordering of social reality as a whole. These limits, which he accepts, may change for him and everyone else at a moment's notice, so that he and his might become beggars through no fault of their own. Even in his freedom, kindness, and friendliness, the limits make their presence felt. He is less his own master than he first appears. His sense of personal independence and his corresponding respect for the freedom and dignity of his fellows are noble but abstract and naïve as well.

There is one social fact the acceptance of which as natural most immediately sanctions the existing relations of dependence, and that is the distinction of property. The poor man must work hard to live. As the structural reserve army of industry swells, he must even regard his work as a great benefit and privilege, and he does so to the extent that he belongs to the bourgeois, authority-oriented type. The free sale of his powers of work is the condition for the growth in power of the overlords, yet the discrepancy between merit and power in both cases grows beyond all belief. With the increasing irrationality of the system, the special isolated talents which earlier offered

some chance of greater success and justified the Horatio Alger stories of the proper proportion between merit and reward, become ever more indifferent as compared with extrinsic factors in a person's destiny, and the disproportion between the good life and the hierarchy of human qualities becomes ever clearer. In the portrait of a just society, principles of reason determine each person's share in what society wrests from nature; in society as it is, however, the sharing depends on chance. Acceptance of such a situation is the same as worship of success, that god of the modern world. Success is not meaningfully related to effort, which may surpass that of others in power, intelligence, and progressiveness. The brute fact that a man has reached success and has power, money, and connections is what lifts him above others and forces others into his service. The consciously cultivated reign of social justice has withdrawn into the courtroom and, apart from political issues, seems there to be busied essentially with theft and murder. The blind sentence passed by the economy, that mightier social power which condemns the greater part of mankind to senseless wretchedness and crushes countless human talents, is accepted as inevitable and recognized in practice in the conduct of men. Universal injustice is thus surrounded by the halo of necessity and is, according to modern philosophically oriented piety, not to be compensated for even by a real hell and by the heaven of the blessed. Such an outlook reacts, of course, on the justice of the law-court and devalues its good efforts, not only because those who are its objects have usually already been condemned at the economic judgment seat before they ever committed their crimes, but even in the thoughts and feelings of the judges themselves. In the period when this order of things was flourishing, reason seemed operative in the distribution of happiness and prestige; today that order is bereft of every meaningful necessity, since the equalization of functions in work and the comprehensibility of the apparatus of production are so far advanced, while human capabilities and social wealth have grown as well.

Yet no one is responsible, for limitations on freedom are

also limitations on conscience. Everyone must look out for himself. "Every man for himself," the watchword of the ruthless anarchic masses in the face of destruction, underlies the whole of bourgeois culture. If world history in general is the judgment passed on the world, its particular verdicts take the form of the selection of parents, the state of the labor market, and the rates of exchange. The order of precedence in this society is not expressly accepted as justified, but it is accepted as necessary and thus, after all, as justified. Authority is soulless yet seemingly rational. Man's naïve faith in it finds expression in the idea of a wise God whose ways are marvelous and obscure. The doctrine of predestination, according to which no man knows whether he has been chosen for eternal life or been rejected, reflects the same naïve faith.

Such authority, in the sense of accepted dependence, is not manifested in religion alone, however, but in all of man's artistic and everyday ideas. Even purely objective authority, such as the knowledge a doctor has, is affected by it. He has the good fortune, due to a series of accidental configurations of circumstances, to get an education and to win influence. But this good fortune then appears to him and his patients to be the result rather of greater talent and superior human worth; in other words, an inborn quality rather than a socially conditioned one. This kind of awareness finds stronger expression, the less the patient has to offer the doctor in terms of position, wealth, or at least an interesting illness.

The essential characteristic of this order of things is that work is done under the guidance of authorities who are such because of possessions or other accidents of fortune and are increasingly unable to appeal to any other ground for their authority than that this is the way things are. This trait colors everything that passes today for reason, morality, honor, and greatness. Even real merit, surpassing knowledge, and practical ability are affected and distorted by it. They are regarded less as a widely distributed blessing than a legal title for power and exploitation. The respect given them is given to a bank account, too, and elevates the monied man still higher by

clothing him and the "genius" alike in the same aura of splendor.

Nietzsche, more clearly than any one else, saw the connection between idealism and the state of affairs we have been describing. Hegel, he says,

implanted in a generation leavened throughout by him the worship of the "power of history," that practically turns every moment into a sheer gaping at success, into an idolatry of the actual: for which we have now discovered the characteristic phrase "to adapt ourselves to circumstances." But the man who has once learnt to crook the knee and bow the head before the power of history, nods "yes" at last, like a Chinese doll, to every power, whether it be a government or a public opinion or a numerical majority; and his limbs move correctly as the power pulls the string. If each success have come by a "rational necessity," and every event show the victory of logic or the "Idea," then—down on your knees quickly, and let every step in the ladder of success have its reverence! There are no more living mythologies, you say? Religions are at their last gasp? Look at the religion of the power of history, and the priests of the mythology of Ideas, with their scarred knees! Do not all the virtues follow in the train of the new faith? And shall we not call it unselfishness, when the historical man lets himself be turned into an "objective" mirror of all that is? Is it not magnanimity to renounce all power in heaven and earth in order to adore the mere fact of power? Is it not justice, always to hold the balance of forces in your hand and observe which is the stronger and heavier?³⁶

The simple fact that in modern times the external circumstance of having property gives a man power to dispose of others, reduces to secondary rank all the other valuational norms which currently play a role in public life. Social groups which must achieve stability within the existing order and which hope to better their position in it, will maintain a faith in the inevitability of the basic situation, even though it has long since become a ball and chain. There has to be "some"

36. Nietzsche, *Thoughts out of Season, Part II*, tr. by Adrien Collins, in *The Complete Works of Nietzsche*, ed. by Oscar Levy (New York, 1909–11; reissued: New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), volume 5, p. 72.

authority. By this they mean not so much the really effective authority, the one based on private property, as the authority of the State which forces them to submit to the real authority and takes all decisions out of their hands. The effort to sustain this frame of mind and to propagate it as widely as possible among the population as a whole, is at work in all areas of intellectual life. The resultant affirmation of the given social hierarchy and of the mode of production on which it rests, as well as all the psychic impulses and forms of consciousness connected with this affirmation, form one of the intellectual elements by which culture proves to be the cement holding together a society with deep cracks in its walls.

The great psychic energy needed if one is to escape the prevailing outlook is not to be identified with an anarchistic rejection of authority nor with the trained judgment of the expert who can distinguish genuine ability from charlatantry. To the extent that expert judgment concentrates on its object in isolation, it does not do the object justice, for it does not show how genuine accomplishments in art and science are in opposition to the prevailing trend. On the other hand, the radically anti-authority attitude of the anarchist is but an exaggeration of the bourgeois awareness of personal freedom as something to be always and everywhere realized if one but will it so. In other words, the anarchist's attitude flows from the idealist view that material conditions play no real role. But, in fact, the work process as found in human history requires very diverse kinds of knowledge for its effectiveness, and to reject the distinction between the management and execution functions in work is not only utopian but would mean retrogression to the primitive ages of man. The genuine alternative to the bourgeois concept of authority takes the form of detaching authority from egoistic interests and exploitation.

Such an alternative is bound up with the idea of a higher form of society as possible today. Only if the management and execution functions of work are not connected with a well-off and poor life respectively nor divided between set social classes, can the category of authority acquire a new significance. In an

individualistic society capabilities too are a possession which one converts into capital, and generally they derive partly from capital, that is, from a good education and from the encouragement which success brings. If the goods men need in order to live no longer originate in an economy of seemingly free producers, of whom some because of poverty must hire themselves out to others, while the latter manufacture goods not according to human needs but according to what their own solvency requires, and if, instead, such goods originate in the rationally guided efforts of mankind, then the freedom of the abstract individual, who proves really to be in chains, will become the collaborative work of concrete men whose genuine freedom will be limited only by nature and its necessities. In disciplined work men will take their place under an authority, but the authority will only be carrying out the plans that men have made and have decided to implement. The plans themselves will no longer be the result of divergent class interests, for the latter will have lost their foundation and been converted into communal effort. The command of another will express his personal interests only because it also expresses the interests of the generality.

The disciplined obedience of men who strive to bring this state of affairs to pass already reflects another conception of authority. The simple fact of unconditional subordination, then, is not an essential structural element in every authority relationship. The formalism which sets up reason and authority as alternatives and asks us to confess to the one and to despise the other, along with anarchism and the authoritarian view of the State—all these are expressions of one and the same cultural epoch.

3. FAMILY

The relation of individuals to authority is determined by the special character of the work process in modern times and gives rise, in turn, to a lasting collaboration of social institutions in producing and consolidating the character types which cor-

respond to the relationship. Institutional activity is not limited to express measures taken by church, school, sporting associations, political parties, theatre, the press, and so on. Even more than through actions deliberately aimed at forming men, this social function is exercised through the continuous influence of the prevailing situation itself, through the formative power of public and private life, through the example of persons who play a role in the individual's life; in short, through processes not consciously directed. Helvétius says that man is "educated by all the objects which surround him, all the situations in which chance places him, and, finally, all the events in which he is caught up."⁸⁷ Even though hunger and the fear of greater wretchedness force men to labor, all the economic and cultural forces must perform their work anew for the men of each generation if the latter are to be qualified to do this work in the forms it takes at any given time. "Intelligence and aptitude among men are always the product of their wishes and their particular situation."⁸⁸ Even man's wishes are shaped along determined lines by the social situation and the various educational forces active in it. The family has a very special place among the relationships which through conscious and unconscious mechanisms influence the psychic character of the vast majority of men. The processes that go on within the family shape the child from his tenderest years and play a decisive role in the development of his capabilities. The growing child experiences the influence of reality according as the latter is reflected in the mirror of the family circle. The family, as one of the most important formative agencies, sees to it that the kind of human character emerges which social life requires, and gives this human being in great measure the indispensable adaptability for a specific authority-oriented conduct on which the existence of the bourgeois order largely depends.

The periods of the Reformation and of absolutism, especially, insisted that this function of the family was an activity to be

37. Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l'homme*, in *Oeuvres complètes* (London, 1778) volume 5, p. 188.

38. Helvétius, *op. cit.*, volume 3, p. 137.

consciously exercised. If the individual were to be habituated not to despair in the hard world in which the new discipline of work was being spread abroad, but to face it courageously, a pitiless lack of consideration for himself and others must become second nature to him. Christianity had, of course, recognized long ago the family's task of educating men to live under authority in society. Augustine taught

that domestic peace has a relation to civic peace—in other words, that the well-ordered concord of domestic obedience and domestic rule has a relation to the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and civic rule. And therefore it follows, further, that the father of the family ought to frame his domestic rule in accordance with the law of the city, so that the household may be in harmony with the civic order.³⁹

But Augustine's recommendation here refers to something more than the strictness which later on came to be regarded as a father's duty. Augustine wanted the Christian raised to be a good citizen and was trying to establish a harmony between State and Church. Protestantism helped the evolving social system in introducing the frame of mind which regards work, profit, and power to dispose of capital as ends in themselves, substitutes for a life centered on earthly or even heavenly happiness. A man is not to bow before the Church, as happened in Catholicism; but he must learn simply to bow, to obey, and to work. Even obedience is no longer valued essentially as a means to reaching beatitude, nor does it have limits placed on its exercise by the laws of God and men; instead, under absolutism, it becomes increasingly a virtue valued for its own sake. The child's self-will is to be broken, and the innate desire for the free development of his drives and potentialities is to be replaced by an internalized compulsion towards the unconditional fulfillment of duty. Submission to the categorical imperative of duty has been from the beginning a conscious goal of the bourgeois family. In the Renaissance, humanistic education was

39. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 19, Chapter 16, tr. by Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 695.

a benefit which seemed a happy beginning of a new age, even if with few exceptions such an education extended only to the children of Italian princes.⁴⁰ But in the countries which assumed economic leadership once the sea route to East India was discovered, childhood became increasingly grim and oppressive.

In the developmental history of the family from the absolutist to the liberalist period, a new factor in habituation to authority emerges even more strongly. No longer is it obedience that is immediately demanded, but, on the contrary, the application of reason. Anyone who looks at the world soberly will see that the individual must adapt and subordinate himself. Such education to realism, too, the goal of every good pedagogy in the more developed phases of bourgeois society, was anticipated in the Protestant conception of the family. It is present in

the very essence of Lutheranism, which looks upon the physical superiority of man as the expression of a superior relationship willed by God, and a stable order as the chief end of all social organizations. The house-father represents the law, and possesses unlimited power over others; he is the breadwinner, the pastor, and the priest of his household.⁴¹

The naturally given fact of the father's physical strength is regarded in Protestantism as also a moral fact to be respected. Because the father is *de facto* stronger, he is also *de jure* stronger. The child is not only to take the father's superiority into account; he is also to have esteem for it. In this kind of familial situation, with its determinative influence on the child's education, we find anticipated in large measure the structure of authority as it existed outside the family. According to the latter, the prevailing differences in conditions of life, which the individual finds in the world, are simply to be accepted; he must make his way within that framework and not rebel against it. To

40. Such an exception was, for example, the activity of the great Vittorino Rambaldoni in behalf of poor children; cf. *Handbuch für Pädagogik* 1 (Langensalza, 1928), p. 190.

41. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, tr. by Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 546.

recognize facts means to accept them. Distinctions established by nature are willed by God, and, in bourgeois society, wealth and poverty seem naturally determined. When the child respects in his father's strength a moral relationship and thus learns to love what his reason recognizes to be a fact, he is experiencing his first training for the bourgeois authority relationship.

The father thus has a moral claim upon submission to his strength, but not because he proves himself worthy of respect; rather he proves himself worthy by the very fact that he is stronger. At the beginning of the bourgeois age the father's control of his household was doubtless an indispensable condition of progress. The self-control of the individual, the disposition for work and discipline, the ability to hold firmly to certain ideas, consistency in practical life, application of reason, perseverance and pleasure in constructive activity could all be developed, in the circumstances, only under the dictation and guidance of the father whose own education had been won in the school of life. But if the suitability of such a course of action is not seen against the background of its real social causes and, instead, is dressed in religious or metaphysical ideology so that its real meaning is necessarily obscured, it can continue to seem a valid ideal even in an age when the small family in most cases offers very inadequate conditions for human education as compared with the pedagogical possibilities present in society at large.

The same is true of other functions of the family. In the course of history the family has had extremely diverse and numerous roles to play. As compared with periods in which it was the predominant productive community, not only has the family completely lost many of its former functions but even the ones left to it have been affected by changes in society as a whole. In 1911 Müller-Lyer listed as functions of the family the management of the household, the reproduction, rearing, and education of children, the control of population growth and of genetic lines, the development of sociableness, the care of the sick and elderly, the accumulation and hereditary transmission

of capital and other property, as well as the determination of choice of occupation.⁴² But sociological literature is now full of evidence that the family has already become a problematic form for carrying out the functions listed. The possibility of adaptation of the family is, however, usually stated as obvious and, indeed, must be, since the essential traits of the family, too, are inescapably connected with the continuance of the social system. "There appears to be a growing feeling that the family as a social unit or event may change considerably but that the fundamental basis of family life, namely, its place in the ongoing evolutionary process, is not likely to change greatly either in degree or extent."⁴³ As a matter of fact, the family is one of those social forms which, as elements of the present cultural structure, are exercising necessary functions in an ever more inadequate way due to increasing contradictions and crises, yet cannot be changed without change in the total social framework. Every effort to improve the whole beginning with the family, necessarily betrays, at least at present, a parochial and utopian outlook and simply distracts men from urgent historical tasks. Success, however, in more central social areas, as well as every widespread movement, reacts back upon life within the family; for, despite its relative autonomy and capacity for resistance, the latter is at all points dependent on the dynamics of society as a whole. Brutal oppression in social life makes for strictness in the exercise of educational authority, and restrictions on power and domination in public life are reflected in a more tolerable discipline within the home. Yet the bourgeois child of recent centuries regarded his socially conditioned dependence on his father as the consequence of a religious or natural state of affairs. The experience that parental power was

42. Franz Carl Müller-Lyer, *The Family*, tr. by F. W. Stella Browne (New York: Knopf, 1931), pp. 325-26.

43. Eduard C. Lindemann, "Newer Currents of Thought on Parent Education," in Edward B. Reuter and Jessie R. Runner (eds.), *The Family: Source Materials for the Study of Family and Personality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), p. 27.

not underived occurred to him usually only in case of extreme conflict with his parents, namely, when civic authority was enlisted on the father's side to bend a rebellious will and break a child's obstinacy.

In the Protestant concept of God the reification of authority finds direct expression. It is not because God is wise and good that men owe him reverence and obedience. If that were the case, authority would be a relationship in which one party with good reason subordinates himself to the other because of the latter's objective superiority; it would tend to eliminate itself because obedience ultimately frees the inferior from his inferiority. But such a view contradicts the prevailing social practice, in which the acceptance of dependence leads rather to its own continuation and intensification. In the consciousness of the present age, authority is not even a relationship but an inalienable property of the superior being, a qualitative difference. Just as the bourgeois outlook does not regard the value of the material or spiritual goods which men daily use as a form of social relations but withdraws it from rational analysis as being either a natural property of things or, on the contrary, as a purely arbitrary appraisal, so it likewise conceives of authority as a stable quality (provided it does not, in anarchistic fashion, deny it entirely). Reflecting on the principles of authority, Kierkegaard says:

A king is indeed assumed to have authority. Why is it then that one is almost offended at learning that a king is clever, is an artist, etc.? Surely it is because in his case one essentially accentuates the royal authority, and in comparison with this the commoner qualification of human difference is a vanishing factor, is unessential, a disturbing accident. A government board is assumed to have authority in a determinate sphere. Why is it then that one would be offended if such a board in its decrees, etc., were really clever, witty, profound? Because one quite rightly accentuates its authority. To ask whether the king is a genius, with the implication that in such case he is to be obeyed, is really *lèse majesté*, for the question contains a doubt concerning subjection to authority. To be willing to obey a board

in case it is able to say witty things is at bottom to make a fool of the board. To honor one's father because he is a distinguished pate is impiety.⁴⁴

Kierkegaard does expressly say that earthly authority is only "a vanishing factor" and will be eliminated by eternity. But his idea and ideal of authority finds all the clearer expression in his conception of God.

When the man who has authority to say it says, "Go!" and when he who has not authority says, "Go!"—then indeed the saying "Go" along with its content is identical; appraised aesthetically, if you will, they are both equally well said, but the authority makes the difference. In case authority is not "the other" (τὸ ἕτερον), in case it might in any way indicate a higher power within the identity, then precisely there is no authority . . . When Christ says, "There is an eternal life," and when Theological Candidate Petersen says, "There is an eternal life"—they both say the same thing; in the first statement there is contained no more deduction, development, profundity, thoughtfulness, than in the latter; both statements, aesthetically appraised, are equally good. And yet there is an eternal qualitative difference! Christ as the God-Man is in possession of a specific quality of authority which no eternity can mediate and put Christ on the same plane with the essential human equality. Christ therefore taught with authority. To ask whether Christ is profound is blasphemy and an attempt (whether consciously or unconsciously) to annihilate him; for in the question is contained a doubt about his authority and an attempt is made with impertinent simplicity to appraise and judge him as though he were up for examination and should be catechized—whereas instead of that he is the one to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth.⁴⁵

It is precisely this reified concept of authority that is applied to the supreme political leader in the modern theory of the authoritarian state. The fact that in Protestantism such authority belongs only to a transcendent being is of decisive importance

44. Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation: The Book on Adler, or A Cycle of Ethico-Religious Essays*, tr. by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955; Harper & Row, 1966, Torchbook edition), p. 113 (in Torchbook edition).

45. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 113–14.

religiously. This does not, however, affect the truth that the concept, whether as religious or as political, springs from the same social experience and that the opportunity for it to become in either form a basic category for understanding the world was inevitably created by the situation in the limited family of the patriarchal type.

The unmediated identification of natural strength with estimability in the bourgeois family operates as an educational factor with reference to the authority-structure characteristic of this society. But another, likewise seemingly natural characteristic of the father operates in the same way. He is master of the house because he earns or at least possesses the money. Oppenheimer has pointed out the equivocation of the word "family" as it occurs in theory of the State. He wanted to counteract the mistaken idea that the emergence of the State from the family was a peaceful process of differentiation. In such a view the ancient and the modern family were being abusively equated, thus concealing the fact that the family out of which, according to Aristotle, the State emerged "presupposes the distinction of classes in its most brutal form, slavery." The "complete household consisted of slaves and free men, and even the latter were anything but free in comparison to the head."⁴⁶ Oppenheimer stressed the distinction between the two types of family, not their identity. The "free persons" in the modern family can indeed no longer be sold by the father, and the grown-up son and his children are not now subject to the supreme authority of the grandfather.⁴⁷ But the fact that in the average bourgeois family the husband possesses the money, which is power in the form of substance, and determines how it is to be spent, makes wife, sons, and daughters even in modern times "his," puts their lives in large measure into his hands, and forces them to submit to his orders and guidance. As in the

46. Cf. Franz Oppenheimer, *System der Soziologie* 2 (Jena, 1926) 89ff.

47. On the subjection of children in Rome, cf. Edward Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas* (London: Macmillan, 1912²) 1. 610-11.

economy of recent centuries direct force has played an increasingly smaller role in coercing men into accepting a work situation, so too in the family rational considerations and free obedience have replaced slavery and subjection. But the relationship in question is that of the isolated and helpless individual who must bow to circumstances whether they be corrupt or reasonable. The despair of women and children, the deprivation of any happiness in life, the material and psychic exploitation consequent upon the economically based hegemony of the father have weighed mankind down no less in recent centuries than in antiquity, except for very limited periods, regions, and social strata.

The spiritual world into which the child grows in consequence of such dependence, as well as the fantasies with which he peoples the real world, his dreams and wishes, his ideas and judgments, are all dominated by the thought of man's power over man, of above and below, of command and obedience. This scheme is one of the forms understanding takes in this period, one of its transcendental functions. The necessity of a division and hierarchy of mankind, resting on natural, accidental, and irrational principles, is so familiar and obvious to the child that he can experience the earth and universe, too, and even the other world, only under this aspect; it is the pre-given mold into which every new impression is poured. The ideologies of merit and accomplishment, harmony and justice, can continue to have a place in this picture of the world because the fact that the reification of social categories contradicts them does not emerge into consciousness. According to the structure, property relationships are stable and eternal; they do not manifest the fact that they are in truth the objects of social activity and revolution, and therefore they are not prejudicial to the appropriateness claimed by the social structure. Yet because of these contradictions the bourgeois child, unlike the child of ancient society, develops an authority-oriented character which, according to his social class and individual lot in life, has in greater or lesser degree a calculating, fawning, and moralizing or rationalizing aspect. To yield to his father because the latter

has the money is, in his eyes, the only reasonable thing to do, independently of any consideration of the father's human qualities. Such a consideration even proves to be fruitless, at least in the later stages of bourgeois society.

In consequence of the seeming naturalness of paternal power with its twofold foundation in the father's economic position and his physical strength with its legal backing, growing up in the restricted family is a first-rate schooling in the authority behavior specific to this society. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the idea of freedom and justice had not yet been relativized in a way perceptible even to a child, nor were they obviously regarded as secondary by parents. Even so, despite all the talk of such ideals which they received and made their own, the sons and daughters of bourgeois families learned that the fulfillment of all wishes depends in reality on money and position. Helvétius asks:

When from childhood on I remember people always linking happiness with wealth, what means can there be of separating the two in my later years? Are people now aware of the power which connected ideas exercise? If experience of a certain kind of government leads me to fear the great, shall I not automatically respect greatness in a foreign lord who has absolutely no power over me?⁴⁸

One travels the paths to power in the bourgeois world not by putting into practice judgments of moral value but by clever adaptation to actual conditions. A son has this impressed on him by circumstances in his own family. He may think what he will of his father, but if he is to avoid conflicts and costly refusals he must submit to his father and satisfy him. The father is, in the last analysis, always right where his son is concerned. The father represents power and success, and the only way the son can preserve in his own mind a harmony between effective action and the ideal, a harmony often shattered in the years before puberty's end, is to endow his father, the strong and powerful one, with all the other qualities the son considers estimable. As a matter of fact, in the present circumstances the father's

48. Helvétius, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 215-16.

economic and educational service to his children is indispensable; in his educational and governing function, even in his strictness which can be carried far enough to affect society as a whole, he is meeting a genuine social need, even if in a problematic fashion. It is consequently impossible to separate rational and irrational elements in the respect given him by his children. Consequently, too, childhood in a limited family becomes an habituation to an authority which in an obscure way unites a necessary social function with power over men.

Conscious educational measures which demand the spirit of respect for the status quo and the ability to adapt oneself to it are thus supplemented by the suggestive power of the situation in the limited family.⁴⁹ Where the family is still a productive community, the head of the family is immediately seen in his productive social achievement. But in the family which has shrunk to being a consumer community, his position is acquired essentially by the money he brings in and involves all the more momentous consequences for his family. Because of this separation in space and time between professional and familial life, every bourgeois father may in social life have a very modest position and have to bend the knee to others, yet at home will be the master and exercise the highly important function of accustoming his children to discretion and obedience. This is why not only the upper middle classes but many groups of workers and employees yield ever new generations of people who do not question the structure of the economic and social system but accept it as natural and permanent and allow even their dissatisfaction and rebellion to be turned into effective forces for the prevailing order.

The individual mechanisms which operate in shaping the authority-oriented character within the family have been the object of investigation, especially by modern depth-psychology. The latter has shown how the lack of independence, the deep sense of inferiority that afflicts most men, the centering of their

49. For the conception of social suggestion in general, cf. Ludwig Gumplowicz, *Die soziologische Staatsidee* (Innsbruck, 1902), pp. 205ff.

whole psychic life around the ideas of order and subordination, but also their cultural achievements are all conditioned by the relations of child to parents or their substitutes and to brothers and sisters. The concepts of repression and sublimation as the outcomes of conflict with social reality have greatly advanced our understanding of the phenomena mentioned. For the formation of the authority-oriented character it is especially decisive that the children should learn, under pressure from the father, not to trace every failure back to its social causes but to remain at the level of the individual and to hypostatize the failure in religious terms as sin or in naturalistic terms as deficient natural endowment. The bad conscience that is developed in the family absorbs more energies than can be counted, which might otherwise be directed against the social circumstances that play a role in the individual's failure. The outcome of such paternal education is men who without ado seek the fault in themselves. At times this has been a productive trait, namely, as long as the fate of the individual and the common good both depended, at least in part, on the efficiency of the individual. In the present age, however, a compulsive sense of guilt, taking the form of a continual readiness to be sacrificed, renders fruitless any criticism of the real causes of trouble. The principle of self-blame will show essentially its negative side as long as it does not take on, in the majority of men, its more valid form: a living awareness in each member of a self-determining human society that all happiness flows from work in common. The human types which prevail today are not educated to get to the roots of things, and they mistake appearance for substance. They are unable to think theoretically and to move independently beyond the simple registering of facts, that is, beyond the habit of applying conventional concepts to reality. The religious and other categories, with the help of which they are confident they can rise above circumstance, are ready to hand, and they have learned to use them uncritically. Cruelty, which Nietzsche calls the "salve for wounded pride,"⁵⁰ finds other outlets than work

50. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Musarion-Ausgabe), volume 11, p. 251.

and knowledge, though a rational education could channel it into the latter.

Under the present mode of production, the realization of every project depends upon a thousand chances, and free decision is degraded into a matter of mere guessing among obscure possibilities. To live in this way is enough by itself to kill any joy in activity. If it were not, education in the limited family is doubtless the most effective preparation for such a surrender of individual volition. In members of the upper classes, the results of this education for living under authority show more in an objectivity, an openness to all things, even to the mutually contradictory views and events in art and history, an enthusiasm for greatness as such; it shows, in brief, in the empiricism and relativism of the liberal period. Among the lower classes, on the contrary, where pressure on the father is transmuted into pressure on his children, the result has been directly to increase, along with cruelty, the masochistic inclination to surrender one's will to any leader whatsoever, provided only he could be described as powerful. Comte, the founder of modern sociology, knew this from his own experience:

The widespread desire for leadership is certainly quite unrestrained today, in consequence of our intellectual anarchy. Yet there is surely no one who in a secret personal testing of conscience has not felt more or less deeply how sweet it would be to obey, if only we could in our day and age have the almost impossible good luck of being freed from the oppressive burden of responsibility by wise and worthy leaders. Such a feeling they especially may have experienced who could themselves do the best job of leading.⁵¹

McDougall notes that blame and disapproval check the impulse of self-assertion and arouse "the impulse of submission":

the resulting state ranges, according as one or other of these affects predominates, from an angry resentment, in which negative self-feeling is lacking, through shame and bashfulness of many shades, to a state of repentance in which the principal element is negative

51. Auguste Comte, *Système du politique positive ou Traité de sociologie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1851-54), volume 1.

self-feeling, and which may derive a certain sweetness from the completeness of submission to the power that rebukes us, a sweetness which is due to the satisfaction of the impulse of submission.⁵²

Even involvement with science is often motivated by the need of a firmly marked goal and way to it, of a meaning and purpose for action. "You think you're looking for the 'truth'?" says Nietzsche. "You're looking for a leader and prefer to be given orders!"⁵³

The impulse of submission, however, is not a timeless drive, but a phenomenon emerging essentially from the limited bourgeois family. The decisive thing here is not whether coercion or kindness marked the child's education, since the child's character is formed far more by the very structure of the family than by the conscious intentions and methods of the father. In view of the power at his disposal, even his very friendliness seems less a behavior elicited by the situation than a magnanimity adopted out of a sense of duty; and this impression of the child does not arise only when children relate their experiences to each other, but is caused by the very situation within his own family. However rationally the father may be acting by his own lights, his social position in relation to the child means that every educational measure he takes, however reasonable, must carry overtones of reward and punishment. It is true, of course, that no education conceivable today can absolutely do away with these alternatives, since the development of every human being from self-centered infant to member of society is, despite all modifications, essentially an abbreviated repetition of a thousand-year-long civilizing process which is unthinkable without an element of coercion. But it makes a difference whether this coercion is the spontaneous reflection in the father-son relationship of the prevailing social contradictions or proves rather to be a provisional relationship which is eliminated as the individual grows and moves out into the larger society.

52. William McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1936²³), p. 171.

53. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Müsarion-Ausgabe), volume 14, p. 95.

As long as there is no decisive change in the basic structure of social life and in the modern culture which rests on that structure, the family will continue to exercise its indispensable function of producing specific, authority-oriented types of character. The family is an important element in the patterned unity which marks the present period of history. All the self-consistent political, moral, and religious movements which have aimed at strengthening and renewing this unity, have been quite aware of the fundamental role of the family as creator of the authority-oriented cast of mind and have regarded it as a prime duty to strengthen the family and all its social presuppositions, such as the outlawing of extra-marital sexual relations, propaganda for having and rearing children, and the restricting of women to the domestic sphere. Furthermore, the conceptions men had of social policy have also been essentially conditioned by insight into the family and its irreplaceable function. Le Play, more than any other writer perhaps, has thrown light on the social significance of obedience in the patriarchal family. The last volumes of his great book on the European workers show on the title-page itself that this sociologist and social thinker who was wholly oriented to the past makes the decline of paternal authority responsible for all the social ills of modern times. The social groups with which Le Play deals are categorized from the start according as they are faithful or not to "the decalogue and paternal authority." Faith in a single God and submission to paternal authority are for Le Play "the two eternal principles of every society."⁵⁴ The spirit of obedience he considers to be in a way "the material element in social peace,"⁵⁵ and he regards paternal authority, the origins of this obedience, as so important that education and schooling, the child's learning to read and write, are of questionable value in some circumstances.

In all uneducated societies the fathers of families have an instinct for this danger, and it leads them to reject the benefit of an elementary instruction for the upcoming generation. They do not fail

54. Frédéric Le Play, *Les ouvriers européens* (Paris, 1877-79²), volume 6, p. xii.

55. Le Play, *op. cit.*, p. xli.

to see the value of such instruction, but they are afraid that under the influence of its novelty they will lose the respect and obedience of their children. . . . Such a means [schooling] is not to be taken lightly when its hasty introduction into backward societies means a loss of paternal authority. It is decidedly dangerous when it give people the opportunity to foster hostility towards the traditional ways of mankind. In every nation where this impulse is given to the minds of the younger generation and coexists with a weakening of religious belief and paternal authority, there is a disruption of the social structure.⁵⁶

Le Play saw the real situation quite clearly, even if he evaluated it from an antiliberalist viewpoint. The same is true of the present-day totalitarian states. Superficial critics tend to be overimpressed by the integration of fathers and sons into the national organizations. The trend is there, of course, and has profound and cogent reasons behind it. But family life has for a long time been progressively breaking up over the greatest part of the Western world, ever since the growth of large-scale manufacturing and increasing unemployment, and the break-up has affected even large sectors of the bourgeoisie. In view of this, the increased takeover of educational functions by a state that is, from its own point of view, very much on the side of the family, certainly carries no especially great threat of dissolution of the family. In addition to fostering a general rigidification of those social relationships which sustain the family in its functions and are in turn sustained by it, these states also attempt directly to regulate the antifamilial tendencies mentioned and to limit them in the degree required for maintaining the present system with its national and international play of forces.⁵⁷

The family is related to every other factor in the cultural

56. Le Play, *op. cit.*, volume 4, pp. 361–62.

57. How highly esteemed the family is in contemporary Germany, for example, for its irreplaceable role in character formation may be seen in the Report of the Fourteenth Congress of the German Psychological Society (*Psychologie des Gemeinschaftslebens*, ed. by Otto Klemm [Jena, 1935]; cf. especially the pages on "Die Struktur der Familie in ihrer Bedeutung für die Erwachsenen" by Oskar Kutzner [pp. 254ff.], as well as a number of other contributions to the volume).

complex, as it is to the complex as a whole, in an antagonistic no less than in a promotive way. Even in the golden age of the bourgeois order, it must be remembered, there was a renewal of social life, but it was achieved at the cost of great sacrifice for most individuals. In that situation, the family was a place where the suffering could be given free expression and the injured individual found a retreat within which he could put up some resistance. In the economy man was being reduced to a mere function of one or other economic factor: wealth or technically demanding physical or mental work. The same process of reduction to subpersonal status was going on within the family in so far as the father was becoming the money-earner, the woman a sexual object or a domestic servant, and the children either heirs of the family possessions or living forms of social security who would later make up with interest for all the effort expended on them. Within the family, however, unlike public life, relationships were not mediated through the market and the individual members were not competing with each other. Consequently the individual always had the possibility there of living not as a mere function but as a human being. In civic life, even when common concerns were not mediated by a contract, as in the case of natural catastrophes, wars, or the suppression of revolutions, they always had an essentially negative character, being mainly concerned with the warding off of dangers. But common concerns took a positive form in sexual love and especially in maternal care. The growth and happiness of the other are willed in such unions. A felt opposition therefore arises between them and hostile reality outside. To this extent, the family not only educates for authority in bourgeois society; it also cultivates the dream of a better condition for mankind. In the yearning of many adults for the paradise of their childhood, in the way a mother can speak of her son even though he has come into conflict with the world, in the protective love of a wife for her husband, there are ideas and forces at work which admittedly are not dependent on the existence of the family in its present form and, in fact, are even in danger of shrivelling up in such a milieu, but which, nevertheless, in the

bourgeois system of life rarely have any place but the family where they can survive at all.

Hegel recognized and wrote of this opposition between the family and the larger community. He regarded it as "the supreme opposition in ethics and therefore in tragedy."⁵⁸ Over against human law which is "open to the light of day," that is, the law prevailing in society and state, according to which men compete with one another "in the segregation and isolation of [their] systems,"⁵⁹ there is "the eternal law" under which individuals are valued for their own sakes.

The procuring and maintaining of power and wealth turn, in part, merely on needs and wants, and are a matter that has to do with desire; in part, they become in their higher object something which is merely of mediate significance. This object does not fall within the family itself, but concerns what is truly universal, the community; it acts rather in a negative way on the family, and consists in setting the individual outside the family, in subduing his merely natural existence and his mere particularity and so drawing him on towards virtue, towards living in and for the universal. The positive purpose peculiar to the family is the individual as such.⁶⁰

Since Hegel absolutizes bourgeois society, he is not able really to develop the dialectic inherent in this opposition, even if as a very great philosophical realist he does not seek a hasty resolution of the conflict by softening its contours. He links the knowledge that only as a socialized being is man real with a hypostatization of contemporary society, but at least he recognizes that the individual's lot in this society is "the long sequence of his broken and diversified existence" and "the unrest of a life of chance,"⁶¹ whereas the family embraces "the whole individual." However, Hegel was unable to think the possibility of a truly united and rational society in which "the individual as such," as understood and cherished within the family, could

58. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, no. 166, tr. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 115.

59. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. by J. B. Baillie (New York: Macmillan, 1931²), pp. 473-74.

60. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

61. Hegel. *op. cit.*, p. 470.

come into his own. He is forced, therefore, to regard this concrete individual entity, man in his totality, as being, even within the family, a "merely unreal insubstantial shadow,"⁶² and to say that

the act . . . which embraces the entire existence of the blood relation . . . has as its object and content this specific individual . . . as a universal being, divested of his sensuous, or particular reality. The act no longer concerns the living but the dead.⁶³

If justice is in fact embodied in the society and state of the day, even though these do not respect the individual's uniqueness but are absolutely indifferent to it, then the reduction of the individual to nothing but the representative of an economic function is philosophically canonized and made permanent. The individual as he really lives and suffers, that is, "the specific particularity of a given nature, which becomes purpose and content," is looked upon not only as the limited being he presently is, but even as "something powerless and unreal."⁶⁴ Consequently the satisfaction of the unique, natural, i.e. really existing man is not the goal of politics but the purely spiritual task of the absolute Spirit, the achievement of art, religion, and metaphysics. If individuals, supported by these spiritual forces, do not bear up under pressures and make the necessary sacrifices, then

government has from time to time to shake [them] to the very centre by War. By this means it confounds the order that has been established and arranged, and violates their right to independence, while the individuals (who . . . get adrift from the whole, striving after inviolable self-existence . . . and personal security) are made, by the task thus imposed on them by government, to feel the power of their lord and master, death.⁶⁵

Any transition to a higher form of society is thus excluded. But in the society which Hegel regards as definitive, individuals

62. Hegel, *ibid.*

63. Hegel, *ibid.*

64. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

65. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

at any rate are only replaceable representatives of economic functions, exchangeable cases and instances, and correspond wholly to examples of a concept as found in discursive logic which even Hegel, the objective idealist, cannot escape from here. The individual in this philosophy, as in the society which corresponds to it, is "not . . . this particular husband, this particular child, but . . . a husband, children *in general*,"⁶⁶ and against the tensions and disruptive tendencies which arise out of the disregarded claims of particular men, war becomes a final, even if dangerous, act of wisdom. The only thing left for the despairing family when the beloved husband or wife or child is annihilated in this inhuman political solution is their "positive ethical act towards the given individual,"⁶⁷ and this they accomplish by funeral rites and burial, not, for example, by working to better the evil situation. When the family "weds the relative to the bosom of the earth,"⁶⁸ it resolves the injustice "in such a way that what has happened becomes rather a work of their own doing, and hence bare existence, the last state, gets also to be something willed, and thus an object of gratification."⁶⁹ Hegel saw the conflict between family and public authority in the light of Antigone who struggles to recover her brother's corpse. He regarded the relation between brother and sister as the most unalloyed one within the family. Had he discovered that this human relationship, in which "the moment of *individual selfhood*, recognizing and being recognized, can . . . assert its right,"⁷⁰ need not simply accept the present in the form of mourning for the dead but can take a more active form in the future, his dialectic with its closed, idealistic form would have broken through its socially conditioned limitations.

Hegel identified the principle of love for the whole person, such as it exists in the marital community, with "womanliness" and the principle of civic subordination with "manliness." In so

66. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

67. Hegel, *op. cit.* p. 472.

68. Hegel, *ibid.*

69. Hegel, *op. cit.* p. 481.

70. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

doing he to some extent simulated interest in the problem of matriarchy which is associated with the names of Bachofen and Morgan. Morgan describes the coming age of civilization as "a renewal, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the ancient gentes."⁷¹ In similar fashion, Engels saw matriarchy, which was characteristic of ancient society with its basis in sexual unions, as a society (admittedly undeveloped) in which there were no class conflicts and no reduction of man to an object.⁷² He calls the transition to father-right a revolution, "one of the most decisive ever experienced by humanity."⁷³ The patriarchal system introduced mankind to class conflict and to the rupture between public and familial life, while within the family the principle of naked authority came to be applied. "The overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex."⁷⁴ To the extent that any principle besides that of subordination prevails in the modern family, the woman's maternal and sisterly love is keeping alive a social principle dating from before historical antiquity, a principle which Hegel conceives "as the law of the ancient gods, 'the gods of the underworld,' "⁷⁵ that is, of prehistory.

Because it still fosters human relations which are determined by the woman, the present-day family is a source of strength to resist the total dehumanization of the world and contains an element of antiauthoritarianism. But it must also be recognized that because of her dependence woman herself has been changed. She is, in large measure, socially and legally under the authority of the male and is seen in relation to him, thus experiencing in her person the law that prevails in this anarchic

71. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, ed. by Leslie A. White (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 467.

72. Cf. Erich Fromm, "The Theory of Mother Right and Its Relevance for Social Psychology," in his *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), pp. 84-109.

73. Friedrich Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*, tr. Ernest Untermann (reprinted: New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 49.

74. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

75. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, no. 166, p. 115.

society. In the process her own development is lastingly restricted. The male and, concretely, the male as formed by existing circumstances dominates her in a double way: societal life is essentially managed by men, and the man is at the head of the family. Since that original revolution in which mother-right was overthrown, women's dependence on man has been uninterrupted in civilized lands. Even the age of knights and troubadours is no exception. "The noble ladies, married and unmarried, who were the bright jewels of festivals and tourneys, were wholly subject to the domestic power of father and husband, were not infrequently physically ill-treated, and were jealously watched as though they were ladies of the harem."⁷⁶ The Protestant church sees in woman's subjection to man the penalty for Eve's sin,⁷⁷ but on this point it is only following the views of the medieval church. For the latter, too, "woman [is] primarily the partner who wittingly and unwittingly seduces to sin; the attraction she awakens in the male is regarded as moral fault on her part."⁷⁸ Even belief in witches, which was the rationalization for the most frightful terrorism ever exercised against a sexual group, was regarded as justified by the corruption of woman's nature. In the modern period woman's dependence has, indeed, taken other forms due to the new mode of production, but the principle itself remains unchanged as do its profound effects on the female psyche. Even in North America where women receive a respect which recalls the medieval love service, the principle is entirely preserved. Of the two great dramatic critics of modern society Ibsen has portrayed the fact of woman's subjection and exploitation, while Strindberg has shown its result: the wife in a bourgeois marriage, restricted in her development, unsatisfied, spiritless.

The familial role of the woman strengthens the authority of the status quo in two ways. Being dependent on her husband's position and earnings, she is also circumscribed by the fact that

76. J. Bühler, *Die Kultur des Mittelalters* (Leipzig: A. Kröner, 1930), pp. 305-6.

77. Cf. Troeltsch, *ibid.*

78. Bühler, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

the head of the family adapts himself to the situations he meets and under no circumstances rebels against the powers that be but does his utmost to better his position. Profound economic and even physiological interests link the woman to her husband's ambition. Before all else, however, her concern is with her own and her children's economic security. The introduction of the franchise for women was a gain for conservative forces even in states where a strengthening of labor groups had been expected.

The sense of economic and social responsibility for wife and child, which necessarily becomes an essential trait of the male in the bourgeois world, is one of the most important elements in the functioning of the family as a conservative force in that society. When accommodation to existing authority relationships becomes advisable for husband and father out of love for his family, then the very thought of rebellion causes him the most agonizing conflicts of conscience. The struggle against certain historical conditions ceases to be a matter simply of personal courage and becomes the sacrifice of persons dear to him. The existence of many states in the modern period is closely bound up with such inhibitions and their continuance. If these restraints ceased or even lessened in intensity, such states would immediately be endangered. Furthermore, it is not only concern for his family but also the constant spoken or tacit urging of his wife that chains the husband to the status quo. In their upbringing by the mother the children, too, experience directly the influence of a mind dedicated to the prevailing order of things, although, on the other hand, love for a mother who is dominated by the father can also sow in the children the seeds of a lasting spirit of rebellion.

It is not only in this direct way, however, that the woman exercises her function of strengthening authority. Her whole position in the family results in an inhibiting of important psychic energies which might have been effective in shaping the world. Monogamy as practiced in bourgeois male-dominated society presupposes the devaluation of purely sensuous pleasure. As a result, not only is the sexual life of the spouses surrounded with mystery as far as the children are concerned,

but every sensuous element is strictly banished from the son's tenderness for his mother. She and his sisters have the right to pure feelings and unsullied reverence and esteem from him. The forced separation, expressly represented by the mother and especially by the father, of idealistic dedication and sexual desire, tender mindfulness and simple self-interest, heavenly interiority and earthly passion forms one psychic root of an existence rent by contradictions. Under the pressure of such a family situation the individual does not learn to understand and respect his mother in her concrete existence, that is, as this particular social and sexual being. Consequently he is not only educated to repress his socially harmful impulses (a feat of immense cultural significance), but, because this education takes the problematic form of camouflaging reality, the individual also loses for good the disposition of part of his psychic energies. Reason and joy in its exercise are restricted; the suppressed inclination towards the mother reappears as a fanciful and sentimental susceptibility to all symbols of the dark, maternal, and protective powers.⁷⁹ Because the woman bows to the law of the patriarchal family, she becomes an instrument for maintaining authority in this society. Hegel refers with enthusiasm to Antigone's final words in Sophocles' play: "If this seems good to the gods, / Suffering, we may be made to know our error."⁸⁰ When she thus renounces all opposition, she simultaneously accepts the principle of male-dominated bourgeois society: bad luck is your own fault.

The role of cultural institutions in keeping a society going is usually well known, instinctively at first, conceptually later on, by those whose lives are especially closely bound up with it. They cling passionately to ways of life which seem essential to a world order that favors them. But the powers of self-preserva-

79. Cf. the work of modern depth psychology, especially Freud's essay, "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," in *Collected Papers*, tr. by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth, 1925), volume 4, pp. 203-16.

80. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, tr. by Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: K. Paul, 1892-96), volume 1, p. 441.

tion which these institutions possess comes only in small part from deliberative promotive efforts from above. They draw ever new life from the fundamental structure of society (which they in turn confirm) and, in the process, directly strengthen their own self-preservation energies. Religious ideas, for example, draw their continued existence, in a seemingly almost natural way, from the life experience of men in present-day society. But religion in turn strengthens the tendency to give a religious interpretation of personal experience, for it predisposes the individual from childhood on to react thus and it has at hand methods suitable to the needs of any given moment.

Similarly, the authority-promoting function of the family affects the family itself in two ways: the economic structure of society, for which the family is one condition, makes the father the master and directly creates in his offspring the disposition to start their own household in turn. The man was, until very recently, the entrepreneur and wage-earner in the bourgeois family. Within such a framework the emancipation of woman (a long-delayed and gradual process at best) and her business activity were regarded from the beginning as merely substitutional. Woman's "vocation," for which she is prepared in mind and feeling by her bourgeois education and character formation, drives her not behind the counter of a store nor to a typewriter, but towards a happy marriage in which she will be cared for and will be able to worry about her children. Furthermore, the emancipation has come too late, for it has come at a period when unemployment has become a structural part of our present society. In this situation the woman is unwelcome, and the laws of many states, limiting the professional activity of women as they do, show that her prospects in this area are poor. The authority-promoting effects of the family depend essentially on the man having the decisive role he does, and his domestic power depends in turn on his being the provider. If he ceases to earn or possess money, if he loses his social position, his prestige within the family is endangered. Then he experiences in his own life the working out of the law of the bourgeois world, not simply because respect and love usually attend upon suc-

cess, but also because the family falls into despair and decline and becomes incapable of such positive emotions.

The authority structure of a particular family, however, can be strong enough for the father to maintain his position even after its material basis has disappeared, just as in the larger society particular groups can continue to prevail even when they have but little to contribute to society as a whole. Psychic and physical power, which grew out of economic power, thus shows its capacity for resistance. The power sprang originally from the material basis of society and the man's place in this mode of production, but the consequences of this dependence can in individual cases continue long after the father has lost his job. The reason for this may be that he impressed his power very deeply on the souls of his family during the time when he was provider, or it may be that the widespread and deeply rooted conviction of the father's role continue to keep wife and children in line. Such continuing dependence is not artificially produced but is mediated through the whole set of circumstances, the complex interaction of tensions and contrasts. The rhythms and forms in which the economic factor makes its influence felt in particular types of family are numerous and diverse; and the factors which militate against this influence are a chief subject of contemporary research.⁸¹ The cultural forces which mediate between economy and family determine the family type, as well as how the general rule is applied to particular cases and what inhibiting forces it encounters; but they do not lessen the rule's universal historical validity. The idealization of paternal authority, the pretense that it comes from a divine decision or the nature of things or reason proves on closer examination to be the glorification of an economically conditioned institution.

There is a diversity within social groups which depends on level of income, and it influences family structure. Especially in times when conditions in the labor market were more or less

81. Cf. the volume in which the present essay originally appeared: *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, ed. by Max Horkheimer (Paris, 1936), pp. 231ff.

tolerable, the great mass of proletarian families took the bourgeois family as its model. But when, especially in the early capitalist period, there was a need to put children to work and when, consequently, authority began to be exercised in crueler ways, these proletarian families took on a new shape. The demands of extensive industrialization do away with the pleasant home and force husband, and often wife as well, into a difficult life outside the house. There can no longer be any question of a private existence with its own satisfactions and values. In the extreme case, the family becomes the available form of sexual satisfaction and, for the rest, a source of multiplied anxieties.

Yet this last state of the family, when the original orientation to the family has largely disappeared, can be the basis for cultivating the same sense of community as binds such men to their fellows outside the family. That is, the conception of a proximately possible society without poverty and justice, and the consequent efforts to improve conditions and to make such a society a reality, replace the individualistic motive as the dominant bond in relationships. Out of the suffering caused by the oppressive conditions that prevail under the sign of bourgeois authority, there can arise a new community of spouses and children, and it will not, in bourgeois fashion, form a closed community over against other families of the same type or against individuals in the same group. Children will not be raised as future heirs and will therefore not be regarded, in the old way, as "one's own." In so far as the work of such children, if work for them is still possible, is not limited to securing their daily food, it will contribute to the fulfillment of the historical task of creating a world in which they and others will have it better. When education is shaped by such a familial mentality, children will learn, less perhaps through explicit instruction than through spontaneous behavior and tone of voice, that the knowledge of facts is to be clearly distinguished from the acceptance of facts.

Of course, as unemployment grows and free work becomes not only uncertain but ultimately the privilege of relatively limited and carefully chosen segments of the population, the kind of future-oriented family we have been describing will be-

come rare. Complete demoralization, submission in utter hopelessness to every master, lays hold upon the family as well as the individual. Impotence and lack of opportunity for productive work have already in good measure crushed out the beginnings of new types of education. "Authority is the more treasured as creative powers wane."⁸²

The continuance of the bourgeois family by economic forces is supplemented by the mechanism of self-renewal which the family contains within itself. The working of the mechanism shows above all in the influence of parents on their children's marriages. When the purely material concern for a financially and socially advantageous marriage conflicts with the erotic desires of the young, the parents and especially the father usually bring to bear all the power they have. In the past, bourgeois and feudal circles had the weapon of disinheritance as well as moral and physical means of imposing the parental will. In addition, in the struggle against the unfettered impulses of love, the family had public opinion and civil law on its side.

The most cowardly and spineless men become implacable as soon as they are able to make their absolute parental authority prevail. The misuse of this authority is a sort of crude revenge for all the submissiveness and dependence they have had to show, willingly or not, in bourgeois society.⁸³

When people in progressive seventeenth-century Holland were initially reluctant to persecute Adrian Koerbagh, the fearless precursor and martyr of the Enlightenment, for his theoretical views, his enemies changed their tactics and focused on his living outside marriage with a woman and their child. The novels and plays of the bourgeois age, which were the literature of social criticism for the period, were filled with the struggles of love against being reduced to its familial form. In fact we may say that at the historical moment when enchained human powers no longer experienced their opposition to the status quo as es-

82. Nietzsche, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Musarion-Ausgabe), volume 21, p. 247.

83. Karl Marx, in a review of Peuchet, *Vom Selbstmord*, in Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Part I, volume 3 (Berlin, 1932), p. 396.

essentially a conflict with particular institutions such as church and family, but attacked this whole way of life at its roots, specifically bourgeois literature came to an end. The tension between the family and the individual who resists its authority found expression not only in coercion against sons and daughters but also in the problem of adultery and of the murderess of her child. Treatment of this subject ranges from *Kabbala and Love* and *The Awakening of Spring* to the tragedy of Gretchen and *Elective Affinities*. In this area the classical and romantic periods, impressionism and expressionism, all voice one and the same complaint: the incongruity of love and its bourgeois form.

However decisive a force in human development monogamous marriage has been in its millennial history, and however long and significant a future it may still have in a higher form of society, it has at any rate served to make very clear the contradiction between life as it unfolds and the circumstances in which it unfolds. In the Renaissance there were two legends which both found immortal expression in works of art: Romeo and Juliet, and Don Juan. Both glorify the rebellion of eros against authority: Don Juan in rejection of the constricting morality of fidelity and exclusive love, Romeo and Juliet in the name of this same morality. The same relationships are made manifest in these figures despite their differences; they are caught in the same situation. Romeo's embrace brings Juliet the happiness which only Don Juan can give a woman, while Don Juan sees a Juliet in every girl. Both would have to divert their own creative powers, which are both bodily and psychic, and to deny all the principles of masculinity, if they were to submit to the bourgeois moral code. Such legendary figures manifest the gulf that lies between the individual's claim to happiness and the claim of the family to priority. These artistic creations reflect one of the antagonisms that exist between social forms and vital forces. But in the very exceptions the rule is confirmed. In general, the authority of the bourgeois male prevails even in love and determines its course. In his concern for his partner's dowry, social position, and capacity for work, in his expectation of advantage and honor from his chil-

dren, in his respect for his neighbor's opinion, and, above all, in his internal dependence on deeply rooted concepts, custom, and convention—in this male empiricism of modern times, an empiricism which has been learned but which has also become a second nature, there is an imperious urge to respect the form of the family and to affirm it in the individual's existence.

The family in the bourgeois era is no more a single and uniform reality than is, for example, man or the state. From one period to another, and even from one social group to another, the family's function and structure alter. Especially under the influence of the development of industrialism it has undergone decisive change. The consequences of domestic technology for the relations between members of the family has been discussed in detail in the sociological literature. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern traits and tendencies of the bourgeois family which are inseparable from the foundation on which bourgeois society is built.

The educating of authority-oriented personalities, for example, for which the family is suited because of its own authority structure, is not a passing phenomenon but part of a relatively permanent state of affairs. Of course, the more this society enters a critical stage due to its own immanent laws, the less will the family be able to exercise its educational function. The resultant need for the state to concern itself in greater measure than before with education for authority relationships and to lessen at least the time allowed the family and the church, has been indicated above. This new situation, however, like the type of authoritarian state which introduces it, is part of a more fundamental and irresistible movement. We refer to the tendency, arising out of the economy itself, to dissolve all cultural values and institutions, the very tendency which created the bourgeois age and has kept it in existence. The means of protecting the cultural totality and developing it further have increasingly come into conflict with the cultural content itself. Even if the form of the family should finally be stabilized by the new measures, yet, as the importance of the whole bourgeois middle class decreases, this form will lose its active power

which is grounded in the free vocational activity of the male. In the end everything about the family as we have known it in this age will have to be supported and held together in an ever more artificial fashion. In the face of this will to preserve, cultural forces themselves will come more and more to seem like counterforces which need regulation.

In the bourgeois golden age there was a fruitful interaction between family and society, because the authority of the father was based on his role in society, while society was renewed by the education for authority which went on in the patriarchal family. Now, however, the admittedly indispensable family is becoming a simple problem of technological manipulation by government. The totality of relationships in the present age, the universal web of things, was strengthened and stabilized by one particular element, namely, authority, and the process of strengthening and stabilization went on essentially at the particular, concrete level of the family. The family was the "germ cell" of bourgeois culture and it was, like the authority in it, a living reality. This dialectical totality of universality, particularity, and individuality⁸⁵ proves now to be a unity of antagonistic forces, and the disruptive element in the culture is making itself more strongly felt than the unitive.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

84. Cf. Fritz Mauthner, *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande* (4 vols.; Stuttgart-Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1920-23), volume 2, pp. 342ff.

85. Cf. *The Logic of Hegel*, no. 164, p. 294.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

THE concept of God was for a long time the place where the idea was kept alive that there are other norms besides those to which nature and society give expression in their operation. Dissatisfaction with earthly destiny is the strongest motive for acceptance of a transcendental being. If justice resides with God, then it is not to be found in the same measure in the world. Religion is the record of the wishes, desires, and accusations of countless generations.

But the more Christianity brought God's rule into harmony with events in the world, the more the meaning of religion became perverted. In Catholicism God was already regarded as in certain respects the creator of the earthly order, while Protestantism attributed the world's course directly to the will of the Almighty. Not only was the state of affairs on earth at any given moment transfigured with the radiance of divine justice, but the latter was itself brought down to the level of the corrupt relations which mark earthly life. Christianity lost its function of expressing the ideal, to the extent that it became the bed-fellow of the state.

The productive kind of criticism of the status quo which found expression in earlier times as a belief in a heavenly judge today takes the form of a struggle for more rational forms of societal life. But just as reason after Kant, even though it knows better, cannot avoid falling into shattered but nonetheless recurring illusions, so too, ever since the transition from religious longing to conscious social practice, there continues to exist an illusion which can be exposed but not entirely banished. It is the image of a perfect justice.

It is impossible that such justice should ever become a reality

within history. For, even if a better society develops and eliminates the present disorder, there will be no compensation for the wretchedness of past ages and no end to the distress in nature. We are therefore dealing here with an illusion, the spontaneous growth of ideas which probably arose out of primitive exchange. The principle that each one must have his share and that each one has the same basic right to happiness is a generalization of economically conditioned rules, their extension into the infinite. Yet the urge to such a conceptual transcending of the possible, to this impotent revolt against reality, is part of man as he has been moulded by history. What distinguishes the progressive type of man from the retrogressive is not the refusal of the idea but the understanding of the limits set to its fulfillment.

When the authoritarian state seems to engage in a historic conflict with religion, the essential issue is whether the two shall compete, be coordinated, or go their separate ways. A bureaucracy au courant with the contemporary situation takes over and reorganizes the old ideological apparatus in which the church had its share. Even if it involves hardship the church must ultimately see that its own social position depends on the continued existence of the basic traits of the present system. If these were to change, the church would lose all and gain nothing. Its position rests on the belief that absolute justice is not simply a projection of men's minds but a real eternal power; a future society, however, would cease to perpetuate this belief.

It is a vain hope that contemporary debates in the church would make religion once again the vital reality it was in the beginning. Good will, solidarity with wretchedness, and the struggle for a better world have now thrown off their religious garb. The attitude of today's martyrs is no longer patience but action; their goal is no longer their own immortality in the after-life but the happiness of men who come after them and for whom they know how to die.

A purely spiritual resistance becomes just a wheel in the machine of the totalitarian state. True discipleship, to which many Christians may once again be called, does not lead men

back to religion. Yet that image of perfect justice, the spreading of which brings neither power nor respect in this world or the beyond and which is accompanied by a growing awareness of its own vanity, may be more attractive to disillusioned believers than the empty self-satisfaction which religion in the last century either did not see within itself or else tolerated as well-intentioned.

Mankind loses religion as it moves through history, but the loss leaves its mark behind. Part of the drives and desires which religious belief preserved and kept alive are detached from the inhibiting religious form and become productive forces in social practice. In the process even the immoderation characteristic of shattered illusions acquires a positive form and is truly transformed. In a really free mind the concept of infinity is preserved in an awareness of the finality of human life and of the inalterable aloneness of men, and it keeps society from indulging in a thoughtless optimism, an inflation of its own knowledge into a new religion.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

THE LATEST ATTACK ON METAPHYSICS

It is difficult to reconcile science with metaphysics. While metaphysics treats of essential being, substance, the soul, and immortality, science has little use for any of these. Metaphysics claims to apprehend being, to grasp totality, and to lay bare by means of cognitive methods available to every man a meaning of the world independent of man. From the inner structure of reality, it derives precepts for the conduct of life; for example, the dictum that man's most fitting and worthy activity is to occupy himself with supreme ideas, the transcendental, or with the primary cause. As a rule, metaphysical theories harmonize well with the belief that hardship is an eternal necessity for the great majority of men and that the individual must always surrender himself to the designs of the powers that be. Metaphysics bases this belief not on the Bible, but on allegedly indubitable insights.

With the authority of direct revelation badly shaken in modern times, metaphysical systems sought the use of natural reason to justify the categories of faith and to sustain the belief that human life has a deeper meaning. All such attempts are futile, however; the assertions of metaphysics are in perpetual conflict with the type of thinking that is supposed to uphold them. The incompatibility between natural reason and metaphysical categories may be observed in two historical processes: in the reciprocal destruction of the metaphysical systems and in the banishment of their concepts from science, where the natural reason to which metaphysics lays claim has its true and proper home. The scientific textbooks of the twentieth century

say very little about substance as such, about man and the soul, and nothing at all about eternal meaning. Scientists do not think for a moment that the validity of their theories logically depends on such ideas, whether as postulates or as necessary adjuncts. On the contrary, they endeavor, without the assistance of metaphysics, to reduce their systems to ever more simple principles. Metaphysical and moral categories have no place in their theories. This does not signify, as is sometimes assumed, that science is erecting a special world of its own behind the real world. The mathematical formulae in which the conceptions of physics are formulated embody that knowledge about the physical world as an isolate which has been acquired up to the present time by means of highly developed techniques, precise instruments, and refined methods of calculation. The complexity of the connection between the world of perception and the world of physics does not preclude that such a connection can be shown to exist at any time. Science as it stands today is the body of knowledge which a given society has assembled in its struggle with nature. At present, when the prevailing forms of society have become hindrances to the free expression of human powers, it is precisely the abstract branches of science, mathematics and theoretical physics, which in the main pursue purely scientific aims. They offer a less distorted form of knowledge than other branches of science which are interwoven with the pattern of daily life, and the practicality of which seemingly testifies to their realistic character.

Although the formulations of science now offer the most advanced knowledge of nature, men continue to use obsolete forms of thought long discarded by scientific theory. In so far as these obsolete forms are superfluous for science, the fact that they persist violates the principle of the economy of thought, that characteristic trait of the bourgeois temper. It turns out, however, that many of these ideas are not merely superfluous, but also meaningless. Notions of absolute space, absolute time, and other metaphysical categories have been proved untenable. In addition, the doctrines of substance, causality, the soul, the mind-body relation, at least in their traditional form, have come

into conflict with modern scientific methods. Yet, for all that, the pattern of ordinary thinking has not changed. This fact is really the projection of a contradiction that has persisted throughout the modern era. The public thinking of the bourgeoisie has never been in complete harmony with its science.

The religious conception of a preestablished harmony among all things, including man, was abandoned by science as early as the seventeenth century. Descartes held that man was no mere automaton like an animal, no mere collection of blindly driven corpuscles, but that his essential attribute was thought. Cartesian science, however, had no more to say about the thinking self or ego than Kant did about the self of pure and original apperception. All we know, they said, is necessarily connected to that self. For the rest, the self, the fundamental concept of modern philosophy, was relegated to faith rather than to science which could do nothing with it. Psychology, as well, failed to show the way out of the blind interplay of matter. Very early, psychology had constituted itself as a theory of affective phenomena which, according to Descartes, had nothing to do with the self and even threatened to destroy it. Metaphysicians have persevered for centuries in their assertion that a soul exists, is subject to ethical laws, and has an eternal destiny. But their lack of assurance about these matters betrays itself in the fact that their systems are patched together at the most crucial points by mere opinions, improbable statements, and outright fallacies. Their systems express the confused and contradictory thought of the savant. Scientific knowledge is formally recognized to be correct; at the same time, metaphysical views are retained. With science alone, mirroring as it does the chaotic reality in nature and society, the dissatisfied masses and thinking individuals would be left in a dangerous and desperate state. Neither their private nor public store of ideas can do without a covering-over ideology. For this reason it was necessary to maintain science and metaphysical ideology side by side.

All systematic thought of the last centuries has concerned itself with this contradiction. The traditional task of philosophy, as handed down from the Middle Ages, consisted in explaining

the world view of religion by means of natural reasons, that is, scientifically. To this day, the Cartesian solution that there are two distinct substances prevails in the average consciousness as the most plausible answer. According to this doctrine, there is, on the one hand, a world of sense which can be construed realistically or spiritually. It is possible to observe and predict regularities in this world. The world, nevertheless, does not exist through itself alone, but is transitory, as are all things. On the other hand, there is man who, as a rational being, is thought to participate in a higher order, whether in the sense that his character and his actions are regarded as a product of transcendental forces and decisions or in the sense that they have transcendental consequences. In any event, the true being of man belongs to different spheres from those of natural or merely human history. Belief in design is thus linked with science. To deny the observations and theories of science would have been absurd. The whole body of science is itself nothing but the refined body of empirical knowledge of the bourgeois individual. His society could not entirely dispense with illusions, however. Metaphysical illusions and higher mathematics form constituent elements, as it were, of his mentality. Philosophy is merely the domain in which a systematic effort was made to reconcile the two in some manner.

Every man of science and, to some extent, every member of bourgeois society finds his own private solution to the problem, or at least keeps this problem more or less definitely in the background of his consciousness. We need only study the memoirs and biographies of the typical representatives of the modern era to find this fact confirmed. As the interests of outstanding scientists become increasingly specialized, the naïve simplicity of their solution conflicts ever more strongly with the accuracy and rigor of the methods they use in their scientific procedure. Max Planck, the originator of the quantum theory, is thoroughly convinced, on the basis of his scientific experience, that all events, even those in the "realm of mind" are conditioned by natural occurrence. On the other hand, he is unwilling to give up the metaphysical conception of free will because the

moral and political views he entertains presuppose that conception.

The will of the other person is governed by causal laws; his every volition, provided that we possess reasonably accurate information regarding antecedent conditions, may, in principle, at least, be conceived as a necessary effect of causal laws and predictable in every detail . . . One's own will, however, can be comprehended causally only as regards acts in the past; as to acts in the future, our will is free.¹

The remote plausibility of this explanation is typical of the proposals of the more straightforward scientists. Their education, based on bourgeois traditions, is responsible for the uneasiness which assails them when they examine the world they serve. The price paid them in money, position, and influence attests to their contribution to the social whole; yet they see this society as "in many respects comfortless."² They dare not call its present form into question; therefore, they seek refuge in metaphysical beliefs like the idealistic view of conscience and freedom. Philosophy patches the objective rigor of science and such beliefs into a world-view so as "to assure in our conduct of life perfect harmony with our own selves, internal peace."³ And with this peace in their hearts, the savants placidly witness the destruction of the human race.

The various attempts at harmonization fall into two extremes. One is the statement that science is the only possible form of knowledge and that the last traces of metaphysical thought must give way before it. The other is the deprecation of science as a mere intellectual technique answering to subordinate considerations of human existence. True knowledge, it is urged, must emancipate itself from science. During and after the war the typical directions taken by this antiscientific view were romantic spiritualism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and material and existential phenomenology. The new metaphysics, an outgrowth of re-

1. Max Planck, *Vom Wesen der Willensfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 20f.

2. Planck, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

3. *Ibid.*

ligion, preserved the belief that man could expect more through and from himself alone than from the existing order. It was a manifestation of man's dissatisfaction with the valuation attached to him and with what he experiences. It does not take long to see what this valuation for which metaphysics attempts to compensate really is. A man discovers what he is actually worth in this world when he faces society merely as a man, without money, name, or powerful connections, stripped of all but his native potentialities. He soon finds that nothing has less weight than his human qualities. They are prized so low that the market does not even list them. Strict science, which acknowledges man only as a biological concept, reflects man's lot in the actual world; in himself, man is nothing more than a member of a species.

In the eyes of the world, the quality of humanity confers no title to existence, nay, not even a right of sojourn. Such title must be certified by special social circumstances stipulated in documents to be presented on demand. If these are inadequate or nonexistent, the least that can happen to a man is that he is marked down as an outsider; at every wicket he will be answered accordingly. This category of alien or outsider is nothing but the reverse side of bourgeois self-interest. From the free towns of the Middle Ages, through the times of princely dominions and national states, down to this very day when every country has been turned into a huge military camp, these two sides have never been merged into a new unity. The ego of the bourgeois sees the outsider as his opposite; with reference to that opposite the bourgeois determines his own position. He knows he is somebody, not just anybody. "Anybody" has a contemptuous ring. Since, however, within our commodity society the equality of all is part and parcel of everyone's consciousness despite the particularization of all individuals, the bourgeois must constantly hold himself in contempt, while at the same time he esteems himself and pursues his interests. Each individual stands in the center of his own universe. As for the world outside, he is fully aware that he is superfluous there.

The dreams of metaphysics provide an escape from these

experiences of everyday life which have been etched deeply into his soul, try as he might to eradicate them. In these dreams the isolated, insignificant individual can identify himself with super-human forces, with omnipotent nature, with the stream of life, or an inexhaustible world-ground. Metaphysics gives significance to his existence; it explains that his lot in this society is mere appearance. The world of appearance, it asserts, sustains its value through his inner decisions, through the metaphysical freedom of the personality, and it stands in relation to genuine and true existence. The disparagement of empirical evidence in favor of a metaphysical world of illusion has its origin in the conflict between the emancipated individual of bourgeois society and his fate within that society. In private life this philosophical belittling of science acts as an opiate; in society, as a fraud.

In contrast to this metaphysics, positivism is hostile to everything that savors of illusion. Here, only experience, purified experience in the strict sense it has received in natural science, is called knowledge. To know is neither to believe nor to hope. The most fitting formulation of man's knowledge is positive science; for the rest, the starting points of science, direct observation and the language of everyday life, may also be of service as crude implements. This emphasis cannot be linked with any one name in the history of philosophy. Metaphysicians like Descartes and Spinoza showed it to an extent, while positivists like Comte and Spencer, who gave the trend its name, had too many admixtures of *Weltanschauung* to personify Simon-pure positivism. Present-day positivism usually traces its origin to Hume on the one side and to Leibniz on the other. It combines skeptical empiricism with a rationalized logic which it seeks to render more fruitful for science. The ideal it pursues is knowledge in the form of a mathematically formulated universal science deducible from the smallest possible number of axioms, a system which assures the calculation of the probable occurrence of all events. Society, too, is to be explained in this way. This last, positivism admits, is an ideal that is still far off, but it holds out hope that in the not too distant future, social phenomena will be completely clarified and brought into

suitable relation with the underlying factors of the total system.

Ultimately, according to positivism, the events of the human world will be predicted with the same degree of probability as all other events. The only difference is that it will be necessary to wait a little longer for the results of future investigations in the special sciences to be applicable to social and cultural phenomena than to fields like psychology or biology. Besides science, there is art. In so far as metaphysics is not out and out nonsense, it belongs to poetry. Knowledge is the exclusive province of science. The question as to what man is shall be answered by the course of daily life and by the physiological sciences and, to some extent, by psychology, which is reducible to them. The distinction between what an entity is and what it appears to be is altogether meaningless.

Because of the fact that postwar metaphysics paved the way intellectually for the authoritarian system of government in Germany, it is not surprising that the neopositivist mode of thought attracts wide circles opposed to fascism. In its most flourishing period, positivism did not limit its attack to metaphysical ideas about the beyond, but criticized organicist theories of state and society as well. Early in its history it criticized the fetishistic concept of the state together with the illusory concept of God. This clarification is entered on the credit side of modern positivism. One of the most significant documents of the Enlightenment states that the Romans worshipped their Republic

as some kind of entity differentiated from all the individual citizens who comprised it. They all spoke of it in that way, and it is in consequence of this idea that they demanded that every citizen sacrifice his interests, his happiness, and his life to this conception, although the peace and well-being of this Republic were nothing other than the peace of all the individual citizens.⁴

This document further asserts that the idea of God was looked upon in a similar way. It was a phantasm that hindered the development of man.

4. M. Fréret, *Lettre de Thrastibule à Leucippe* (London, n.d.), p. 23.

Today the chief interests of scientivism no longer center about the struggle against such socially significant ideas. The question of the present-day aims of these theorists is usually answered with the statement that their work consists in removing the obstacles that bar the advance of mathematics and the natural sciences. In spite of this, the younger generation, searching for intellectual weapons against the totalitarian frenzy, attaches itself to the glorious past of this philosophy, especially in the universities, where it has established itself as the most thoroughgoing antimetaphysical school. And yet, this philosophy in its present form is as securely bound as metaphysics to the established order. Though its relation to the existence of the authoritarian state may not seem obvious at first, nevertheless, it can be discovered easily. Neoromantic metaphysics and radical positivism alike have their roots in the present sad state of the middle class. Having given up all hope of improving its condition through its own activity, the middle class, dreading a sweeping change in the social system, has thrown itself into the arms of the economic leaders of the bourgeoisie.

The essence of the latest school of positivism is its union of empiricism with modern mathematical logic. Bertrand Russell stated at the International Congress for Scientific Philosophy in 1935:

In science, this combination has existed since the time of Galileo; but in philosophy, until our time, those who were influenced by mathematical method were anti-empirical, and the empiricists had little knowledge of mathematics. Modern science arose from the marriage of mathematics and empiricism; three centuries later, the same union is giving birth to a second child, scientific philosophy, which is perhaps destined to as great a career. For it alone can provide the intellectual temper in which it is possible to find a cure for the diseases of the modern world.⁵

Russell's statement certainly exhibits great self-assurance. The movement of which he speaks has styled itself *logical em-*

5. Bertrand Russell, "The Congress of Scientific Philosophy," *Actes du Congrès International de Philosophie Scientifique* (Paris, 1936), No. 1, p. 11.

piricism. It presents the sharp outlines of a school within which, as within the phenomenological school of Husserl, there already exist several distinct subgroups. Several noted scientists, working in various fields, have shown sympathy to this movement. Since it is not our intention to describe its history, but to point out the defects in its mode of thinking and its connection with this history of the bourgeoisie, we shall not dwell on the shades of difference among its adherents.

Logical empiricism has this in common with the older empiricism: both hold that in the final analysis all knowledge about objects derives from facts of sense experience. Thus, Carnap thinks that all concepts "are reducible to root concepts relating to given data, the immediate content of experiences."⁶ As to the truth of theories, or, rather, their probability, the sciences make their appeal to observation and experience as the highest court. On the whole, the work of knowledge in all fields terminates with the successful prediction of the occurrence of sense data.

A certain distinction does exist, however, between traditional empiricism and its modern successors on this point. The former defended the claim of the individual that society was organized in his behalf. Science, too, had to justify itself to the individual, and it did so by assuring him that it asserted only what everyone could see and hear. The individual was shown that physics and all the other sciences were nothing but the condensed expression, the purified form of his own everyday experiences, in other words, that they were not different from the devices he used in practical life, except that they were more systematic, permitting him to orient himself to reality with greater speed. The doctrine of man, though it was a restricted form of doctrine, therefore made up the content of this philosophy. It demonstrated that science begins with sense experiences and always has to refer back to them. Locke sought in his "historical, plain method" to give an "account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have; and . . . set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge,

6. Rudolf Carnap, "Die alte und die neue Logik," *Erkenntnis*, I (Leipzig, 1930/31), 24.

or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different, and wholly contradictory . . .”⁷ Hume defined his task as the endeavor “to explain the principles of human nature.” This, he declared, was the only philosophical foundation upon which the sciences “can stand with any security.”⁸ Although, in keeping with their liberal conception of society, Locke and Hume understood this definition of science as a human product in a purely individualistic sense and sought to grasp the genesis of knowledge in terms of a psychologistic epistemology, nevertheless their philosophy contains at least this dynamic element—the relation to a knowing subject.

Modern empiricism disregards this relation altogether, even in its theory of the origin of concepts and judgments. Physics, as a definitely circumscribed intellectual technique, always deals with the formulated judgments of observers and not directly with observations. It follows that the criterion of experience is not the sense impression, as with Locke and Hume, but the judgment formulated about the impression. The exclusive task of science is to establish a system from which such propositions can be deduced as can be confirmed by the judgments of observers, by “protocol sentences.” A descriptive symbol is regarded as acceptable if by means of definitions or newly established principles it is reducible to symbols which occur in protocol sentences.⁹ Science and consequently scientific philosophy have therefore to deal with the given world only in the form of sentences about it. The scientist is concerned with the world only insofar as it is framed in language. He reckons solely with what has been duly recorded in a protocol. The analysis of the process whereby experience is translated into a protocol belongs to the domain of empirical psychology, which may record the behavior of a subject in the same way that physics records the

7. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by A. C. Fraser (Oxford, 1894), Introduction, Sec. 2, p. 27.

8. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1928), p. xx.

9. Cf. Rudolf Carnap, *Logical Syntax of Language*, tr. Amethe Smeaton (New York and London, 1937), p. 319.

behavior of bodies. Psychology, too, does not deal directly with perceptions. The material manipulated is not the observation of the psychologist himself, but the facts certified by a great number of observers, that is, facts formulated in judgments. Neither the inexpressible nor the unexpressed may play a role in thinking; they may not even be inferred.

The way in which the various stages of empiricism conceive the objects of knowledge may indeed be evidence of an increasing shallowness of bourgeois thought, a growing aversion to seeing the human bottom of nonhuman things. In any event, the principle that our knowledge of the world is derived from our senses has persisted throughout all its stages. Inasmuch as the meaning of this principle is limited to the statement that every assertion about anything in nature or in history must refer to a corresponding experience, its oppositional force is directed solely against belief in the hereafter. Rationalism did not contradict the principle; it simply did not isolate it as the fundamental law of philosophy. The rationalist systems of the seventeenth century employed the empiricist principle in connection with their doctrine that it is less important to devote attention to any single existent as it is, than to be able to mold and construct what exists in thought and in reality. Its belief in the possibility of completely dominating nature and society determined rationalism to concentrate on the problem of intellectual penetration of the world, on the *modus operandi* of reason. Mathematics is a means of producing objects from principles which the subject could develop in himself. The highest insights coincide with the foundations of being; they are not derived from single experiences, nor are they fixed arbitrarily. They make up the proper nature of rational thought and every secret must yield to its constructive power. Every existent must legitimate itself in perception. If a thing is known to us only through perception, however, it remains a mere thing-in-itself. It becomes a thing for us only when we are able to make it ourselves. Such was the view of rationalism.

As opposed to this, verification through perception is the alpha and omega of empiricism. It holds only to what is, to the

guarantee of facts. "The world is everything that is the case . . . The world divides into facts,"¹⁰ is the view expressed in the chief work of modern empiricism. With respect to the future, the characteristic activity of science is not construction, but induction. The more often something has occurred in the past, the more certain that it will in all the future. Knowledge relates solely to what is and to its recurrence. New forms of being, especially those arising from the historical activity of man, lie beyond empiricist theory. Thoughts which are not simply carried over from the prevailing pattern of consciousness, but arise from the aims and resolves of the individual, in short, all historical tendencies that reach beyond what is present and recurrent, do not belong to the domain of science.

Empiricism, it is true, untiringly avows its willingness to set aside any conviction if new evidence should prove it false. "No rule of the physical language is definitive" and "the test applies, at bottom, not to a single hypothesis but to the whole system of physics as a system of hypotheses . . ."¹¹ Nevertheless, empiricism limits this test to neutral, objective, nonnormative viewpoints, that is to say, to viewpoints that are, after all, isolate. One can either change physical laws that come into conflict with new observations or refuse to acknowledge the new evidence. There is no element of necessity in this, however; the consideration of expediency, which makes the decision, escapes theoretical determination.¹² Empiricism denies that thought can evaluate observations and the manner in which science combines them. It assigns supreme intellectual authority to the accredited science, the given structure and methods of which are reconciled to existing conditions.

10. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London, 1922), p. 21.

11. Carnap, *Logical Syntax of Language*, p. 318.

12. Logical empiricism is at one with the currently dominant theory of knowledge in maintaining that the resolution of the conflict between fact and theory cannot itself be theoretically formulated. "Here is where genius comes into its own," is the explanation offered by Hermann Weyl, *Philosophie der Naturwissenschaft*, in *Handbuch der Philosophie*, II (Munich-Berlin, 1927), p. 113.

In the eyes of the empiricist, science is no more than a system for the arrangement and rearrangement of facts, and it matters not what facts are selected from the infinite number that present themselves. He proceeds as if the selection, description, acceptance, and synthesis of facts in this society have neither emphasis nor direction. Science is thus treated like a set of containers which are continually filled higher and kept in good condition by constant repair. This process, which was previously identified with the activity of the understanding, is unconnected with any activity which could react on it and thereby invest it with direction and meaning. Everything designated by idealism as idea and end and, by materialism, as social practice and conscious historical activity, is related to science essentially as objects of observations and not as constitutive interests and directive forces, insofar as empiricism concedes them to be conditions of knowledge at all (Otto Neurath).¹³ There is no mode of thought adapted to the methods and results of science and entwined with definite interests which may criticize the conceptual forms and structural pattern of science, although it is dependent on them. No criticism can be brought against a branch of technical science from outside; no thought fitted out with the knowledge of a period and setting its course by definite historical aims could have anything to say to the specialist. Such thought and the critical, dialectical element it communicates to the process of cognition, thereby maintaining conscious connection between that process and historical life, do not exist for empiricism; nor do the associated categories, such as the distinction between essence and appearance, identity in change, and rationality of ends, indeed, the concept of man, of personality, even of society and class taken in the sense that presupposes specific viewpoints and directions of interest. In exceptional cases, when the empiricist does employ such concepts, he restricts them to a purely classificatory function as if they

13. Cf. especially: "Soziologie im Physikalismus," *Erkenntnis*, II (1931), pp. 423-28; and *Empirische Soziologie* (Vienna, 1931), pp. 128-147.

were zoological genera. For this very reason, the structure of knowledge and consequently of reality—as far as the latter can be known—is as rigid for him as it is for any dogmatist.

The empirical and rationalist modes of thought are more closely related in this respect than their adherents would presume. Notwithstanding their attacks on the basic conception of rationalism, on synthetic *a priori* judgments, that is, material propositions that cannot be contradicted by any experience, the empiricist posits the forms of being as constant. In principle, the whole world has its place in a fixed system which is not definitive at any one time and “it is absurd to speak of a single and comprehensive system of science.”¹⁴ Yet the statement that the correct form of all knowledge is identical with physics, that physics is the great “unity of science” in terms of which everything must be stated, posits certain forms as constant. Such an assertion constitutes a judgment *a priori*. The empiricist further states that the meaning of all concepts of science is determined by physical operations. He fails to see that the concept of the corporeal, in the sense peculiar to its use in physics, involves a very special subjective interest, involves, indeed, the whole of social practice.¹⁵

14. Otto Neurath, “L’Encyclopédie comme ‘modèle,’” *Revue de synthèse*, XII (1936), p. 188.

15. The philosophical consequences of regarding corporeal things in their pure state (that is, completely abstracted from subjectivity and from human praxis) as concrete realities have been discussed by Edmund Husserl in his recent *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936; tr. by David Carr; Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970). The book came to my attention only after the present essay had been completed. Even though this most recent publication of the last genuine theoretician of knowledge is not concerned specifically with the “physicalist movement” (“Vienna Circle,” “logical empiricism”) but with physicalism generally, the hypostatizations to which it calls attention are what has led to this newest form of physicalism. All the factors we have been discussing—uncritical objectivism, the absolutizing of special science, the many affinities (at least from our contemporary viewpoint) between empiricism and rationalism, the neutralization of Hume’s skepticism in his followers—are all noted in Husserl’s analysis and an attempt is made to explain them. Despite the great differences between Husserl’s outlook and the theory we are proposing here, his book with its extremely abstract discussion of prob-

The naïve harmonistic belief which underlies his ideal conception of the unity of science and, in the last analysis, the entire system of modern empiricism, belongs to the passing world of liberalism. One can come to an understanding with everybody on every subject. According to the empiricists this is a "fortunate coincidence" which one need not analyze to determine its significance and bearing. One simply hypostatizes it as a "perfectly general structural property of experience."¹⁶ Ernst Mach paved the way for the view that subjective factors could, in principle, be eliminated. He admitted them only as the influence of the "nerves of our body" upon our perceptions.¹⁷ Natural science, he stated, compensates for this subjective influence by using a great number of observers instead of a single subject to study events. In this manner it is possible to eliminate accidental differences introduced by individual nervous systems and to purify physical events of all subjective admixtures.

In this process the $K L M . . . K' L' M' . . .$ [the different observers and their respective nervous systems] are treated like physical instruments, each with its peculiarities, its special constants, and so forth, from which the results, as finally indicated, have to be set free . . . thus from this point onwards we have obtained a safe basis for the whole field of scientific research.¹⁸

The idea of radically eliminating the subject not only from physics, but also from the process of cognition generally by declaring individual differences themselves to be mere series of facts is itself a principle of research that stands in need of careful restriction. The belief that this principle is essentially applicable at every moment of history leads, of necessity, to

lems has more to contribute to contemporary historical tasks than does pragmatism for all its vaunted relevance or the writing and thinking, supposedly addressed to the "man in the street," of many young intellectuals who are in fact ashamed of their role.

16. Rudolf Carnap, *The Unity of Science* (London, 1934), p. 65.

17. Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations*, tr. from the first German edition by C. M. Williams (Chicago and London, 1914), p. 36.

18. Mach, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

an unhistorical and uncritical conception of knowledge and to the hypostatis of the particular methods of procedure employed by natural science. It results in the view that all theoretical differences which rest on historically conditioned antagonisms of interest are to be settled by a "crucial experiment" rather than by struggle and counter-struggle. The harmonious relation of individuals to one another becomes a fact, therefore, that has even more general character than a law of nature. It becomes, in some degree, an eternal fact, and thus falls directly in line with the principles of rationalism and transcendentalism.

The determined value of a physical magnitude in any concrete case is independent . . . of the experimenter . . . A difference of opinion between two observers concerning the length of a rod, the temperature of a body, or the frequency of an oscillation, is never regarded in physics as a subjective and therefore unresolvable disagreement; on the contrary, attempts will always be made to produce agreement on the basis of a common experiment. Physicists believe that . . . when such agreement is not found in practice, technical difficulties (imperfection of instruments, lack of time, etc.) are the cause . . . *Physical determinations are valid inter-subjectively.*¹⁹

The same holds true for all other languages used in science—biology, psychology, and the social sciences—all "can be reduced to the physical language."²⁰ Thus, "*the whole of Science becomes Physics.*"²¹

Logical empiricism holds the view, notwithstanding some of its assertions, that the forms of knowledge and consequently the relations of man to nature and to other men never change. According to rationalism, too, all subjective and objective potentialities are rooted in insights which the individual already possesses, but rationalism uses existing objects as well as the active inner strivings and ideas of man to construct standards for the future. In this regard, it is not so closely associated with the present order as is empiricism with its confusion of the concept of novelty with inadequate pre-

19. Carnap, *The Unity of Science*, p. 64f.

20. Carnap, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

21. Carnap, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

dictability. Leibniz's theory on the subject as *substantia ideans*²² in the sense of a causative agent of decisions and acts stands much closer to a materialist interpretation of history than does a philosophy which reduces the thinking subject to the role of subsuming protocol sentences under general propositions and deducing other sentences from them.

Empiricism rejects the notion of the subject *in toto*. The conception of development or tendency, too, presents little difficulty for it. Development or tendency, it states, merely means the probable behavior of objects, predictable on the strength of observed regularities of recurrence. The known modes of behavior of each object in a definite environment or situation are the partial tendencies of that situation; the probable event is the resultant of all partial tendencies. Behaviorist psychology seeks to formulate a doctrine of man by the exclusive use of the concepts and methods of the sciences that deal with inorganic matter. Historical tendencies, one might think in conformity with behaviorist views, seem to be distinguished from physical tendencies in that human volitions are involved in the former. But behaviorism declares that the human will is just like the other regularities in nature. William James had suggested that every voluntary act is a movement conditioned by prior thought. The child discovers from observation that he can execute a specific movement or act if he thinks about it beforehand. Specific ideas and thoughts stand in the same relation to definite movements and acts as two neighboring metal knobs with opposite electrical charges stand to the spark. There is no qualitative leap between motive and cause; both are merely conditions regularly followed by definite events. A is followed by B. A head thinks of an action and it is carried out; a brick falls on that head and the head is broken. Both are cases of the same kind of objective law. Whenever an adult person thinks of an act and does not execute it, his failure to do so rests only on the fact that other thoughts or circumstances are present and inter-

22. Leibniz, *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, ed. by Ernst Cassirer (Leipzig, 1904-1906), II, p. 299.

fere with the action.²³ Otherwise, according to this theory, we would always be compelled to do what we think of doing. We must view every volition as the resultant of various regularities of human behavior which enter a given situation. Regularity is the term for repeatedly observed effects. Given A, the occurrence of B is probable if in the past it has frequently succeeded A. The occurrence of the probable sometimes depends on human factors, however; but behaviorism passes over this fact in laying down its categories, declaring that it belongs to another branch of science.

The endeavor of scientific research to see events in their more general connections in order to determine their laws, is a legitimate and useful occupation. Any protest against such efforts, in the name of freedom from restrictive conditions, would be fruitless if science did not naïvely identify the abstractions called rules and laws with the actually efficacious forces, and confuse the probability that B will follow A with the actual effort to make B follow A. Such confusion also occurs if effort or action is reified as merely a state or event and is never grasped as the specific structure of the subject-object relation.

In the beginning positivism associated the process of determining laws and of deducing events from general conceptions and propositions (which it regarded as the only valid form of determining occurrences) with the explicit view that A, from the outset, was a constituent part of the fixed relation AB or AC or AD, and that all one had to do was to wait and see what happened. It admitted, however, that what a situation actually is might depend entirely on what men and their science make out of it, for example, whether they drag mankind to its doom or bring about its real awakening. According to modern empiricism such a choice is of no significance in the appraisal of the present world. The existing state of things is a fact of the same kind as the desire to change it, that is, if this desire resides not only in a few men, but is present in suitable form in the common consciousness. The state of things following the present

23. Bertrand Russell, *Philosophy* (New York, 1927), p. 223f.

order would be a new fact. Comprehensive terms like "beginning" or "end of mankind" are neither convenient nor otherwise justifiable abbreviations since, even after long discussion, it would be difficult to lay down definitions to which everybody could subscribe. It may be added that this disagreement will prevail as long as mankind has no more solid foundation than the present order. It is, of course, true that every event is resolvable into facts—and facts, varying in widely different ways according to the situation, play a decisive part in any proof. Nevertheless, it seems to us rather out of place to form a new school of empiricism on this circumstance alone. It looks too much like a promise that knowledge will keep to the narrow path of certainties and not deal with historical controversies at all or only in some indefinite future. "The view that thought is a means of knowing more about the world than may be directly observed . . . seems to us entirely mysterious," is the conviction expressed in a work of the Vienna circle.²⁴ This principle is particularly significant in a world whose magnificent exterior radiates complete unity and order while panic and distress prevail beneath. Autocrats, cruel colonial governors, and sadistic prison wardens have always wished for visitors with this positivistic mentality. If science as a whole follows the lead of empiricism and the intellect renounces its insistent and confident probing of the tangled brush of observations in order to unearth more about the world than even our well-meaning daily press, it will be participating passively in the maintenance of universal injustice.

In reply, empiricism might raise the question: Would the intellect be confident that it knows the underlying truth if it did not have observations of its own to set against the countless observations of the day? In countering experience, the intellect must itself appeal to experience, for its concepts are not inborn or inspired. The answer is that it is precisely because facts are referred to when other facts are being exposed or abolished, and because facts, as it were, are involved in everything on every

24. Hans Hahn, "Logik, Mathematik und Naturerkennen," *Einheitswissenschaft*, ed. by Otto Neurath *et al.*, Heft 2 (Vienna, 1933), p. 9.

hand, that constructive thought which evaluates facts and discriminates between surface and pith is of such supreme importance in every decision. The term empiricism is either entirely meaningless today or it constitutes the abandonment of reason in the proper sense of the word.

The role of empiricism throughout the world may be illustrated by many examples. The following incident, dealing with the son of Carl Vogt, the critic of Marx, is taken from an article by F. de Spengler:

In his fine book devoted to the memory of his father, he recalls with smug amusement a remark of Professor Schiff to the members of an antivivisectionist society who wished to inspect the university laboratories. He told them that, although the animals were by no means asleep, the visitors would not hear a single sound. A simple transection of their vocal cords had deprived the animals of the ability to give voice to their suffering!²⁵

The pleasure which the younger Vogt derived from the gullibility of those good people is a perfect example of the pleasure to be derived from naïve empiricism in a world in which everything is attuned to deception.

Just as it is possible to foretell the actions of individuals, by methods of procedure identical with the prediction of physical processes, it is also possible to make predictions concerning social groups. The empiricist theory of society is "social behaviorism."

States, nations, age groups, and religious communities are all complexes composed of single elements, the individuals. Such composite groups exhibit certain relationships conforming to specific laws; they have a definite physiognomy . . .

Scientific study has shown . . . that division into "social classes" which plays an increasing role in political life, can be represented sociologically. An "anthropology of the unpropertied classes" produces biologically noteworthy material.²⁶

25. *Le Gutenberg*, Organe de la Federation Suisse des Typographes, August 28, 1936.

26. Otto Neurath, *Empirische Soziologie*, p. 105.

To be sure, the theory of society is not so amenable to experimentation as physics. At bottom, however, the "aggregates" cited are composed of "single living beings, man and other animals. Behaviorism studies their behavior under the influence of stimuli as a department of biology (see Pavlov and others)."²⁷ Sociology, we are told, is comparable to a biology that has only a single animal at its disposal for study and therefore

would have to deduce laws governing the movements of legs from those governing the movements of arms and laws governing a six-year-old animal from those governing a four-year-old animal. In such cases, too, experience about change has shown that the relevant laws change according to definite rules.²⁸

The empiricists feel certain that in following this method

significant changes . . . are not known beforehand. Comparisons of the total complexes do not allow us to predict revolutions unless they are common occurrences. It is necessary to wait for the occurrence of the new phenomenon before we can discover the new laws relating to it.²⁹

Of course, we need not wait with folded arms.

Whoever needs logs must either wait for the wood chopper or do the chopping himself. Besides, sociological insight into present relationships is, as a rule, gained most easily by those who are closest to the social structures of our day. In physics, too, familiarity with technical practice stimulates research. This is even more true of sociology. The scientist is an element like any other element.³⁰

Thus, individual and social tendencies are not exceptions to the empiricist's apparatus of concepts. They, too, are formulations of observations. Familiarity with social practice is a stimulant to the sociologist. Yet, the subject himself is not involved. It makes no difference whether the "significant changes" are awaited actively or passively; even when they are active, science treats human beings as mere facts and objects. The scientist is

27. Neurath, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

28. Neurath, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

29. Neurath, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

30. Neurath, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

objective to the point of concerning himself as a mere element. This objectivity has its theoretical consequences. Since society is itself regarded as nothing more than the aggregate of all individuals, the difference between subject and object, knowledge and the content of knowledge, theory and practice, even on the social plane, is not treated as something that is incessantly shifting, constantly being rearranged in the course of history, but as non-existent, as an empty phrase. The problem of this shifting critical relationship between consciousness and being has always stood in the center of both idealist and materialist philosophies. In empiricism it has resolved itself as it were, of its own accord. There are nothing but facts, and the entire conceptual apparatus of science serves to determine and predict them. When the relation of consciousness to the objective world does come under consideration, it is in turn treated as a collection of facts, such as habits conditioned physiologically or in a similar way. Any other mode of consideration is meaningless.

Under present-day methods of production, science is more interested in the results of abstraction than in the theoretical reconstruction of the whole; animals, human beings, and society are one and all regarded as aggregates of things and events. The process which brought these abstractions into being in the course of social praxis does not enter the consciousness of science. Empiricism always treats thought on the level it has reached at any one time. If it is reminded of the genesis of these abstractions, it refers the problem to psychology or sociology, or places it in the care of some other discipline. Its assertions always tend to point out that all that can be ascertained are facts and nothing but facts. When we analyze our volitional acts, we find desires, feelings, ideas, and movements which are interconnected. It would be nonsensical to speak of a subject or of a reality that could not be given, but lay before or behind individual facts and their interrelations. If we speak of the subject alone, without going any further, we must view it as an isolated object, a set of physical events like every other set. How would it otherwise be possible to reach an agreement in a world of misunderstandings? The real subject disappears behind this or any other

linguistic fixation which may or may not be to the point. We are not to speak of the subject, nor, if we follow the logical empiricists, of any reality independent of consciousness. This school believes that it has disposed of all problems by such dubious purifications of language.

The conception that science establishes and classifies given data with a view to predicting future facts and that such a function exhausts the tasks of science, isolates knowledge and fails to remedy that isolation. The consequence is a ghostlike and distorted picture of the world. The empiricists, however, fail to see that this is the case. According to them, when scientists take part in activity they transform themselves from scientists into acting beings, that is, they become elements, data, facts; as soon as they reflect on their activity, however, they are re-transformed into scientists. The trained specialist *qua* scientist looks upon himself as a chain of judgments and inferences; *qua* member of society, he regards himself as a mere object. The same holds for everyone. The individual is divided into innumerable functions, the interconnections of which are unknown. In society a man is *pater familias* under one aspect, business man under another, thinker under a third; to be more precise, he is not a human being at all, but all these aspects and many more in an inevitable succession. Knowledge consists of facts, action consists of facts; the constituents of knowledge, the perceptions, notions, facts, cannot be brought into a cognitive relation to any different thing, such as a subject.

Logically, this unrestrained isolation of science rests on the hypostasis of the abstract concept of datum or fact. From Descartes on, only that which every individual could recognize as existing was to be accepted as such. Empiricism, however, by eliminating the subject has eliminated the critically discriminating factor, and has therefore obliterated all distinction between the concept of the datum and that of anything else, so that datum, fact, and object merely seem to possess determinate meaning. The special sciences are to deal with particulars and discretas. As distinct from them, philosophy is to deal exclu-

sively with the nebulous sphere of the universal, with facts as such, with mere propositions, with language apart from content, with pure form. Reason cannot decide over these branches of knowledge or the connection between them, any more than it can over the other elements of social reproduction. Its function is restricted to the discrete fields of social research and branches of science, that is to say, it exists only in the form of understanding. In view of this restriction, philosophy has no other course than to take the meaningless universality of given facts for the whole world. Empiricism falsely considers this universality to be particular and determinate, and the only thing that can be believed.

In the older forms of empiricism, this equating of the world and mere data, this leveling down of all praxis was connected with either religious or skeptical ideas, and therefore had merely a problematical character. Berkeley was unable to understand that the existing order is a product of the life process of society in which the individual is an active participant. The alienation of the product of social labor from the isolated individual also appeared as a hypostatization of facts. The problem of the origin of these facts raised insuperable difficulties and Berkeley fled to a religious belief that God gives the facts to the individual. Hume, on the other hand, expressed despair of ever solving the problem of the origin of facts. With these two philosophers, the absolute isolation of knowledge remained an open question, as is apparent from their skepticism. At times this result plunged Hume into "melancholia."

The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? And on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most

deplorable condition imaginable, environ'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty.³¹

He felt that the elimination of constructive thinking, the obliteration of the opposition between subject and object, theory and practice, thinking and willing, to which his philosophy, the philosophy of the rising bourgeoisie, led, had a disturbing, negative aspect. This feeling is no longer shared by his followers; one would look in vain for any sign of sorrow on their part over the impotence of reason. Modern empiricism is silent on this point, that is, unless it unsuspectingly adopts a Hegelian term and declares that "the mystical" enters with the problems of life.

One may separate science from all other spheres of social life; one may regard science as comprising the determination and prediction of facts. It should be known, however, at least since Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, that the most immediate experiences, sensations, and perceptions, as given to us, appear to be ultimate only to the most limited understanding and that actually they are derivative and dependent. Hegel wrote in his criticism of the philosophy of E. Schulze, a criticism which anticipates the whole of logical empiricism:

Neither early skepticism nor materialism, nor even the most ordinary common sense, unless it has fallen to the level of bestiality, has ever made itself guilty of the barbarism of assigning incontrovertible certainty and truth to the facts of consciousness. Such barbarism has heretofore been unheard of in the history of philosophy. According to this newest skepticism our physics and astronomy and analytic thought defy all reasonable doubt. Hence, this skepticism even lacks the noble side of the old classical skepticism which set itself against limited and finite knowledge.³²

The development of idealistic philosophy in Germany, from its beginning with Leibniz to the present, has been able to confirm the insight that the world of perception is not merely a copy nor something fixed and substantial, but, to an equal measure a

31. Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 268f.

32. Hegel, "Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie," *Sämtliche Werke*, I (Jubiläumsausgabe; Stuttgart, 1927), p. 253.

product of human activity. Kant proved that the world of our individual and scientific consciousness is not given to us by God and unquestioningly accepted by us, but is partially the result of the workings of our understanding. He further showed, in the chapter on the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding, that empirical perceptions which enter the consciousness have already been shaped and sifted by productive human faculties. The Neo-Kantians have preserved this legacy by differentiating and broadening it. In this manner, thanks mainly to the advances made in ethnology and psychology, it became possible to demonstrate the constitutive importance of language in the formulation of sensuous data.

Signification does not arise after the object is completed; it is the progress of the sign and the increasingly sharp "distinction" of the contents of consciousness resulting therefrom that produces the more clearly defined outlines of the world as a totality of "objects" and "qualities" of "changes" and "activities," of "persons" and "things," of spatial and temporal relations.³³

The given is not only expressed by speech but fashioned by it; it is mediated in many ways. In accordance with its philosophical presuppositions, Neo-Kantianism has understood the activity which produces and organizes the facts to be an intellectual process. Although Cassirer recognizes that the world of perception is conditioned by man, he nevertheless declares that language, the conditioning factor, is "a vehicle in that vast process of 'struggle' between the self and the world in which the boundaries of the two are first definitely demarcated."³⁴

But even this view is too narrow. In order to place man's present consciousness of facts in the right context, it is not sufficient to trace the abstract principle of the ego in its historical interconnections. The opposition of the ego and the world, in its definite form, belongs to a transitory historical epoch. The conception of the ego as a monadically isolated substance is an abstraction, in idea as well as in fact. The disciples of classical

33. Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (Berlin, 1923), I, 233.

34. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, I, p. 232.

idealism conceived the conditionality of perception idealistically, and made use chiefly of transcendental, that is, intellectual factors, in order to balance the one-sided doctrine that knowledge consists in accumulating facts. In so doing they showed better judgment than those who would equate knowledge of facts with knowledge of reality. The name empiricism itself betrays the lack of any such judgment. The facts of science and science itself are but segments of the life process of society, and in order to understand the significance of facts or of science generally one must possess the key to the historical situation, the right social theory.

Empiricism, especially in its latest form which has gone so far as to abandon the criterion of personal observation and which intends, in all strictness, to rely exclusively on the logical perfection of the system and on protocol sentences, can easily come to disaster. We can illustrate this point readily. Let us suppose that in a definite country at a definite time the science of man, economics, history, psychology, and sociology are completely attuned to the principles of empiricism. Its people make careful observations; they possess a highly perfected logistic system of symbols, and in a number of cases they arrive at very acute predictions. The daily occurrences in economic and political life are faithfully recorded and even market fluctuations are accurately calculated in advance, although only at short range. The reflexes and reactions of the human being, from infancy to old age, have been carefully observed and all emotions have been related to measurable physiological processes. It is possible to make correct predictions regarding the conduct of the majority of the inhabitants of that country; for instance, as to their observance of stringent regulations, their frugality during a wartime food shortage, their passivity in the face of the persecution and extermination of their best friends, their manifestations of joy at public festivals and at the favorable outcome of the election of a brutal and deceitful bureaucracy, and so forth.

The social sciences may have achieved all this and more in their effort to match the achievements of physics, the empirical science *par excellence*. The "facts of pure sense experience,"

the supporting protocol sentences, pour in upon scientists in the same abundance as the spontaneous demonstrations of approval pour in upon that worthless government which would doubtless know how to use the meticulous classification, collation, and coordination of this science as an instrument of its all-embracing mechanism of control. And yet, the picture of the world and of man produced by these scientific devices might be vastly different from the truth actually attainable at that very time. Because they are harnessed to an economic machine which destroys every inner freedom, because their intellectual development is retarded by cunning methods of education and propaganda and they are driven out of their wits by horror and fear, the inhabitants of that country might very well be subject to distorted impressions, commit acts hostile to their real interests, and produce nothing but deceptions and lies in every feeling, every expression, and every judgment. In all their acts and utterances, they might be possessed, in the strict sense of that word. Their country would then resemble both an insane asylum and a prison, and its smoothly working scientific research would not be aware of it. Their science could improve physical theories, play a prominent part in food and war chemistry as well as in astronomy, and reach unheard of heights in the creation of means for the derangement and self-annihilation of the human race. It would, however, entirely miss the decisive point. It would not notice that it had long become its own opposite. Although some of its departments might have reached the highest eminence, science itself would have turned into barbarous ignorance and shallowness. Empiricism, however, would have to exalt that science which imperturbably continues to discover, label, classify, and predict facts. After all, where else should one learn what science is if not from science itself, from the men engaged in it? And these men are perfectly agreed on the fact that everything is in order.

Empiricism could easily come to such a fate without having the slightest conception of how to avoid it. Should those resolute groups who are no longer able to bear life under that oppressive order emerge victorious in their struggle—a struggle which

impassive "fact-finding" mechanism of science does not see—the whole scene would be changed in one stroke. Science would be surprised, but, according to empiricism, no shadow could thereby fall upon its reputation. Science would then admit that the former consciousness and behavior of the people were false, that it had been an enforced conformity, a product of a situation that had enslaved them. After a few years, human development would be free and science would duly note the fact that the past epoch had been marked by intellectual confusion and the warping of human powers under extreme pressure. Indeed, the masses themselves would now realize that what they had formerly said and done, and even what they had thought in secret were perverted and untrue. But how was science to have known or noticed these things at that time? The task of the scientist is to find facts, not to indulge in prophetic insights. According to the scientist, scientific predictions rarely deal with "significant changes" because observational material is lacking. "We must wait for the emergence of the new phenomenon before we can find the new laws that govern it." The active groups and individuals who brought about that change, however, would stand in a different relation to theory. They did not move in an unbroken succession from scientists into men of action and back again into scientists. Their fight against the *status quo* combined the true unity of theory and practice. Fastening their eyes on a better life they were able to see through the deceit of the established order. Their specific action was contained in their very mode of perception, just as the praxis of the faulty society was embedded in its misguided science. Even in sense perception they remained conscious and active agents. None of the trumpery recorded in protocols had escaped their penetrating attention. They saw through it all.

Dialectic, too, notes empirical material with the greatest care. The accumulation of solitary facts can be most incisive if dialectic thought manipulates them. Within dialectical theory such individual facts always appear in a definite connection which enters into every concept and which seeks to reflect reality in its totality. In empiricist methodology, on the other hand, concept

and judgment are isolated and self-subsistent; they are single building stones which can be put together, interchanged, and partially remodelled. This treatment destroys meaning in all but those exceptional cases in which trivial, obvious statements, or statements that involve neither social nor historical problems, occur. When thought has to produce a picture of living things in which the functions of the single parts and the whole become clear only at the close of the intellectual process, empiricism fails completely. Dialectical thought integrates the empirical constituents into structures of experience which are important not only for the limited purposes served by science, but also for the historical interests with which dialectic thought is connected.

As opposed to customary practice, the individual who is conscious of himself does not focus his attention merely upon the possibility of definite predictions and practical results, the universal requirements of natural science. When an active individual of sound common sense perceives the sordid state of the world, desire to change it becomes the guiding principle by which he organizes given facts and shapes them into a theory. The methods and categories as well as the transformations of the theory can be understood only in connection with his taking of sides. This, in turn, discloses both his sound common sense and the character of the world. Right thinking depends as much on right willing as right willing on right thinking.

The meaning of theory for the consciously acting individual is quite different from its meaning for the empirical scientist. For the latter, theoretical forms are conventions to be taken over from prevailing scientific practice. Where, however, thought reaches beyond the given composition of social life, the theoretical pattern is not given *a priori*, but is a construct of empirical elements which consciously reflects reality as seen from the standpoint of the far-reaching interests of the individual. The processes of construction and presentation connected with his inquiries are proper elements of knowledge. In physics, according to the empiricist, a body is a "string of events, connected together by certain causal connections, and having

enough unity to deserve a single name.”³⁵ The use of such names is, then, a “convenient shorthand,” and very little disagreement exists as to precisely what is connected by it. A glance at our human world, however, indicates that the views regarding causal relations, unity, and convenience of expression do not fit together as neatly as they do in physics. The autonomously acting individual discerns unity and interdependence where the servile consciousness perceives only disparity, and conversely. Yet, where the former encounters unity in his struggle, for instance, in the above mentioned system of oppression and exploitation—this “string of events” is seen not as a “shorthand” and a fiction, but as a bitter reality.

In the dialectical theory, the fact that subjective interest in the unfolding of society as a whole changes continuously in history is not regarded as a sign of error, but as an inherent factor of knowledge. All basic conceptions of the dialectical theory of society, such as society, class, economy, value, knowledge, and culture are part and parcel of a theoretical context dominated throughout by subjective interests. The tendencies and counter-tendencies out of which the historical world is constituted represent developments which cannot be grasped without the will for a more human existence, a will which the subject must experience, or rather produce, within himself. The empiricist would not even admit those tendencies and counter-tendencies as *Ballungen*,³⁶ through which he usually connects the concepts of “vulgar” language with his formulas. The organization and constitution of man, which after the sweeping transformation in our imaginary country, even the empiricist recognized to be man’s true form of organization (although he must scorn this mode of expression), determined the consciousness of the participating groups even during the struggle leading to that transformation.

35. Russell, *Philosophy*, p. 119.

36. Empirical matter-of-factness has penetrated even into the French language. In order to do justice to *Ballungen*, the translator had to enrich his mother tongue with the word “grégats.” Cf. Neurath, “L’Encyclopédie,” p. 190.

These groups did not have to assert a single fact which was not empirically provable, provided that they were guided by the right interest. Rational knowledge does not controvert the tested findings of science; unlike empiricist philosophy, however, it refuses to terminate with them.

Empiricist philosophy could very well offer the reminder that the freedom realized in our imaginary country actually exists only in our fancy. Mention has already been made of the crucial point which empirical science fails to note, namely, the common interest and the idea of a truly human existence. Empiricism declares that such ideas arise from the confusion of personal desires, moral beliefs, and sentiments with science; it regards the strict separation of values from science to be one of the most important achievements of modern thought. Empiricism further contends that other aims may be set alongside the will to freedom and that it is not the task of science to decide which of these is right. It would hold that before those who were engaged in the struggle had attained their goal, the interest that shaped their ideas and their whole theory was not different from other desires and was in no way superior to them. The conception of a theory governed throughout by an interest, this argument concludes, is incompatible with objective science.

Economists and other social scientists as late as the middle of the nineteenth century built their theories and systems on the prospect of a favorable evolution of the human race. Pure scientists of recent decades, however, would not take such considerations into account. Shutting all conscious social impulses out of their minds, they let themselves be guided in their work only by their unconscious impulses. They receive their problems, and learn the direction in which their solutions and "predictions" are examined to point from the status of their science and from the condition of the academic or public temper. These latter-day apologists for freedom from value judgments (*Wertfreiheit*) glorify the fact that thought has a subordinate role, that it has fallen to the level of a handmaiden to the prevailing objectives of industrial society with its extremely dubious future. The ruling powers can use thought that has renounced

every determinative function. And the scientists, whose disparaging interpretation of values expresses just such a renunciation, help them along. They promise to conform by ignoring the direction in which the single steps of theoretical reflections lead and by maintaining that such indifference is equivalent to scientific rigor. Their position is comparable to that of the citizens of a tyrannical state who maintain that silent endurance of their yoke is faithfulness and loyalty to their rulers.³⁷

Intellectual rigor is as important for those who view conditions from the standpoint of conscious interest as it is for those who seek to eliminate interest from their considerations. Nor is a single word needed to prove that there is a type of uncom-

37. Relativism, in the sense of an indifference on the part of science towards values and ends, is nowadays represented as the general characteristic of a liberal outlook. This is a misconception. The "tolerance" of the Enlightenment was certainly not neutral. It meant siding with the bourgeoisie against feudalism, with deism against the Church, with the demand that convicts be given useful work as against the practice of torturing them, etc. Modern relativism is actually the ideological capitulation of liberalism to the new autocratic systems. It is the admission of its own impotence, the transition to an authoritarian philosophy, which here as well as in other directions constitutes the natural consequence of relativism: "Super-Relativism." "We recognize the demands of relativism," declares Neurath ("L'Encyclopédie," p. 189). With disarming simplicity, the positivists blend relativism with democracy and pacifism, asserting that these have "a natural affinity with the basic assumptions of relativism" (H. Kelsen, "Wissenschaft und Demokratie," a feuilleton in *The Neue Züricher Zeitung*, No. 321, February 23, 1937). Mussolini has grasped the situation with more acumen. He has always prided himself on having maintained a relativistic attitude in contrast to socialism and all other political doctrines. His movement never had a straightforward program. As the situation demanded, it called itself aristocratic or democratic, revolutionary or reactionary, proletarian or antiproletarian, pacifistic or antipacifistic. This, according to Mussolini, bears out its claim "to stem directly from the most up-to-date trend of the European mind," namely from the relativistic trend of philosophy. "From the circumstance that one ideology is as good as the next, that is, that all are mere fictions, the modern relativist infers that everybody has the right to create his own ideology and to get the most out of it with all the energy at his disposal." (Mussolini, "Relativismo e fascismo," *Diuturna*, Milan, 1924, pp. 374-377). Relativism, which is without philosophical justification, is an element of a social dynamic which moves toward authoritarian forms. Indifference to the idea in theory is the precursor of cynicism in practical life.

promising partisanship which clarifies the historical situation. On the other hand, strict adherence to what happens to be given though it may have been the source of achievements in special departments of science, tends to prevent insight into human and social matters. When dialectical thought, anticipating the annihilation of the human race in wars and endless barbarism, takes it upon itself to speak of a general interest, to separate what is relevant from what is not, and to construct its ideas in this light, it does not always find unwavering support for its statements. Its difficulties are all the greater because the mass of people is still blind and ready to disavow any one who thinks or acts in its behalf.

Empiricists often remark that there is no essential difference between physics and social theory, except that the latter has not yet advanced as far as the former. It is true that the same spirit of harmony does not prevail among social theorists as among physicists. It does not follow, however, that the formation of concepts in social theory has to be deferred indefinitely and that categories, such as the common interest, the fettering of human capacities, happiness, and growth, have nothing to do with science at all. There are very basic reasons for the fact that social theory is accompanied by hesitation and doubt. In physics, the selection of material and concepts can be undertaken calmly. But in social science, the same activity requires conscious decision, for otherwise everything remains in a state of sham objectivity. Certain contemporary sociological schools are in just such a state. It is because the empiricist conception of truth is unrelated to any subjective interest or desire for a rational society that it does not possess the uncertainty which such an interest must involve. It degrades knowledge to the level of a bourgeois profession the members of which help to register, systematize, and reproduce the experience of the common man. When nine-tenths of the people agree that they see spectres in broad daylight, and brand innocent social groups as devils and demons, when they exalt desperados to the office of gods, in other words, when a hopeless state of confusion prevails, a state which usually precedes the disintegration of a society, it be-

comes clear that the empiricist conception of knowledge is fundamentally incapable of checking the spread of such "experiences" and of criticizing "common knowledge." When the thoughtless crowd is mad, thoughtless philosophy cannot be sane. Besides, the empiricists have never been completely immune from spiritism.³⁸ And this is the philosophical school that takes arms against metaphysics.

It has been mentioned more than once in the preceding pages that modern and traditional empiricism are distinct. The new school of empiricism has frequently insisted that it goes beyond the traditional type.

. . . logical knowledge is not derivable from experience alone, and the empiricist's philosophy can therefore not be accepted in its entirety, in spite of its excellence in many matters which lie outside logic.³⁹

The propositions of formal logic and mathematics cannot, then, be derived from empirical data. Since logical empiricism acknowledges that these formal sciences constitute its particular field of interest, without insisting, as did John Stuart Mill, on reducing them to the data of experience, it regards itself as a school of its own. This new kind of thought, which is distinguished from the mere establishment of facts, is quite discreet in face of the existing order of things. True to its origin, traditional logic has always attempted to comprise the most universal qualities of being within fundamental principles; modern logic, on the other hand, declares that it comprises nothing, that it is wholly devoid of content. Its sentences are not supposed to reveal anything at all about reality. Rather, the entire system of logic as well as of mathematics (which is a part of logic according to Whitehead and Russell) is merely an extensively differentiated system of sentences about concepts, judgments, and syllogisms of the kind used in science and everyday life.

38. Cf. Friedrich Engels, "Dialektik und Natur," *Marx-Engels Archiv*, II (1927), 207-216; Horkheimer, "Materialism and Metaphysics," pp. 10-46 of this volume.

39. Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Chicago and London, 1929), p. 40.

According to Russell, the function of logic is to investigate these logical elements and, further, to lay down a foundational system for the various forms of judgment. This logic is called formal because symbolic elements are manipulated without regard to their relation to reality, that is to say, without regard to the question of truth or falsity.

The writing in the field hardly makes clear how form is to be determined apart from subject matter. As a rule the procedure is as follows: Several examples are cited in which it is usually quite clear that different facts or entities are denoted; it is then stated that what remains the same in all examples in spite of these differences is the form, while that which changes is the content. On the other hand, propositions are cited in which there is no question regarding the fact that the object denoted is one and the same; in this case that which varies is designated as the form. After he has given examples of various propositions relating to Socrates in which the subject, Socrates, remains the same, Russell says:

"Take (say) the series of propositions, "Socrates drank the hemlock," "Coleridge drank the hemlock," "Coleridge drank opium," "Coleridge ate opium." The form remains unchanged throughout this series, but all the constituents are altered. Thus form is not another constituent, but is the way the constituents are put together.⁴⁰

Through its analysis of the formal elements of science, then, logic affords the possibility of discovering conceptual obscurities and apparent contradictions, of bringing to light alternatives that went unnoticed before, and of replacing complex theoretical constructions by simpler ones, of setting diverse forms of expression in harmony with one another in different branches of science, or in the same branch, and of creating greater uniformity. Like mathematics, it uses symbols for all formal elements and even attempts to use them for all operations. Logic deals algebraically with statements expressed symbolically, particularly in the syllogism, thus preventing many misunderstandings and promoting clarity. With great pride logic

40. Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 45f.

says of itself that it nowhere increases the store of material of knowledge in the sense in which the special sciences in their present form do. Its aim is to assist the sciences in formulating their results and in reaching mutual agreement. Its program, so to speak, consists in "rationalizing" scientific research. According to Carnap, "There is no philosophy as a theory or a system of special propositions alongside of those of science."⁴¹ It would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that the addition of logic in any way changes the general character of empiricism.

The interpretation of logic as a system of linguistic forms devoid of content soon proves to be questionable, however, and it is quickly abandoned in the struggle with metaphysics. The separation of form and content cannot be carried out. The idea that it is possible to do so without resort to extralogical considerations turns out to be an illusion. It seems plausible in theoretical physics, in which the separation originates, because the "immediately given," understood as an isolated perception, plays a minor role in comparison with the complicated process of formulating and reformulating laws. In the social world, however, it is no accident that this bifurcation can only be supported by the most inane examples. For, in social sciences, the connection with material judgments and decisions is demonstrated from the very beginning. Every expression of the language has a definite meaning. A judgment is a compound symbol and every individual symbol in it is correlated either with a definite or indefinite entity. Judgments may, therefore, be dealt with in the same manner as any other definite thing; one may take out and replace elements, substitute Coleridge for Socrates, and so on.⁴² In order not to destroy the character of the judgment and replace it with meaningless constructions, it is necessary to observe certain rules in substituting symbols. The elaboration of such a system of rules was prompted primarily by logical difficulties encountered within mathematics and now forms a specially cultivated department of modern logic. The process of determining, however, whether or not a combination of symbols is to be

41. Carnap, "Die alte und die neue Logik," p. 26.

42. Cf. Rudolf Carnap, *Abriss der Logistik* (Vienna, 1929), p. 3ff.

called intersignificant, that is to say, the process of distinguishing between a meaningful statement and a combination of meaningless sounds, cannot be separated from a concrete decision on a material problem. The notion prevails that the logician need merely go to his colleagues in other departments of science or, perhaps, to journalists and business men to collect established facts from which he can then abstract the concept of form in the quiet of his study. This fallacious idea reduces logic to a type of thought that is strictly confined to the accredited classificatory systems of science and only explores relations between fixed conceptions.

The type of thinking by which fixed conceptions are incorporated into constructions in which they assume specific meanings is not accessible to the formal logician. When judging human matters, he is restricted to trivial elements and relationships. In science as well as in everyday life he finds, apart from mathematical formulae, countless sentences the meanings of which are unmistakable even when torn from their context. The conceptions contained in these sentences can clearly be traced to "root conceptions." These, in turn, may be traced to experiences which can be repeated in this society by any one at any time. The experiences concerned deal with qualities and structures that are more or less undisputed. The statement, "Arthropods are animals having articulated bodies, jointed limbs, and a chitinous shell," unquestionably has meaning as a zoological statement; the meaning of other sentences, such as "Humboldt travelled in America," or "Tommy has a cold in the head," involves no problems. We run into difficulties, however, as soon as we assert that a court decision is just or unjust, that a man has a high or low intellectual level; or if we make the statement that one form of consciousness precedes another one, that a commodity is the unity of use value and exchange value, or if we declare that the real is rational or irrational. The validity of these judgments cannot be ascertained by recourse to statistical surveys, whether among common folk or scholars. Here, experience, the "given," is not something immediate, common to all and independent of theory, but is mediated by the whole

configuration of knowledge in which these sentences occur, even though the reality to which this configuration refers exists independently of consciousness. The precise relation of this theoretical whole to man and to the given world cannot be determined definitely. Just as everyday language and the language of the classificatory systems represent specific historical unities, intellectual productions, although they may agree with those systems in many general features, have their own peculiar structure and history. The manner in which the given is mediated by thought, the manner in which connections between the objects are brought to light, differentiated, and transformed, the linguistic structure in which the interaction of thought and experience is expressed, is the mode of presentation or the style. It is an insurmountable obstacle to formal logic.

The development of natural science, too, influences perception. The theory of relativity, for instance, is an important factor in transforming the structure of experience, if experience includes the world of perception of everyday life as well. Within its own province, however, that is, in physics, the structure of scientific experience, insofar as it is conceived of as isolated from thought, will not be changed by the theory of relativity; it will remain a body of "atomic" observations. This state is inherent in physics as an isolated branch of science, and it is not injurious in the least to the significance of its theories; it is detrimental only to empiricist logic which views such new achievements at a safe distance from individual existence and social praxis, and then proceeds to designate certain elements of those achievements as prototypes of knowledge.

Modern logic disregards this relationship altogether. Its achievements have reference purely to practical rationality, to a kind of thinking typical of the reproduction of life in its given form. Its entire structure and all the laws formulated by it are devoted to this end.⁴³ Modern logic should, however, beware of assuming a critical attitude toward conceptions which do not serve this end. It declares that it defines the principles resulting

43. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Zum Problem der Wahrheit," *Kritische Theorie*, I (Frankfurt, 1968), p. 265ff.

from the comparison and systematic correlation of familiar ideas as the form of thought. The one objectionable item in all this is its questionable use of the term "thought." There is no reason to restrict the designation "thought" to those instances from among which this logic culls its examples. If there were, the assertion that the propositions of logic are tautologies would have some justification. We designate a certain complex of phenomena as thought. If we are confronted then with a thought construction of peculiar structure and singular design we would, in accordance with the methods of the old natural science, have to reformulate our concept of thought, for instance, take it as a species of some wider genus. In a case of this very kind, however, the logical empiricist would invoke his option to reject disturbing protocol sentences. His process is to select certain ideas beforehand and designate them as alone true and genuine as against all other ideas, many of which have played and still play an important part in human history. In this way his logic drops the role of tautology and demonstrates the partiality of its position, a partiality altogether contrary to the principles of empiricism.

It becomes apparent that the two elements of logical empiricism are only superficially connected. Notwithstanding some innovations—for example, the theory of types, the value of which, despite the great amount of ingenuity expended upon them, is doubtful—symbolic logic is identical with formal logic on essential points. Consequently, what is open to objection in the one is equally objectionable in the other. "Form" is an abstraction derived from a material of conceptions, judgments, and other theoretical constructions restricted in respect to kind and extent. If one logical doctrine claims to be logic as such, it therewith abandons formalism, for its statements then acquire material meaning and lead to far-reaching philosophical consequences. Characteristically, however, modern logic does not know this, and its ignorance is what distinguishes it from the material logic of Aristotle and Hegel which it so bitterly attacks. On the other hand, if any type of logic refrains from claiming universality (the claim is, however, historically associated with

the very name of logic), by explicitly prohibiting its propositions from being given a normative cast, or, worse yet, by denying that any critical conclusions may be drawn from them, it loses the philosophical, and especially the antimetaphysical character which it took on in empiricism.

In any case, logic is in conflict with empiricism; in fact, logic and mathematics have always constituted unsolved difficulties for empirical systems. The attempts of John Stuart Mill and Ernst Mach to deduce logical propositions from dubious psychological data were manifest failures. Hume had the wisdom not to attempt such deduction of mathematical and related propositions. For this very reason, however, the evident relations of ideas exist side by side with empirical facts in his works in such a way that their interrelations do not become clear. For Berkeley, mathematics was a plague next only to materialism, as the *Analyst* and other writings demonstrate. He openly and unwaveringly opposed his empiricism to the developments of modern science and declared himself for the Bible and good common sense, without the benefit of modern mathematics. In fact, he seriously endangered the beginnings of modern mathematics. The rigid separation of sensuous and rational knowledge, inherent in all empiricism, asserted itself in a familiar way in Berkeley's philosophical career—he passed from empiricism to Platonism. Readers of Locke's *Essay*, after being instructed in empiricism in the first three books, have always been amazed at the surprising turn taken in the fourth. Morality and mathematics are represented as independent of experience, yet valid for it. The basic works of the earlier empiricist doctrine contain the same contradiction between the empirical conception of science and the rational elements to be found in it as is contained in the more modern variety which brings together the two extremes of this contradiction in the very name it assumes.

When modern formalistic logic encounters theoretical constructs which, as a whole, or in their separate parts, do not fit into its conception of thought, it does not call the universality of its own principles into question, but challenges the refractory object, whatever its constitution or qualities may be. The fol-

lowers of this system say that it is wrong to regard thinking as a "means of knowing something that must have unconditional validity at all times and in all parts of the world."⁴⁴ They constantly refuse to accord any "executive power" to thinking. At the same time, however, they demand that all thinking should conform to empirical criteria.

As has been shown, this philosophical position by virtue of its very nature can not possess a single legitimate weapon to combat any form of mass delusion once the latter has attracted sufficient followers. Belief in witchcraft was combated in its day by means of a strictly rationalist philosophy. In the presence of a large number of protocol sentences bearing on the existence of witches, the empiricists would not even have been able to fall back on improbability. Empiricists regard Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel as the champion crackbrains of the world, and their philosophies as a scientific vacuum for no weightier reasons than that their ideas do not fit into the system of logistics and that their relation to the "root concepts" and "primitive experiences" of empiricism is problematical. The superficiality and presumption with which the new empiricists pass judgment on the products of intellectual activity parallel an attitude to culture which now and then finds practical expression in nationalistic uprisings and the bonfires associated with them, though such demonstrations may in fact offend the empiricists personally. Russell came across Hegel's *Logic* and discovered that logic and metaphysics are identified in this system. His explanation follows:

Hegel believed that, by means of *a priori* reasoning, it could be shown that the world *must* have various important and interesting characteristics, since any world without these characteristics would be impossible and self-contradictory. Thus what he calls "logic" is an investigation of the nature of the universe, in so far as this can be inferred merely from the principle that the universe must be logically self-consistent. I do not myself believe that from this principle alone anything of importance can be inferred as regards the

44. Hahn, "Logik, Mathematik und Naturerkennen," p. 9.

existing universe. But, however that may be, I should not regard Hegel's reasoning, even if it were valid, as properly belonging to logic . . .

Furthermore, Russell holds that Hegel's logic is nothing other than traditional logic which Hegel "uncritically . . . assumed throughout his reasoning."⁴⁵

Russell has a very acute insight into the mental caste of the typical philosopher:

The paradoxes apparently proved by his [the non-empiricist's] logic are really the paradoxes of mysticism, and are the goal which he feels his logic must reach if it is to be in accordance with insight. It is in this way that logic has been pursued by those of the great philosophers who were mystics—notably Plato, Spinoza, and Hegel. But since they usually took for granted the supposed insight of the mystic emotion, their logical doctrines were presented with a certain dryness . . .

And he continues in this vein. He cannot forgive these philosophers because "they remained—to borrow a useful word from Mr. Santayana—'malicious' in regard to the world of science and common sense."⁴⁶

The book from which these passages are quoted and the more recent writings of Russell strike a popular note. The writings of the Vienna circle, on the other hand, make the same judgments in a strict and uncompromising manner. Carnap remarks:

When subjected to the relentless scrutiny of modern logic, all philosophy in the traditional sense of the word, whether it follows Plato, Thomas, Kant, Schelling, or Hegel, or seeks to build up a new "metaphysics of being" or a *geisteswissenschaftliche Philosophie* proves not merely to be false in content but to be logically untenable, that is, proves to be nonsense.⁴⁷

In contrast to other philosophers who are granted only a disparaging word because they do not subscribe to logical em-

45. Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, pp. 40–41.

46. Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–49.

47. Carnap, "Die alte und die neue Logik," p. 13.

piricism, Kant has been distinguished by a thorough refutation at the hands of Reichenbach. Very little was left of Kant after Reichenbach had finished with him. His *Critique of Pure Reason* was remarkable "in its effect." It was intended to explode Leibnizean logic. "Today we logicians are fully aware that this critique has long been confuted by incontrovertible facts."⁴⁸

Among the conceptions which empiricism does not comprehend but attacks nonetheless, is the thesis that truth is not an isolated judgment, but in every case a whole of knowledge. As a rule, the mathematical logicians do not attack Hegel on this point but direct their attention to his English disciple, Bradley. The following passage is a good example of the grounds on which they criticize him:

The truths discovered by the special sciences are not related to one another in such a way that if taken singly they are only relative, that is to say, that each is only one aspect of truth and must be supplemented by all other aspects in order to become really true. Such a conviction, held by many a philosopher, such as Bradley, seriously offends against logic. (The blunder consists, for instance, in their belief that they are entitled to say, "It is not quite true that it is cold but it is partially true," instead of simply, "It is rather cold.") In fact, however, every sentence that has been arrived at without error is by itself completely true; it is a part of the whole truth and not merely an approximation to, or only one aspect of it. (Should it contain a mistake, however, it is simply false and consequently not an aspect of the truth.)⁴⁹

These statements lack definiteness on the most vital point, namely, when they refer to errors. The naïve misapprehension of the mathematical logicians is especially evident in their conception that every judgment in any line of thought must be of the same nature as the one which expresses the relatively simple fact that it is cold. They hold that any theory, or for that matter any intellectual whole, is a compound of single judgments the

48. Heinrich Scholz, "Die klassische deutsche Philosophie und die neue Logik," *Actes du Congrès International de Philosophie Scientifique*, Part VIII (Paris, 1936), 2.

49. Moritz Schlick, "Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft," *Erkenntnis*, IV (1938), 381.

truth of which could be determined individually and independently of the whole, just as in the case of the temperature. In many very important instances, at least, it is imperative to know the whole, the context, before any valid decision can be made. The insight gained may then be expressed in a simple sentence as, for example, in Hegel's formulation that the true is the whole. In order to comprehend such an insight, however, it is not enough as in the judgment, "it is rather cold," to appeal to the average level of education or to assume a normal metabolism. The thought as expressed in a general philosophical formulation characterizes a consciousness which has actually passed through a series of reflections leading up to that thought. What it then knows is, if one insists, just as "empirical" as a simple perception. The difference lies in the fact that thought is more actively involved in the achievement than in the statement, "It is rather cold." This idea is expressed by Hegel in the assertion "that the absolute is to be understood as result." Hegel's conception holds not only for absolute knowledge, the problems of which are not so easily dismissed as the empiricists think, but also for most theories which aim beyond the present order. Dialectical logic has reference to thought involved in the interpretation of living reality, to thought in process, and not merely to static expression.

This logic is not a "physics of language" but material knowledge itself, considered under the aspect of its presentation. Schlick and Russell accomplish little when they marshal such sentences as "It is rather cold," and "Tommy has a cold in the head,"⁵⁰ against Bradley's philosophy. Their oft-repeated demand that philosophers should overcome their "instinctive aversion"⁵¹ and study logistics must be countered with the reminder that before refuting dialectics one ought at least to know its rudiments. The standpoint, "which is to shake previous philosophy to its foundations,"⁵² cannot be found in the primitive misconceptions exhibited by the modern empiricists.

50. Cf. Bertrand Russell, *Philosophy*, pp. 250-253.

51. Carnap, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

52. *Ibid.*

This is all the more true because not only logistic but every other theory lacks the ability to overthrow the old philosophy, no matter how thorough its acquaintance with the traditions combated. Idealistic philosophy or metaphysics cannot be "shaken to its foundation" by mere theoretical rejection. Nor can it be negated simply by "turning one's back on philosophy and, with head averted, mumbling a few angry and banal phrases about it."⁵⁸

Harmony and significant existence, which metaphysics wrongly designates as true reality as against the contradictions of the phenomenal world, are not meaningless. Powerful economic forces welcome a philosophy that professes not to know what to make of these conceptions and for that reason prefers to stick to facts; a philosophy that resolves not to make any essential distinction between the conspiracy of brutal despots against all human aspiration to happiness and freedom, on the one hand, and the struggles to defeat these tyrants on the other; a philosophy that reduces the two to the abstract concept of the "given" and even glorifies such conduct as objectivity. These forces expect the scientist to provide the technical means for perpetuating the established order and, particularly, for maintaining a war economy which has long converted peace into its opposite. The large section of the middle class which has been pushed into the background by the free play of economic forces must either side with these powerful economic groups or remain silent and withhold any opinion on vital issues. Thought relinquishes its claim to exercise criticism or to set tasks. Its purely recording and calculatory functions become detached from its spontaneity. Decision and praxis are held to be something opposed to thought—they are "value judgments," private caprices, and uncontrollable feelings. The intellect is declared to be connected only externally, if at all, with the conscious interest and the course it may follow. With the Idea there is no connection whatsoever. Thought and will, the parts of the

53. Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, ed. by F. Mehring (Stuttgart, 1920), I, 390.

mental process, are severed conceptually. Logically, there can be no objection to the latter procedure. What is very strongly objectionable from the standpoint of logic, however, is the attempt to set these abstractions up as rigid departments into which reason must be divided so that the function of thought would be mere calculation, while choice or decision would be the exclusive province of the will. The objections would apply even if some exponents of this misguided rigor conceded that the will may "make use of" the findings of thought. In view of the fact that the ruling economic powers use science as well as the whole of society for their special ends, this ideology, this identification of thought with the special sciences, must lead to the perpetuation of the *status quo*. With their increasing impotence in Europe during the last decades the middle class groups mentioned above, whose consciousness is best outlined by this philosophy, have come to regard the established order as the natural one. Faced with the intensification of this order in the authoritarian states, they accept the purity advocated by logical empiricism as the given theoretical attitude. (Because its barbarous attitude to language causes it to miss the actual meanings inherent in words, logical empiricism must fail to see the deeper connection between the glorification of the isolated quality of purity [*Sauberkeit*] and the need for a purge [*Säuberung*] to which authoritarian states make the most appalling concessions. Its error is the reverse of that made by a certain school of metaphysics which transforms philosophy into hermeneutics and seeks to track down ultimate things by tracing the original meanings of words. The modern empiricists believe it possible, given an accurate knowledge of customary usage, "faithfully" to translate a living language into an artificial one by following certain rules previously agreed upon. Thus it would be possible to translate any existing language into one made to order, for instance, into "physical language" without losing anything in the transfer. They hold that concepts like man or capitalism—provided they are not on the *Index Verborum Prohibitorum*—could just as well be rendered by "larifari" or "ruarua"; in fact, it would be preferable to choose such

“neutral” expressions because once correctly defined, neutral expressions would prevent misunderstanding.)

The confounding of calculatory with rational thinking as such solidifies the monadological isolation of the individual engendered by the present form of economy. The following illustrations will throw light on this fallacy. Let us assume a prison with several hundred men incarcerated for life. The prison consists of only one large hall. The necessities of life are supplied from outside. There is not enough food and the number of cots provided is too small for the number of prisoners. Some of the men have been allowed to have musical instruments, others sing and shout from time to time, and an almost continuous uproar prevails as a result. The intelligent prisoner will have to be on the alert to preserve his welfare. He will have to observe his fellow prisoners and study their behavior in all particulars in order to get his share when the food arrives. He will have to figure out when there will be least noise and when he will have the greatest chance to find a vacant cot, then carefully weigh these factors to determine when it would be best to sleep. He will have to engage in psychology and sociology, in fact, in every empirical science which can be of use to him. Factions may be formed, fights develop, and compromises be arranged. Individuals will join or break away from one or the other of these factions according to their strength or interests. In the end, they may submit to the strongest and most brutal individuals, simply because they cannot organize and plan their actions by themselves. Their characteristic intellectual traits will be shrewdness, empirical rationality, and calculation; but, however brilliantly these faculties may develop, they represent only a special kind of thinking. In respect to human affairs, calculation is a poor expedient. We may conceive forms in which the mental powers of individuals do not have merely adaptive functions designed to meet the continually changing situations resulting from their chaotic behavior, but actually define and order their life. For the inwardly isolated prisoner the daily scramble for food, the belligerent attitude of the others, the din alternating with relative quiet are all inescapable natural forces conditioning

his life. He has no choice but to submit to these facts in the most rational manner possible. They are realities, just as the prison walls and the quantity of food delivered to the prison.

Where, however, man confronts circumstances which do depend on him and yet eyes them as alien and unalterable his thought is bound to be feeble and abstract. Where today there is nothing but dependence, there could instead be constructive resolve on so wide a scale that even the character of intellectual behavior would be altered. Calculative thought, mere "head" thinking ("*Verstandes*"-*Denken*), corresponds to a type of human being who is still in a stage of relative impotence, who is still passive with regard to vital issues, despite all his industrious traits. As a result the functions of management and regulation increasingly become the exclusive privilege of the most powerful. In our bifurcated world, they take on the character of adaptation and artifice far more than that of rationality. Since the development of a higher spontaneity hinges on the creation of a rational community, it is impossible for the individual simply to decree it. As may be noted in the example of the prison, the prerequisite of this goal is that the individual abandon the mere recording and prediction of facts, that is, mere calculation; that he learn to look behind the facts; that he distinguish the superficial from the essential without minimizing the importance of either; that he formulate conceptions that are not simple classifications of the given; and that he continually orient all his experiences to definite goals without falsifying them; in short, that he learn to think dialectically. Modern empiricism joined with logistic is a logic of monads. The criticism brought against it because of its "solipsism" is fully justified.⁵⁴

54. The solipsistic character of modern empiricism has not been treated in this study. It has, however, been the subject of repeated attack since the early years of this century. Since the publication of the early polemics against empirio-criticism, nothing has changed in the positivist doctrine and method except that it exercises greater caution in its formulations. It now claims not to deny consciousness and physical states, but merely to maintain that all psychological concepts may be traced back to physical ones, which, of course, leads to the same thing.

Logical empiricism was designated at the outset of this study as an attempt to bring unity and harmony into the inconsistencies of the modern consciousness. While neoromantic philosophers strove to attain this end by disparaging science, the latest branch of positivism seeks to carry it out by hypostatizing the special sciences. The two philosophical movements have a common feature. Neither apprehends reality in conscious connection with a definite historical activity, as a body of tendencies, but takes it in the immediate form in which it presents itself. The prometaphysical view absolves the given world by referring it to a significant being that exists independent of historical change. Scientivism rejects all metaphysical categories. It feels "sufficient vitality in itself to affirm the world in its present form . . ." This means that it sees physics as "a science full of vital problems, full of inner movement, and tremendous effort to find the answer to the questions posed by the mind in its quest for knowledge."⁵⁵ Scientivism romanticizes the special sciences when it declares that physical theories furnish proof "that man grows with knowledge and carries in himself possibilities of thought forms which he could not even imagine on a previous level."⁵⁶

While it is true that metaphysics is wrong to feed mankind

Logical empiricists are apparently unable to see that at times it is the inner states which are significant rather than outer effects. They affirm that it makes no difference in knowledge whether or not consciousness is attributed to man. Carnap ridicules as metaphysical flummery the statement of Empedocles that the attraction and repulsion of matter are to be understood as love and hate ("Logic," *Factors Determining Human Behavior, Harvard Tercentenary Publications* [Cambridge, Mass.], 1937, p. 110). It is his opinion that this statement means nothing at all. What holds for matter holds equally for man. In the case of the body, too, it is declared to be nonsense to conceive that it is moved by love, and hate, pleasure and pain. According to the terminology proper to the school, such a logical verdict does not arise from solipsism or nihilism, but from a methodological prescript: the claim that man has a consciousness is not false, but meaningless. Nihilism is, however, present in its assertion that not only are you nothing, but I am nothing. This philosophy corresponds fairly accurately to the feeling characteristic of the followers of an authoritarian leader.

55. Hans Reichenbach, "Die philosophische Bedeutung der modernen Physik," *Erkenntnis*, I (1930/31), 70-71.

56. Reichenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

on hopes by offering it a being that cannot be verified with the means of science, it is also true that science becomes naively metaphysical when it takes itself to be *the* knowledge and *the* theory and even goes so far as to disparage philosophy, that is, every critical attitude toward science. It is true that any position which is manifestly irreconcilable with definite scientific views must be considered false. Even constructive thought must get much of its material from the special sciences, from physics, geography, psychology, etc. When it considers a certain problem, constructive thought brings together conceptions of various disciplines regardless of conventional borderlines. Unlike absolute metaphysical intuition, however, it does not theretofore disregard or set aside their contents, but weaves them into the right pattern for the given situation. This positive connection with science does not mean that the language of science is the true and proper form of knowledge. The portions of reality covered by the special sciences are restricted both as to range and treatment in comparison to the level of knowledge attainable today. Just as it is inadmissible to run counter to the tested results of science, it is naive and bigoted to think and speak only in the language of science.

Under present circumstances a language that is panic-stricken enough to say that nothing is disclosed to it and even to declare that "the nothing nothings" (*Nichts selbst nichtet*) does not, despite its kinship with the unleashed brute forces of the present day, appear more senseless than the self-assured precisionism which discovers a prediction even in the judgment that a man died under horrible torture. This precisionism, like recent metaphysical language, does not take account of the qualitative leap in history and, like the forlorn pessimism of pre-authoritarian metaphysics, fails to call the existing order into question because it maintains its faith in linear progress. The sectarian spirit of such a harmonistic belief in progress is present, too, among those schools that continue to employ living language with the superior reservation that what they "really" intend is physics although they work with "crude" implements for the sake of convenience. Science and its interpretation are

two different things. One of Mach's disciples declares, "Subjects and objects are clusters or bundles of elements; they are composed of consecutively appearing groups of simultaneously appearing elements."⁵⁷ This statement has not been proved by physics, of course, but it is, nevertheless, part of a unified general outlook to which its disciples adhere as strictly as the modern European and American followers of Buddhism or Christian Science observe their specific cant and ritual. The compilation of an *Index Verborum Prohibitorum* containing all words which some noted specialist has pronounced useless, and the formulation of a unitary language and a unitary science, even if their specific usefulness were conceded, do not in any case belong to a science that desires the respect of philosophical thought.

If we are to credit the opinion of this school, however, all this has nothing to do with the case. They claim that fruitful discussion can begin only when the limited problems of logistics, the logical syntax of speech, or the calculation of probabilities are the subjects. It must also be pointed out that this apologetic for restrictedness, highly dubious as it is at the present time, does not belong to science proper, but to the attitude of a philosophic sect which has found its peace in a finite, self-enclosed world view. Nonetheless, its vision of the world, like most religions, permits its adherents to take the most divergent attitudes with respect to historical problems. Ernst Mach was himself a progressive and many members of his school embraced liberal ideas. In terms of the teaching of the school, however, this circumstance is sheer accident; the empiricist doctrine offers no remedy for political or spiritual superstitions. The intellectual honesty of individual personalities and the acute mental vision of certain of their scientific achievements does not make their philosophies any better. Mathematical logicians may have brought calculatory thinking to the level of development of modern industry and technique and may have cleared away a

57. Friedrich Adler, *Ernst Machs Überwindung des mechanischen Materialismus* (Vienna, 1918), p. 88.

great many antiquated notions; but their own interpretations of what they are doing can, nevertheless, become outworn in the same way that a factory which is thoroughly rationalized and equipped in the most up-to-date fashion may contribute to general disorder and may perpetuate an outmoded system of social chaos. The appeal to the exclusive warranty of facts has been extensively treated in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* in which it was properly classified as one form of contemporary consciousness. It has been dealt with above and need merely be noted here.⁵⁸

The process of embracing some doctrine or other for the purpose of restoring one's inner peace as though the events of objective history had nothing to do with the degree of a man's inner calm, always comes down to a retreat into illusory harmony, a process of insulation from the world; the result is the same whether the contents of the soothing doctrine are scientific or metaphysical.

Considered in themselves, the problems that are preserved in metaphysics (though in a perverted form), as well as the results of scientific inquiry bear elements of cultural growth. While it is true that mankind has benefited from empiricism because the latter put forward the demand that statements must be legitimated by the intellect, it must also be borne in mind that a great many of the writings of the metaphysicians contain a more profound insight into reality than can be found in the works of special sciences, no matter how well the latter are adapted to the needs of the present. True, metaphysics and science cannot be regarded as two similar branches of knowledge. Bergson, who thought they could, was wrong. Science is largely a critique of metaphysics. Logical positivism, however, stigmatizes as metaphysics all thought which attempts to clarify these relations and all theories that take critical account of the special sciences.

It is true that the responsibility for prevailing conditions is

58. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. by J. B. Baillai (London, 1910), I.

shared by metaphysicians because they have glorified those conditions and have evolved an absurd mode of speech; in the new scientivism, however, man becomes completely dumb and only science speaks out. Owing to their median position in society the positivists see their enemies on both sides. They are opposed to thought, whether it tend forward with reason, or backward with metaphysics. The defense of science against theology by means of epistemological and logical argument was a progressive movement in the seventeenth century. Philosophers made themselves champions of one aspect of the new mode of social life. In our time, however, when this social form has long changed its meaning for mankind, it would be evidence of a most naïve interpretation of the historical situation to hold that the only legitimate intellectual pursuit is to cultivate the special knowledge that belongs to that social form and its mode of production and that everything that oversteps these limits is, on principle, theology or some other transcendental belief, crass reaction and absurdity, to insist, in other words, that the force of the antithesis has not been shifted and that the issue is still science versus metaphysics, and metaphysics versus science.

The knowledge brought to light by science is used to perpetuate the social mechanism; on the other hand, it is also mobilized for its overthrow. The contradictory patterns into which it thus enters have long dominated the intellectual atmosphere. Science and metaphysics have been brought together unwittingly. The thought or theory that is committed to a happier future, and not to the existing world and its indicated forms of experience, must nevertheless arise from this existing world. This kind of thought has naturally become rare in the present period of defeat and deflation; its rarity is identical with the disillusionment prevailing everywhere. In spite of this important fact the empiricists, even the most progressive among them, will recognize only one hostile force against which they direct their struggle. Hopelessly confusing the fronts, they stigmatize everyone as metaphysician or poet, no matter whether he turns things into their opposites or calls a spade a spade. A philosophy that confuses logic with logistic and reason with physics must of

necessity misjudge the poet. The poet's aim need not always be poetry, it may be truth. It can easily happen that poetry, keeping meticulously within its limits, as positivism expects knowledge to do, will be struck dumb at the horror of this age, just as science is.

Metaphysics may well be proud of the newest attack against it; it has been identified with thought.

TRADITIONAL AND CRITICAL THEORY

WHAT is "theory"? The question seems a rather easy one for contemporary science. Theory for most researchers is the sum-total of propositions about a subject, the propositions being so linked with each other that a few are basic and the rest derive from these. The smaller the number of primary principles in comparison with the derivations, the more perfect the theory. The real validity of the theory depends on the derived propositions being consonant with the actual facts. If experience and theory contradict each other, one of the two must be reexamined. Either the scientist has failed to observe correctly or something is wrong with the principles of the theory. In relation to facts, therefore, a theory always remains a hypothesis. One must be ready to change it if its weaknesses begin to show as one works through the material. Theory is stored-up knowledge, put in a form that makes it useful for the closest possible description of facts. Poincaré compares science to a library that must ceaselessly expand. Experimental physics is the librarian who takes care of acquisitions, that is, enriches knowledge by supplying new material. Mathematical physics—the theory of natural science in the strictest sense—keeps the catalogue; without the catalogue one would have no access to the library's rich contents. "That is the rôle of mathematical physics. It must direct generalisation, so as to increase what I have called just now the output of science."¹ The general goal of all theory is a universal systematic science, not limited to any particular sub-

1. Henri Poincaré, *Science and Hypothesis*, tr. by W[illiam] J[ohn] G[reenstreet] (London: Walter Scott, 1905), p. 145.

ject matter but embracing all possible objects. The division of sciences is being broken down by deriving the principles for special areas from the same basic premises. The same conceptual apparatus which was elaborated for the analysis of inanimate nature is serving to classify animate nature as well, and anyone who has once mastered the use of it, that is, the rules for derivation, the symbols, the process of comparing derived propositions with observable fact, can use it at any time. But we are still rather far from such an ideal situation.

Such, in its broad lines, is the widely accepted idea of what theory is. Its origins supposedly coincide with the beginnings of modern philosophy. The third maxim in Descartes' scientific method is the decision

to carry on my reflections in due order, commencing with objects that were the most simple and easy to understand, in order to rise little by little, or by degrees, to knowledge of the most complex, assuming an order, even if a fictitious one, among those which do not follow a natural sequence relative to one another.

The derivation as usually practiced in mathematics is to be applied to all science. The order in the world is captured by a deductive chain of thought.

Those long chains of deductive reasoning, simple and easy as they are, of which geometers make use in order to arrive at the most difficult demonstrations, had caused me to imagine that all those things which fall under the cognizance of men might very likely be mutually related in the same fashion; and that, provided only that we abstain from receiving anything as true which is not so, and always retain the order which is necessary in order to deduce the one conclusion from the other, there can be nothing so remote that we cannot reach to it, nor so recondite that we cannot discover it.²

Depending on the logician's own general philosophical outlook, the most universal propositions from which the deduction begins are themselves regarded as experiential judgments, as

2. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, tr. by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931²), volume 1, p. 92.

inductions (as with John Stuart Mill), as evident insights (as in rationalist and phenomenological schools), or as arbitrary postulates (as in the modern axiomatic approach). In the most advanced logic of the present time, as represented by Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, theory is defined "as an enclosed system of propositions for a science as a whole."³ Theory in the fullest sense is "a systematically linked set of propositions, taking the form of a systematically unified deduction."⁴ Science is "a certain totality of propositions . . . , emerging in one or other manner from theoretical work, in the systematic order of which propositions a certain totality of objects acquires definition."⁵ The basic requirement which any theoretical system must satisfy is that all the parts should intermesh thoroughly and without friction. Harmony, which includes lack of contradictions, and the absence of superfluous, purely dogmatic elements which have no influence on the observable phenomena, are necessary conditions, according to Weyl.⁶

In so far as this traditional conception of theory shows a tendency, it is towards a purely mathematical system of symbols. As elements of the theory, as components of the propositions and conclusions, there are ever fewer names of experiential objects and ever more numerous mathematical symbols. Even the logical operations themselves have already been so rationalized that, in large areas of natural science at least, theory formation has become a matter of mathematical construction.

The sciences of man and society have attempted to follow the lead of the natural sciences with their great successes. The difference between those schools of social science which are more oriented to the investigation of facts and those which concentrate more on principles has nothing directly to do with the concept of theory as such. The assiduous collecting of facts

3. Edmund Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik* (Halle, 1929), p. 89.

4. Husserl, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

5. Husserl, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

6. Hermann Weyl, *Philosophie der Naturwissenschaft*, in *Handbuch der Philosophie*, Part 2 (Munich-Berlin, 1927), pp. 118ff.

in all the disciplines dealing with social life, the gathering of great masses of detail in connection with problems, the empirical inquiries, through careful questionnaires and other means, which are a major part of scholarly activity, especially in the Anglo-Saxon universities since Spencer's time—all this adds up to a pattern which is, outwardly, much like the rest of life in a society dominated by industrial production techniques. Such an approach seems quite different from the formulation of abstract principles and the analysis of basic concepts by an arm-chair scholar, which are typical, for example, of one sector of German sociology. Yet these divergences do not signify a structural difference in ways of thinking. In recent periods of contemporary society the so-called human studies (*Geisteswissenschaften*) have had but a fluctuating market value and must try to imitate the more prosperous natural sciences whose practical value is beyond question.

There can be no doubt, in fact, that the various schools of sociology have an identical conception of theory and that it is the same as theory in the natural sciences. Empirically oriented sociologists have the same idea of what a fully elaborated theory should be as their theoretically oriented brethren. The former, indeed, are persuaded that in view of the complexity of social problems and the present state of science any concern with general principles must be regarded as indolent and idle. If theoretical work is to be done, it must be done with an eye unwaveringly on the facts; there can be no thought in the foreseeable future of comprehensive theoretical statements. These scholars are much enamored of the methods of exact formulation and, in particular, of mathematical procedures, which are especially congenial to the conception of theory described above. What they object to is not so much theory as such but theories spun out of their heads by men who have no personal experience of the problems of an experimental science. Distinctions like those between community and society (Tönnies), mechanical and organic solidarity (Durkheim), or culture and civilization (A. Weber) as basic forms of human sociality prove to be of questionable value as soon as one attempts to

apply them to concrete problems. The way that sociology must take in the present state of research is (it is argued) the laborious ascent from the description of social phenomena to detailed comparisons and only then to the formation of general concepts.

The empiricist, true to his traditions, is thus led to say that only complete inductions can supply the primary propositions for a theory and that we are still far from having made such inductions. His opponent claims the right to use other methods, less dependent on progress in data-collection, for the formation of primary categories and insights. Durkheim, for example, agrees with many basic views of the empirical school but, in dealing with principles, he opts for an abridgement of the inductive process. It is impossible, he claims, to classify social happenings on the basis of purely empirical inventories, nor can research make classification easier in the way in which it is expected to do so.

Its [induction's] role is to put into our hands points of reference to which we can refer other observations than those which have furnished us with these very points of reference. But for this purpose it must be made not from a complete inventory of all the individual characteristics but from a small number of them, carefully chosen . . . It will spare the observer many steps because it will guide him . . . We must, then, choose the most essential characteristics for our classification.⁷

Whether the primary principles are gotten by selection, by intuition, or by pure stipulation makes no difference, however, to their function in the ideal theoretical system. For the scientist must certainly apply his more or less general propositions, as hypotheses, to ever new facts. The phenomenologically oriented sociologist will indeed claim that once an essential law has been ascertained every particular instance will, beyond any doubt, exemplify the law. But the really hypothetical character of the essential law is manifested as soon as the question arises whether

7. Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, tr. from the eighth edition by Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 80.

in a particular case we are dealing with an instance of the essence in question or of a related essence, whether we are faced with a poor example of one type or a good example of another type. There is always, on the one hand, the conceptually formulated knowledge and, on the other, the facts to be subsumed under it. Such a subsumption or establishing of a relation between the simple perception or verification of a fact and the conceptual structure of our knowing is called its theoretical explanation.

We need not enter here into the details of the various kinds of classification. It will be enough to indicate briefly how the traditional concept of theory handles the explanation of historical events. The answer emerged clearly in the controversy between Eduard Meyer and Max Weber. Meyer regarded as idle and unanswerable the question of whether, even if certain historical personages had not reached certain decisions, the wars they caused would nonetheless sooner or later have occurred. Weber tried to show that if the question were indeed idle and unanswerable, all historical explanation would become impossible. He developed a "theory of objective possibility," based on the theories of the physiologist, von Kries, and of writers in jurisprudence and national economy such as Merkel, Liefmann, and Radbruch. For Weber, the historian's explanations, like those of the expert in criminal law, rest not on the fullest possible enumeration of all pertinent circumstances but on the establishment of a connection between those elements of an event which are significant for historical continuity, and particular, determinative happenings. This connection, for example the judgment that a war resulted from the policies of a statesman who knew what he was about, logically supposes that, had such a policy not existed, some other effect would have followed. If one maintains a particular causal nexus between historical events, one is necessarily implying that had the nexus not existed, then in accordance with the rules that govern our experience another effect would have followed in the given circumstances. The rules of experience here are nothing but the formulations of our knowledge concerning economic, social, and psychologi-

cal interconnections. With the help of these we reconstruct the probable course of events, going beyond the event itself to what will serve as explanation.⁸ We are thus working with conditional propositions as applied to a given situation. If circumstances *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d* are given, then event *q* must be expected; if *d* is lacking, event *r*; if *g* is added, event *s*, and so on. This kind of calculation is a logical tool of history as it is of science. It is in this fashion that theory in the traditional sense is actually elaborated.

What scientists in various fields regard as the essence of theory thus corresponds, in fact, to the immediate tasks they set for themselves. The manipulation of physical nature and of specific economic and social mechanisms demand alike the amassing of a body of knowledge such as is supplied in an ordered set of hypotheses. The technological advances of the bourgeois period are inseparably linked to this function of the pursuit of science. On the one hand, it made the facts fruitful for the kind of scientific knowledge that would have practical application in the circumstances, and, on the other, it made possible the application of knowledge already possessed. Beyond doubt, such work is a moment in the continuous transformation and development of the material foundations of that society. But the conception of theory was absolutized, as though it were grounded in the inner nature of knowledge as such or justified in some other ahistorical way, and thus it became a reified, ideological category.

As a matter of fact, the fruitfulness of newly discovered factual connections for the renewal of existent knowledge, and the application of such knowledge to the facts, do not derive from purely logical or methodological sources but can rather be understood only in the context of real social processes. When a discovery occasions the restructuring of current ideas, this is not due exclusively to logical considerations or, more par-

8. Max Weber, "Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences I: A Critique of Eduard Meyer's Methodological Views," in *Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences*, ed. and tr. by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe: Free Press, 1949), pp. 113-63.

ticularly, to the contradiction between the discovery and particular elements in current views. If this were the only real issue, one could always think up further hypotheses by which one could avoid changing the theory as a whole. That new views in fact win out is due to concrete historical circumstances, even if the scientist himself may be determined to change his views only by immanent motives. Modern theoreticians of knowledge do not deny the importance of historical circumstance, even if among the most influential nonscientific factors they assign more importance to genius and accident than to social conditions.

In the seventeenth century, for example, men began to resolve the difficulties into which traditional astronomy had fallen, no longer by supplemental constructions but by adopting the Copernican system in its place. This change was not due to the logical properties alone of the Copernican theory, for example its greater simplicity. If these properties were seen as advantages, this very fact points beyond itself to the fundamental characteristics of social action at that time. That Copernicanism, hardly mentioned in the sixteenth century, should now become a revolutionary force is part of the larger historical process by which mechanistic thinking came to prevail.⁹

But the influence of the current social situation on change in scientific structures is not limited to comprehensive theories like the Copernican system. It is also true for special research problems in everyday life. Sheer logic alone will not tell us whether the discovery of new varieties in particular areas of inorganic or organic nature, whether in the chemical laboratory or in paleontological research, will be the occasion for modifying old classifications or for elaborating new ones. The theoreticians of knowledge usually rely here on a concept of theology which only in appearance is immanent to their science. Whether and how new definitions are purposefully drawn up depends in fact not only on the simplicity and consistency of the system but also, among other things, on the directions and goals of

9. A description of this development may be found in Henryk Grossmann, "Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der mechanischen Philosophie und die Manufaktur," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 4 (1935), 161ff.

research. These last, however, are not self-explanatory nor are they, in the last analysis, a matter of insight.

As the influence of the subject matter on the theory, so also the application of the theory to the subject matter is not only an intrascientific process but a social one as well. Bringing hypotheses to bear on facts is an activity that goes on, ultimately, not in the savant's head but in industry. Such rules as that coal-tar under certain conditions becomes colored or that nitroglycerin, saltpeter, and other materials have great explosive force, are accumulated knowledge which is really applied to reality in the great industrial factories.

Among the various philosophical schools it is the Positivists and the Pragmatists who apparently pay most attention to the connections between theoretical work and the social life-process. These schools consider the prevision and usefulness of results to be a scientific task. But in reality this sense of practical purpose, this belief in the social value of his calling is a purely private conviction of the scholar. He may just as well believe in an independent, "suprasocial," detached knowledge as in the social importance of his expertise: such opposed interpretations do not influence his real activity in the slightest. The scholar and his science are incorporated into the apparatus of society; his achievements are a factor in the conservation and continuous renewal of the existing state of affairs, no matter what fine names he gives to what he does. His knowledge and results, it is expected, will correspond to their proper "concept," that is, they must constitute theory in the sense described above. In the social division of labor the savant's role is to integrate facts into conceptual frameworks and to keep the latter up-to-date so that he himself and all who use them may be masters of the widest possible range of facts. Experiment has the scientific role of establishing facts in such a way that they fit into theory as currently accepted. The factual material or subject matter is provided from without; science sees to its formulation in clear and comprehensible terms, so that men may be able to use the knowledge as they wish. The reception, transformation, and rationalization of factual knowledge is the scholar's special

form of spontaneity, namely theoretical activity, whether there is question of as detailed as possible an exposition of a subject as in history and the descriptive branches of other special disciplines, or of the synthesis of masses of data and the attainment of general rules as in physics. The dualism of thought and being, understanding and perception is second nature to the scientist.

The traditional idea of theory is based on scientific activity as carried on within the division of labor at a particular stage in the latter's development. It corresponds to the activity of the scholar which takes place alongside all the other activities of a society but in no immediately clear connection with them. In this view of theory, therefore, the real social function of science is not made manifest; it speaks not of what theory means in human life, but only of what it means in the isolated sphere in which for historical reasons it comes into existence. Yet as a matter of fact the life of society is the result of all the work done in the various sectors of production. Even if therefore the division of labor in the capitalist system functions but poorly, its branches, including science, do not become for that reason self-sufficient and independent. They are particular instances of the way in which society comes to grips with nature and maintains its own inherited form. They are moments in the social process of production, even if they be almost or entirely unproductive in the narrower sense. Neither the structures of industrial and agrarian production nor the separation of the so-called guiding and executory functions, services, and works, or of intellectual and manual operations are eternal or natural states of affairs. They emerge rather from the mode of production practiced in particular forms of society. The seeming self-sufficiency enjoyed by work processes whose course is supposedly determined by the very nature of the object corresponds to the seeming freedom of the economic subject in bourgeois society. The latter believe they are acting according to personal determinations, whereas in fact even in their most complicated calculations they but exemplify the working of an incalculable social mechanism.

The false consciousness of the bourgeois savant in the liberal era comes to light in very diverse philosophical systems. It found an especially significant expression at the turn of the century in the Neo-Kantianism of the Marburg school. Particular traits in the theoretical activity of the specialist are here elevated to the rank of universal categories, of instances of the world-mind, the eternal "Logos." More accurately, decisive elements in social life are reduced to the theoretical activity of the savant. Thus "the power of knowledge" is called "the power of creative origination." "Production" means the "creative sovereignty of thought." For any datum it must be possible to deduce all its determinations from theoretical systems and ultimately from mathematics; thus all finite magnitudes may be derived from the concept of the infinitely small by way of the infinitesimal calculus, and this process is precisely their "production." The ideal to be striven for is a unitary system of science which, in the sense just described, will be all-powerful. Since everything about the object is reduced to conceptual determinations, the end-result of such theoretical work is that nothing is to be regarded as material and stable. The determinative, ordering, unifying function is the sole foundation for all else, and towards it all human effort is directed. Production is production of unity, and production is itself the product.¹⁰ Progress in awareness of freedom really means, according to this logic, that the paltry snippet of reality which the savant encounters finds ever more adequate expression in the form of differential quotients. In reality, the scientific calling is only one, nonindependent, element in the work or historical activity of man, but in such a philosophy the former replaces the latter. To the extent that it conceives of reason as actually determining the course of events in a future society, such a hypostatization of Logos as reality is also a camouflaged utopia. In fact, however, the self-knowledge of present-day man is not a mathematical knowledge of nature which claims to be the eternal Logos, but a critical

10. Cf. Hermann Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (Berlin, 1914) pp. 23ff.

theory of society as it is, a theory dominated at every turn by a concern for reasonable conditions of life.

The isolated consideration of particular activities and branches of activity, along with their contents and objects, requires for its validity an accompanying concrete awareness of its own limitations. A conception is needed which overcomes the one-sidedness that necessarily arises when limited intellectual processes are detached from their matrix in the total activity of society. In the idea of theory which the scholar inevitably reaches when working purely within his own discipline, the relation between fact and conceptual ordering of fact offers a point of departure for such a corrective conception. The prevailing theory of knowledge has, of course, recognized the problem which this relation raises. The point is constantly stressed that identical objects provide for one discipline problems to be resolved only in some distant future, while in another discipline they are accepted as simple facts. Connections which provide physics with research problems are taken for granted in biology. Within biology, physiological processes raise problems while psychological processes do not. The social sciences take human and nonhuman nature in its entirety as given and are concerned only with how relationships are established between man and nature and between man and man. However, an awareness of this relativity, immanent in bourgeois science, in the relationship between theoretical thought and facts, is not enough to bring the concept of theory to a new stage of development. What is needed is a radical reconsideration, not of the scientist alone, but of the knowing individual as such.

The whole perceptible world as present to a member of bourgeois society and as interpreted within a traditional worldview which is in continuous interaction with that given world, is seen by the perceiver as a sum-total of facts; it is there and must be accepted. The classificatory thinking of each individual is one of those social reactions by which men try to adapt to reality in a way that best meets their needs. But there is at this point an essential difference between the individual and society.

The world which is given to the individual and which he must accept and take into account is, in its present and continuing form, a product of the activity of society as a whole. The objects we perceive in our surroundings—cities, villages, fields, and woods—bear the mark of having been worked on by man. It is not only in clothing and appearance, in outward form and emotional make-up that men are the product of history. Even the way they see and hear is inseparable from the social life-process as it has evolved over the millennia. The facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ. Both are not simply natural; they are shaped by human activity, and yet the individual perceives himself as receptive and passive in the act of perception. The opposition of passivity and activity, which appears in knowledge theory as a dualism of sense-perception and understanding, does not hold for society, however, in the same measure as for the individual. The individual sees himself as passive and dependent, but society, though made up of individuals, is an active subject, even if a nonconscious one and, to that extent, a subject only in an improper sense. This difference in the existence of man and society is an expression of the cleavage which has up to now affected the historical forms of social life. The existence of society has either been founded directly on oppression or been the blind outcome of conflicting forces, but in any event not the result of conscious spontaneity on the part of free individuals. Therefore the meaning of "activity" and "passivity" changes according as these concepts are applied to society or to individual. In the bourgeois economic mode the activity of society is blind and concrete, that of individuals abstract and conscious.

Human production also always has an element of planning to it. To the extent then that the facts which the individual and his theory encounter are socially produced, there must be rationality in them, even if in a restricted sense. But social action always involves, in addition, available knowledge and its application. The perceived fact is therefore co-determined by

human ideas and concepts, even before its conscious theoretical elaboration by the knowing individual. Nor are we to think here only of experiments in natural science. The so-called purity of objective event to be achieved by the experimental procedure is, of course, obviously connected with technological conditions, and the connection of these in turn with the material process of production is evident. But it is easy here to confuse two questions: the question of the mediation of the factual through the activity of society as a whole, and the question of the influence of the measuring instrument, that is, of a particular action, upon the object being observed. The latter problem, which continually plagues physics, is no more closely connected with the problem that concerns us here than is the problem of perception generally, including perception in everyday life. Man's physiological apparatus for sensation itself largely anticipates the order followed in physical experiment. As man reflectively records reality, he separates and rejoins pieces of it, and concentrates on some particulars while failing to notice others. This process is just as much a result of the modern mode of production, as the perception of a man in a tribe of primitive hunters and fishers is the result of the conditions of his existence (as well, of course, as of the object of perception).

In this context the proposition that tools are prolongations of human organs can be inverted to state that the organs are also prolongations of the tools. In the higher stages of civilization conscious human action unconsciously determines not only the subjective side of perception but in larger degree the object as well. The sensible world which a member of industrial society sees about him every day bears the marks of deliberate work: tenement houses, factories, cotton, cattle for slaughter, men, and, in addition, not only objects such as subway trains, delivery trucks, autos, and airplanes, but the movements in the course of which they are perceived. The distinction within this complex totality between what belongs to unconscious nature and what to the action of man in society cannot be drawn in concrete detail. Even where there is question of experiencing natural objects as such, their very naturalness is determined by con-

trast with the social world and, to that extent, depends upon the latter.

The individual, however, receives sensible reality, as a simple sequence of facts, into his world of ordered concepts. The latter too, though their context changes, have developed along with the life process of society. Thus, though the ordering of reality by understanding and the passing of judgment on objects usually take place as a foregone conclusion and with surprising unanimity among members of a given society, yet the harmony between perception and traditional thought and among the monads or individual subjects of knowledge is not a metaphysical accident. The power of healthy human understanding, or common sense, for which there are no mysteries, as well as the general acceptance of identical views in areas not directly connected with class conflicts, as for example in the natural sciences, are conditioned by the fact that the world of objects to be judged is in large measure produced by an activity that is itself determined by the very ideas which help the individual to recognize that world and to grasp it conceptually.

In Kant's philosophy this state of affairs is expressed in idealist form. The doctrine of purely passive sensation and active understanding suggests to him the question of whence the understanding derives its assured expectation that the manifold given in sensation will always obey the rules of the understanding. He explicitly rejects the thesis of a pre-established harmony, "a kind of preformation-system of pure reason," in which reason has innate and sure rules with which objects are in accord.¹¹ His own explanation is that sensible appearances are already formed by the transcendental subject, that is, through the activity of reason, when they are received by perception and consciously judged.¹² In the most important chapters of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant tried to give a more detailed explanation of the "transcendental affinity" or subjective de-

11. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 167, tr. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933²), p. 175.

12. Cf. Kant, *op. cit.*, A 110, pp. 137-38.

termination of sensible material, a process of which the individual is unaware.

The difficulty and obscurity which, by Kant's own admission, mark the sections on the deduction and schematism of the pure concepts of understanding may be connected with the fact that Kant imagines the supra-individual activity, of which the individual is unaware, only in the idealist form of a consciousness-in-itself, that is a purely intellectual source. In accordance with the theoretical vision available in his day, he does not see reality as product of a society's work, work which taken as a whole is chaotic, but at the individual level is purposeful. Where Hegel glimpses the cunning of a reason that is nonetheless world-historical and objective, Kant sees "an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze."¹⁸

At least Kant understood that behind the discrepancy between fact and theory which the scholar experiences in his professional work, there lies a deeper unity, namely, the general subjectivity upon which individual knowledge depends. The activity of society thus appears to be a transcendental power, that is, the sum-total of spiritual factors. However, Kant's claim that its reality is sunk in obscurity, that is, that it is irrational despite all its rationality, is not without its kernel of truth. The bourgeois type of economy, despite all the ingenuity of the competing individuals within it, is not governed by any plan; it is not consciously directed to a general goal; the life of society as a whole proceeds from this economy only at the cost of excessive friction, in a stunted form, and almost, as it were, accidentally. The internal difficulties in the supreme concepts of Kantian philosophy, especially the ego of transcendental subjectivity, pure or original apperception, and consciousness-in-itself, show the depth and honesty of his thinking. The two-sidedness of these Kantian concepts, that is, their supreme unity and purposefulness, on the one hand, and their obscurity, unknownness, and

13. Kant, *op. cit.*, B 181, p. 183.

impenetrability, on the other, reflects exactly the contradiction-filled form of human activity in the modern period. The collaboration of men in society is the mode of existence which reason urges upon them, and so they do apply their powers and thus confirm their own rationality. But at the same time their work and its results are alienated from them, and the whole process with all its waste of work-power and human life, and with its wars and all its senseless wretchedness, seems to be an unchangeable force of nature, a fate beyond man's control.

In Kant's theoretical philosophy, in his analysis of knowledge, this contradiction is preserved. The unresolved problem of the relation between activity and passivity, *a priori* and sense data, philosophy and psychology, is therefore not due to purely subjective insufficiency but is objectively necessary. Hegel discovered and developed these contradictions, but finally resolved them in a higher intellectual realm. Kant claimed that there existed a universal subject which, however, he could not quite describe. Hegel escaped this embarrassment by postulating the absolute spirit as the most real thing of all. According to him, the universal has already adequately evolved itself and is identical with all that happens. Reason need no longer stand over against itself in purely critical fashion; in Hegel reason has become affirmative, even before reality itself is affirmed as rational. But, confronted with the persisting contradictions in human existence and with the impotence of individuals in face of situations they have themselves brought about, the Hegelian solution seems a purely private assertion, a personal peace treaty between the philosopher and an inhuman world.

The integration of facts into existing conceptual systems and the revision of facts through simplification or elimination of contradictions are, as we have indicated, part of general social activity. Since society is divided into groups and classes, it is understandable that theoretical structures should be related to the general activity of society in different ways according as the authors of such structures belong to one or other social class. Thus when the bourgeois class was first coming into being in a feudal society, the purely scientific theory which arose with it

tended chiefly to the break-up of the status quo and attacked the old form of activity. Under liberalism this theory was accepted by the prevailing human type. Today, development is determined much less by average men who compete with each other in improving the material apparatus of production and its products, than by conflicting national and international cliques of leaders at the various levels of command in the economy and the State. In so far as theoretical thought is not related to highly specialized purposes connected with these conflicts, especially war and the industry that supports it, interest in theory has waned. Less energy is being expended on forming and developing the capacity of thought without regard to how it is to be applied.

These distinctions, to which others might be added, do not at all change the fact that a positive social function is exercised by theory in its traditional form: that is, the critical examination of data with the aid of an inherited apparatus of concepts and judgments which is still operative in even the simplest minds, as well as the interaction between facts and theoretical forms that goes on in daily professional activity. In this intellectual work the needs and goals, the experiences and skills, the customs and tendencies of the contemporary form of human existence have all played their part. Like a material tool of production, it represents potentially an element not only of the contemporary cultural totality but of a more just, more differentiated, more harmoniously organized one as well. To the extent that this theoretical thinking does not deliberately lend itself to concerns which are external and alien to the object but truly concentrates on the problems which it meets in the wake of technical development and, in this connection, itself turns up new problems and transforms old concepts where necessary—to this extent it may rightly regard the technological and industrial accomplishments of the bourgeois era as its own justification and be confident of its own value.

This kind of theoretical thinking considers itself to belong to the realm of the hypothetical, of course, not of certainty. But the hypothetical character is compensated for in many ways. The

uncertainty involved is no greater than it need be, given the intellectual and technological means at hand at any given time, with their proven general usefulness. The very elaboration of such hypotheses, however small their probability may be, is itself a socially necessary and valuable accomplishment which is not at all hypothetical. The construction of hypotheses and theoretical activity in general are a kind of work which in present social circumstances has a real usefulness; that is, there is a demand for it. In so far as it is underpaid or even neglected, it only shares the fate of other concrete and possibly useful kinds of work which have gotten lost in the present economy. Yet these very kinds of work presuppose the present economy and are part of the total economic process as it exists under specific historical conditions. This has nothing to do with the question of whether scientific labor is itself productive in the narrow sense of the term. In the present order of things there is a demand for an immense number of so-called scientific creations; they are honored in very varying ways, and part of the goods emerging from strictly productive work is handed over for them, without anything at all being thereby settled about their own productivity. Even the emptiness of certain areas of university activity, as well as all the idle ingenuity and the construction of metaphysical and nonmetaphysical ideologies have their social significance, no less than do other needs arising out of social conflicts. However, they do not therefore further the interests of any important large sector of society in the present age. An activity which in its existing forms contributes to the being of society need not be productive at all, that is be a money-making enterprise. Nevertheless it can belong to the existing order and help make it possible, as is certainly the case with specialized science.

We must go on now to add that there is a human activity which has society itself for its object.¹⁴ The aim of this activity

14. In the following pages this activity is called "critical" activity. The term is used here less in the sense it has in the idealist critique of pure reason than in the sense it has in the dialectical critique of political economy. It points to an essential aspect of the dialectical theory of society.

is not simply to eliminate one or other abuse, for it regards such abuses as necessarily connected with the way in which the social structure is organized. Although it itself emerges from the social structure, its purpose is not, either in its conscious intention or in its objective significance, the better functioning of any element in the structure. On the contrary, it is suspicious of the very categories of better, useful, appropriate, productive, and valuable, as these are understood in the present order, and refuses to take them as nonscientific presuppositions about which one can do nothing. The individual as a rule must simply accept the basic conditions of his existence as given and strive to fulfill them; he finds his satisfaction and praise in accomplishing as well as he can the tasks connected with his place in society and in courageously doing his duty despite all the sharp criticism he may choose to exercise in particular matters. But the critical attitude of which we are speaking is wholly distrustful of the rules of conduct with which society as presently constituted provides each of its members. The separation between individual and society in virtue of which the individual accepts as natural the limits prescribed for his activity is relativized in critical theory. The latter considers the overall framework which is conditioned by the blind interaction of individual activities (that is, the existent division of labor and the class distinctions) to be a function which originates in human action and therefore is a possible object of planful decision and rational determination of goals.

The two-sided character of the social totality in its present form becomes, for men who adopt the critical attitude, a conscious opposition. In recognizing the present form of economy and the whole culture which it generates to be the product of human work as well as the organization which mankind was capable of and has provided for itself in the present era, these men identify themselves with this totality and conceive it as will and reason. It is their own world. At the same time, however, they experience the fact that society is comparable to nonhuman natural processes, to pure mechanisms, because cultural forms

which are supported by war and oppression are not the creations of a unified, self-conscious will. That world is not their own but the world of capital.

Previous history thus cannot really be understood; only the individuals and specific groups in it are intelligible, and even these not totally, since their internal dependence on an inhuman society means that even in their conscious action such individuals and groups are still in good measure mechanical functions. The identification, then, of men of critical mind with their society is marked by tension, and the tension characterizes all the concepts of the critical way of thinking. Thus, such thinkers interpret the economic categories of work, value, and productivity exactly as they are interpreted in the existing order, and they regard any other interpretation as pure idealism. But at the same time they consider it rank dishonesty simply to accept the interpretation; the critical acceptance of the categories which rule social life contains simultaneously their condemnation. This dialectical character of the self-interpretation of contemporary man is what, in the last analysis, also causes the obscurity of the Kantian critique of reason. Reason cannot become transparent to itself as long as men act as members of an organism which lacks reason. Organism as a naturally developing and declining unity cannot be a sort of model for society, but only a form of deadened existence from which society must emancipate itself. An attitude which aims at such an emancipation and at an alteration of society as a whole might well be of service in theoretical work carried on within reality as presently ordered. But it lacks the pragmatic character which attaches to traditional thought as a socially useful professional activity.

In traditional theoretical thinking, the genesis of particular objective facts, the practical application of the conceptual systems by which it grasps the facts, and the role of such systems in action, are all taken to be external to the theoretical thinking itself. This alienation, which finds expression in philosophical terminology as the separation of value and research, knowledge and action, and other polarities, protects the savant from the tensions we have indicated and provides an assured framework

for his activity. Yet a kind of thinking which does not accept this framework seems to have the ground taken out from under it. If a theoretical procedure does not take the form of determining objective facts with the help of the simplest and most differentiated conceptual systems available, what can it be but an aimless intellectual game, half conceptual poetry, half impotent expression of states of mind? The investigation into the social conditioning of facts and theories may indeed be a research problem, perhaps even a whole field for theoretical work, but how can such studies be radically different from other specialized efforts? Research into ideologies, or sociology of knowledge, which has been taken over from the critical theory of society and established as a special discipline, is not opposed either in its aim or in its other ambitions to the usual activities that go on within classificatory science.

In this reaction to critical theory, the self-awareness of thought as such is reduced to the discovery of the relationship that exists between intellectual positions and their social location. Yet the structure of the critical attitude, inasmuch as its intentions go beyond prevailing social ways of acting, is no more closely related to social disciplines thus conceived than it is to natural science. Its opposition to the traditional concept of theory springs in general from a difference not so much of objects as of subjects. For men of the critical mind, the facts, as they emerge from the work of society, are not extrinsic in the same degree as they are for the savant or for members of other professions who all think like little savants. The latter look towards a new kind of organization of work. But in so far as the objective realities given in perception are conceived as products which in principle should be under human control and, in the future at least, will in fact come under it, these realities lose the character of pure factuality.

The scholarly specialist "as" scientist regards social reality and its products as extrinsic to him, and "as" citizen exercises his interest in them through political articles, membership in political parties or social service organizations, and participation in elections. But he does not unify these two activities, and

his other activities as well, except, at best, by psychological interpretation. Critical thinking, on the contrary, is motivated today by the effort really to transcend the tension and to abolish the opposition between the individual's purposefulness, spontaneity, and rationality, and those work-process relationships on which society is built. Critical thought has a concept of man as in conflict with himself until this opposition is removed. If activity governed by reason is proper to man, then existent social practice, which forms the individual's life down to its least details, is inhuman, and this inhumanity affects everything that goes on in the society. There will always be something that is extrinsic to man's intellectual and material activity, namely nature as the totality of as yet unmastered elements with which society must deal. But when situations which really depend on man alone, the relationships of men in their work, and the course of man's own history are also accounted part of "nature," the resultant extrinsicality is not only not a suprahistorical eternal category (even pure nature in the sense described is not that), but it is a sign of contemptible weakness. To surrender to such weakness is nonhuman and irrational.

Bourgeois thought is so constituted that in reflection on the subject which exercises such thought a logical necessity forces it to recognize an ego which imagines itself to be autonomous. Bourgeois thought is essentially abstract, and its principle is an individuality which inflatedly believes itself to be the ground of the world or even to be the world without qualification, an individuality separated off from events. The direct contrary of such an outlook is the attitude which holds the individual to be the unproblematic expression of an already constituted society; an example would be a nationalist ideology. Here the rhetorical "we" is taken seriously; speech is accepted as the organ of the community. In the internally rent society of our day, such thinking, except in social questions, sees nonexistent unanimities and is illusory.

Critical thought and its theory are opposed to both the types of thinking just described. Critical thinking is the function

neither of the isolated individual nor of a sum-total of individuals. Its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature. The subject is no mathematical point like the ego of bourgeois philosophy; his activity is the construction of the social present. Furthermore, the thinking subject is not the place where knowledge and object coincide, nor consequently the starting-point for attaining absolute knowledge. Such an illusion about the thinking subject, under which idealism has lived since Descartes, is ideology in the strict sense, for in it the limited freedom of the bourgeois individual puts on the illusory form of perfect freedom and autonomy. As a matter of fact, however, in a society which is untransparent and without self-awareness the ego, whether active simply as thinker or active in other ways as well, is unsure of itself too. In reflection on man, subject and object are sundered; their identity lies in the future, not in the present. The method leading to such an identification may be called explanation in Cartesian language, but in genuinely critical thought explanation signifies not only a logical process but a concrete historical one as well. In the course of it both the social structure as a whole and the relation of the theoretician to society are altered, that is both the subject and the role of thought are changed. The acceptance of an essential unchangeableness between subject, theory, and object thus distinguishes the Cartesian conception from every kind of dialectical logic.

How is critical thought related to experience? One might maintain that if such thought were not simply to classify but also to determine for itself the goals which classification serves, in other words its own fundamental direction, it would remain locked up within itself, as happened to idealist philosophy. If it did not take refuge in utopian fantasy, it would be reduced to the formalistic fighting of sham battles. The attempt legitimately to determine practical goals by thinking must always fail. If thought were not content with the role given to it in

existent society, if it were not to engage in theory in the traditional sense of the word, it would necessarily have to return to illusions long since laid bare.

The fault in such reflections as these on the role of thought is that thinking is understood in a detachedly departmentalized and therefore spiritualist way, as it is today under existing conditions of the division of labor. In society as it is, the power of thought has never controlled itself but has always functioned as a nonindependent moment in the work process, and the latter has its own orientation and tendency. The work process enhances and develops human life through the conflicting movement of progressive and retrogressive periods. In the historical form in which society has existed, however, the full measure of goods produced for man's enjoyment has, at any particular stage, been given directly only to a small group of men. Such a state of affairs has found expression in thought, too, and left its mark on philosophy and religion. But from the beginning the desire to bring the same enjoyment to the majority has stirred in the depths of men's hearts; despite all the material appropriateness of class organization, each of its forms has finally proved inadequate. Slaves, vassals, and citizens have cast off their yoke. This desire, too, has found expression in cultural creations. Now, inasmuch as every individual in modern times has been required to make his own the purposes of society as a whole and to recognize these in society, there is the possibility that men would become aware of and concentrate their attention upon the path which the social work process has taken without any definite theory behind it, as a result of disparate forces interacting, and with the despair of the masses acting as a decisive factor at major turning points. Thought does not spin such a possibility out of itself but rather becomes aware of its own proper function. In the course of history men have come to know their own activity and thus to recognize the contradiction that marks their existence. The bourgeois economy was concerned that the individual should maintain the life of society by taking care of his own personal happiness. Such an economy has within it, however, a dynamism which results in a fantastic

degree of power for some, such as reminds us of the old Asiatic dynasties, and in material and intellectual weakness for many others. The original fruitfulness of the bourgeois organization of the life process is thus transformed into a paralyzing barrenness, and men by their own toil keep in existence a reality which enslaves them in ever greater degree.

Yet, as far as the role of experience is concerned, there is a difference between traditional and critical theory. The viewpoints which the latter derives from historical analysis as the goals of human activity, especially the idea of a reasonable organization of society that will meet the needs of the whole community, are immanent in human work but are not correctly grasped by individuals or by the common mind. A certain concern is also required if these tendencies are to be perceived and expressed. According to Marx and Engels such a concern is necessarily generated in the proletariat. Because of its situation in modern society the proletariat experiences the connection between work which puts ever more powerful instruments into men's hands in their struggle with nature, and the continuous renewal of an outmoded social organization. Unemployment, economic crises, militarization, terrorist regimes—in a word, the whole condition of the masses—are not due, for example, to limited technological possibilities, as might have been the case in earlier periods, but to the circumstances of production which are no longer suitable to our time. The application of all intellectual and physical means for the mastery of nature is hindered because in the prevailing circumstances these means are entrusted to special, mutually opposed interests. Production is not geared to the life of the whole community while heeding also the claims of individuals; it is geared to the power-backed claims of individuals while being concerned hardly at all with the life of the community. This is the inevitable result, in the present property system, of the principle that it is enough for individuals to look out for themselves.

But it must be added that even the situation of the proletariat is, in this society, no guarantee of correct knowledge. The proletariat may indeed have experience of meaninglessness in the

form of continuing and increasing wretchedness and injustice in its own life. Yet this awareness is prevented from becoming a social force by the differentiation of social structure which is still imposed on the proletariat from above and by the opposition between personal class interests which is transcended only at very special moments. Even to the proletariat the world superficially seems quite different than it really is. Even an outlook which could grasp that no opposition really exists between the proletariat's own true interests and those of society as a whole, and would therefore derive its principles of action from the thoughts and feelings of the masses, would fall into slavish dependence on the status quo. The intellectual is satisfied to proclaim with reverent admiration the creative strength of the proletariat and finds satisfaction in adapting himself to it and in canonizing it. He fails to see that such an evasion of theoretical effort (which the passivity of his own thinking spares him) and of temporary opposition to the masses (which active theoretical effort on his part might force upon him) only makes the masses blinder and weaker than they need be. His own thinking should in fact be a critical, promotive factor in the development of the masses. When he wholly accepts the present psychological state of that class which, objectively considered, embodies the power to change society, he has the happy feeling of being linked with an immense force and enjoys a professional optimism. When the optimism is shattered in periods of crushing defeat, many intellectuals risk falling into a pessimism about society and a nihilism which are just as ungrounded as their exaggerated optimism had been. They cannot bear the thought that the kind of thinking which is most topical, which has the deepest grasp of the historical situation, and is most pregnant with the future, must at certain times isolate its subject and throw him back upon himself.

If critical theory consisted essentially in formulations of the feelings and ideas of one class at any given moment, it would not be structurally different from the special branches of science. It would be engaged in describing the psychological contents typical of certain social groups; it would be social psychology. The

relation of being to consciousness is different in different classes of society. If we take seriously the ideas by which the bourgeoisie explains its own order—free exchange, free competition, harmony of interests, and so on—and if we follow them to their logical conclusion, they manifest their inner contradiction and therewith their real opposition to the bourgeois order. The simple description of bourgeois self-awareness thus does not give us the truth about this class of men. Similarly, a systematic presentation of the contents of proletarian consciousness cannot provide a true picture of proletarian existence and interests. It would yield only an application of traditional theory to a specific problem, and not the intellectual side of the historical process of proletarian emancipation. The same would be true if one were to limit oneself to appraising and making known the ideas not of the proletariat in general but of some more advanced sector of the proletariat, for example a party or its leadership. The real task set here would be the registering and classifying of facts with the help of the most suitable conceptual apparatus, and the theoretician's ultimate goal would be the prediction of future socio-psychological phenomena. Thought and the formation of theory would be one thing and its object, the proletariat, another.

If, however, the theoretician and his specific object are seen as forming a dynamic unity with the oppressed class, so that his presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within it to stimulate change, then his real function emerges. The course of the conflict between the advanced sectors of the class and the individuals who speak out the truth concerning it, as well as of the conflict between the most advanced sectors with their theoreticians and the rest of the class, is to be understood as a process of interactions in which awareness comes to flower along with its liberating but also its aggressive forces which incite while also requiring discipline. The sharpness of the conflict shows in the ever present possibility of tension between the theoretician and the class which his thinking is to serve. The unity of the social forces which promise liberation is at the

same time their distinction (in Hegel's sense); it exists only as a conflict which continually threatens the subjects caught up in it. This truth becomes clearly evident in the person of the theoretician; he exercises an aggressive critique not only against the conscious defenders of the status quo but also against distracting, conformist, or utopian tendencies within his own household.

The traditional type of theory, one side of which finds expression in formal logic, is in its present form part of the production process with its division of labor. Since society must come to grips with nature in future ages as well, this intellectual technology will not become irrelevant but on the contrary is to be developed as fully as possible. But the kind of theory which is an element in action leading to new social forms is not a cog in an already existent mechanism. Even if victory or defeat provides a vague analogy to the confirmation or failure of scientific hypotheses, the theoretician who sets himself up in opposition to society as it is does not have the consolidation that such hypotheses are part of his professional work. He cannot sing for himself the hymn of praise which Poincaré sang to the enrichment deriving even from hypotheses that must be rejected.¹⁵ His profession is the struggle of which his own thinking is a part and not something self-sufficient and separable from the struggle. Of course, many elements of theory in the usual sense enter into his work: the knowledge and prognosis of relatively isolated facts, scientific judgments, the elaboration of problems which differ from those of other theoreticians because of his specific interests but nonetheless manifest the same logical form.

Traditional theory may take a number of things for granted: its positive role in a functioning society, an admittedly indirect and obscure relation to the satisfaction of general needs, and participation in the self-renewing life process. But all these exigencies about which science need not trouble itself because their fulfillment is rewarded and confirmed by the social position of the scientist, are called into question in critical thought. The goal at which the latter aims, namely the rational state of so-

15. Poincaré, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-51.

ciety, is forced upon him by present distress. The theory which projects such a solution to the distress does not labor in the service of an existing reality but only gives voice to the mystery of that reality. However cogently absurdities and errors may be uncovered at any given moment, however much every error may be shown to be taking its revenge, yet the overall tendency of the critical theoretical undertaking receives no sanction from so-called healthy human understanding; it has no custom on its side, even when it promises success. Theories, on the contrary, which are confirmed or disproved in the building of machines, military organizations, even successful motion pictures, look to a clearly distinguishable consumer group, even when like theoretical physics they are pursued independently of any application or consist only in a joyous and virtuous playing with mathematical symbols; society proves its humaneness by rewarding such activity.

But there are no such examples of the form consumption will take in that future with which critical thinking is concerned. Nonetheless the idea of a future society as a community of free men, which is possible through technical means already at hand, does have a content, and to it there must be fidelity amid all change. In the form of an insight that the dismemberment and irrationality of society can now be eliminated and how this is to be accomplished, this idea is constantly being renewed amid prevailing conditions. But the state of affairs upon which judgment is passed in this conception and the tendencies inciting men to build a rational society are not brought into existence outside thought by forces extrinsic to it, with thought then, as it were, accidentally recognizing its own reflection in the product of these forces. Rather, one and the same subject who wants a new state of affairs, a better reality, to come to pass, also brings it forth. Out of the obscure harmony between being and thought, understanding and sense perception, human needs and their satisfaction in today's economy, a harmony which seems an accident to the bourgeois eye, there will emerge in the future age the relation between rational intention and its realization. The struggle for the future provides but a fragmentary re-

flection of this relation, to the extent that a will which aims at the shaping of society as a whole is already consciously operative in the construction of the theory and practice which will lead to it. Despite all the discipline, justified by the need to win through, the community of those engaged in the struggle experiences something of the freedom and spontaneity which will mark the future. Where the unity of discipline and freedom has disappeared, the movement becomes a matter of interest only to its own bureaucracy, a play that already belongs to the repertory of modern history.

That the future being striven for should be a vital reality even in the present proves nothing, however. The conceptual systems of classificatory understanding, the categories into which dead and living things, social, psychological, and physical phenomena have all been absorbed together, the division of objects and of judgments on them into the various pigeonholes of the special areas of knowledge—all this makes up the apparatus of thought as it has proved and refined itself in connection with the real work process. This world of concepts makes up the consciousness of most men, and it has a basis to which its proponents can appeal. The concerns of critical thought, too, are those of most men, but they are not recognized to be such. The concepts which emerge under its influence are critical of the present. The Marxist categories of class, exploitation, surplus value, profit, pauperization, and breakdown are elements in a conceptual whole, and the meaning of this whole is to be sought not in the preservation of contemporary society but in its transformation into the right kind of society. Consequently, although critical theory at no point proceeds arbitrarily and in chance fashion, it appears, to prevailing modes of thought, to be subjective and speculative, one-sided and useless. Since it runs counter to prevailing habits of thought, which contribute to the persistence of the past and carry on the business of an outdated order of things (both past and outdated order guaranteeing a faction-ridden world), it appears to be biased and unjust.

Above all, however, critical theory has no material accom-

plishments to show for itself. The change which it seeks to bring about is not effected gradually, so that success even if slow might be steady. The growth in numbers of more or less clear-minded disciples, the influence of some among them on governments, the power position of parties which have a positive attitude towards this theory or at least do not outlaw it—all these are among the vicissitudes encountered in the struggle for a higher stage of man's life in community and are not found at the beginnings of the struggle. Such successes as these may even prove, later on, to have been only apparent victories and really blunders. Again: fertilization in agriculture, for example, or the application of a medical therapy may be far removed from ideal reality and yet accomplish something. Perhaps the theories underlying such technology may have to be refined, revised, or abolished in connection with specialized activity and with discoveries in other areas. Through such techniques, nonetheless, a certain amount of labor is saved in achieving results, and many an illness is healed or alleviated.¹⁶ But the first consequence of the theory which urges a transformation of society as a whole is only an intensification of the struggle with which the theory is connected.

Furthermore, although material improvements, originating in the increased powers of resistance of certain groups, are indirectly due to the critical theory, the groups in question are not sectors of society whose steady spread would finally bring the new society to pass. Such ideas mistake the fundamental difference between a fragmented society in which material and ideological power operates to maintain privileges and an association of free men in which each has the same possibility of self-development. Such an association is not an abstract utopia, for the possibility in question can be shown to be real even at the present stage of productive forces. But how many tendencies will actually lead to this association, how many transitional phases have been reached, how desirable and intrinsically val-

16. The same is true of insights in the areas of political economy and financial technology, and their use in economic policy.

uable individual preliminary stages may be, and what their historical importance is in relation to the idea—all this will be made clear only when the idea is brought to realization.

One thing which this way of thinking has in common with fantasy is that an image of the future which springs indeed from a deep understanding of the present determines men's thoughts and actions even in periods when the course of events seems to be leading far away from such a future and seems to justify every reaction except belief in fulfillment. It is not the arbitrariness and supposed independence of fantasy that is the common bond here, but its obstinacy. Within the most advanced group it is the theoretician who must have this obstinacy. The theoretician of the ruling class, perhaps after difficult beginnings, may reach a relatively assured position, but, on the other hand, the theoretician is also at times an enemy and criminal, at times a solitary utopian; even after his death the question of what he really was is not decided. The historical significance of his work is not self-evident; it rather depends on men speaking and acting in such a way as to justify it. It is not a finished and fixed historical creation.

The capacity for such acts of thought as are required in everyday action, social or scientific, has been developed in men by a realistic training over many centuries. Failure here leads to affliction, failure, and punishment. The intellectual modality to which we refer consists essentially in this, that the conditions for bringing about an effect which has always appeared in the same circumstances before are known and in the appropriate context are supplied. There is an object-lesson kind of instruction through good and bad experiences and through organized experiment. The issue here is direct individual self-preservation, and in bourgeois society men have the opportunity of developing a sense of this. Knowledge in this traditional sense, including every type of experience, is preserved in critical theory and practice. But in regard to the essential kind of change at which the critical theory aims, there can be no corresponding concrete perception of it until it actually comes about. If the proof of the

pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future. Comparison with similar historical events can be drawn only in a limited degree.

Constructive thinking, then, plays a more important role than empirical verification in this theory as a whole, in comparison with what goes on in the activity of common sense. This is one of the reasons why men who in particular scientific areas or in other professional activity are able to do extremely competent work, can show themselves quite limited and incompetent, despite good will, when it comes to questions concerning society as a whole. In all past periods when social change was on the agenda, people who thought "too much" were regarded as dangerous. This brings us to the problem of the general relation of the intelligentsia to society.

The theoretician whose business it is to hasten developments which will lead to a society without injustice can find himself in opposition to views prevailing even among the proletariat, as we said above. If such a conflict were not possible, there would be no need of a theory; those who need it would come upon it without help. The conflict does not necessarily have anything to do with the class to which the theoretician belongs; nor does it depend on the kind of income he has. Engels was a businessman. In professional sociology, which derives its concept of class not from a critique of the economy but from its own observations, the theoretician's social position is determined neither by the source of his income nor by the concrete content of his theory but by the formal element of education. The possibility of a wider vision, not the kind possessed by industrial magnates who know the world market and direct whole states from behind the scenes, but the kind possessed by university professors, middle-level civil servants, doctors, lawyers, and so forth, is what constitutes the "intelligentsia," that is, a special social or even suprasocial stratum.

It is the task of the critical theoretician to reduce the tension between his own insight and oppressed humanity in whose service he thinks. But in the sociological concept of which we

speaking detachment from all classes is an essential mark of the intelligentsia, a sort of sign of superiority of which it is proud.¹⁷ Such a neutral category corresponds to the abstract self-awareness typical of the savant. To the bourgeois consumer under liberalism knowledge meant knowledge that was useful in some circumstances or other, no matter what kind of knowledge might be in question; the sociology we speak of approaches knowledge in the same way at the theoretical level. Marx and Mises, Lenin and Liefmann, Jaurès and Jevons all come under the same sociological heading, unless the politicians are left out of the list and put down as potential students of the political scientists, sociologists, and philosophers who are the real men of knowledge. From them the politician is to learn to use "such and such a means" when he takes "such and such a stand"; he must learn whether the practical position he adopts can be implemented with logical consistency.¹⁸ A division of labor is established between men who in social conflicts affect the course of history and the social theoreticians who assign them their standpoint.

Critical theory is in contradiction to the formalistic concept of mind which underlies such an idea of the intelligentsia. According to this concept there is only one truth, and the positive attributes of honesty, internal consistency, reasonableness, and striving for peace, freedom, and happiness may not be attributed in the same sense to any other theory and practice. There is likewise no theory of society, even that of the sociologists concerned with general laws, that does not contain political motivations, and the truth of these must be decided not in supposedly neutral reflection but in personal thought and action, in concrete historical activity. Now, it is disconcerting that the intellectual should represent himself in this way, as though a difficult labor of thought, which he alone could accomplish,

17. The author is referring, here and in the following paragraphs, to Karl Mannheim's theory, in his sociology of knowledge, of the specific condition and outlook of the intelligentsia in the bourgeois era.

18. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, tr. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 151.

were the prime requirement if men were accurately to choose between revolutionary, liberal, and fascist ends and means. The situation has not been like that for many decades. The avant-garde in the political struggle need prudence, but not academic instruction on their so-called standpoint. Especially at a time when the forces of freedom in Europe are themselves disoriented and seeking to regroup themselves anew, when everything depends on nuances of position within their own movement, when indifference to substantive content, created by defeat, despair, and corrupt bureaucracy, threatens to overwhelm all the spontaneity, experience, and knowledge of the masses despite the heroic efforts of a few, a conception of the intelligentsia which claims to transcend party lines and is therefore abstract represents a view of problems that only hides the decisive questions.

Mind is liberal. It tolerates no external coercion, no revamping of its results to suit the will of one or other power. But on the other hand it is not cut loose from the life of society; it does not hang suspended over it. In so far as mind seeks autonomy or man's control over his own life no less than over nature, it is able to recognize this same tendency as a force operative in history. Considered in isolation, the recognition of such a tendency seems neutral; but just as mind is unable to recognize it without having first been stimulated and become concerned, neither can it make such recognition a generally accepted fact without a struggle. To that extent, mind is not liberal. Intellectual efforts which arise here and there without any conscious connection with a particular practical commitment but vary according to different academic or other tasks that promise success, intellectual efforts which take now this, now that for their field of concentration, may be useful in the service of one or other historical tendency. But for all their formal correctness (and what theoretical structure, however radically faulted, cannot fulfill the requirements of formal correctness?), they can also hinder and lead astray the development of the mind. The abstract sociological concept of an intelligentsia which is to have missionary functions is, by its structure, an hypostatization of specialized science. Critical theory is neither "deeply

rooted" like totalitarian propaganda nor "detached" like the liberalist intelligentsia.

Our consideration of the various functions of traditional and critical theory brings to light the difference in their logical structure. The primary propositions of traditional theory define universal concepts under which all facts in the field in question are to be subsumed; for example, the concept of a physical process in physics or an organic process in biology. In between primary propositions and facts there is the hierarchy of genera and species with their relations of subordination. Facts are individual cases, examples, or embodiments of classes. There are no differences due to time between the unities in the system. Electricity does not exist prior to an electrical field, nor a field prior to electricity, any more than wolf as such exists before or after particular wolves. As far as an individual knower is concerned there may be one or other temporal sequence among such relationships, but no such sequence exists in the objects themselves.

Furthermore, physics has also ceased to regard more general characteristics as causes or forces hidden in the concrete facts and to hypostatize these logical relationships; it is only sociology that is still unclear on this point. If new classes are added to the system or other changes are introduced, this is not usually regarded as proof that the determinations made earlier are necessarily too rigid and must turn out to be inadequate, for the relationship to the object or even the object itself may change without losing its identity. Changes are taken rather as an indication that our earlier knowledge was deficient or as a substitution of some aspects of an object for others, as a map, for example, may become dated because forests have been cut down, new cities built, or different borders drawn. In discursive logic, or logic of the understanding, the evolution of living beings is conceived in the same way. This person is now a child, then an adult; for such logic this can only mean that there is an abiding stable nucleus, "this person," who successively possesses the attributes of being a child and an adult. For positivism, of course, there is simply no identity: first there is a child, later

there is an adult, and the two are simply distinct complexes of facts. But this view cannot come to grips with the fact that a person changes and yet is identical with himself.

The critical theory of society also begins with abstract determinations; in dealing with the present era it begins with the characterization of an economy based on exchange.¹⁹ The concepts Marx uses, such as commodity, value, and money, can function as genera when, for example, concrete social relations are judged to be relations of exchange and when there is question of the commodity character of goods. But the theory is not satisfied to relate concepts of reality by way of hypotheses. The theory begins with an outline of the mechanism by which bourgeois society, after dismantling feudal regulations, the guild system, and vassalage, did not immediately fall apart under the pressure of its own anarchic principle but managed to survive. The regulatory effects of exchange are brought out on which bourgeois economy is founded. The conception of the interaction of society and nature, which is already exercising its influence here, as well as the idea of a unified period of society, of its self-preservation, and so on, spring from a radical analysis, guided by concern for the future, of the historical process. The relation of the primary conceptual interconnections to the world of facts is not essentially a relation of classes to instances. It is because of its inner dynamism that the exchange relationship, which the theory outlines, dominates social reality, as, for example, the assimilation of food largely dominates the organic life of plant and brute beast.

In critical theory, as in traditional theory, more specific elements must be introduced in order to move from fundamental structure to concrete reality. But such an intercalation of more detailed factors—for example the existence of large money reserves, the diffusion of these in sectors of society that are still precapitalist, foreign trade—is not accomplished by simple deduction as in theory that has been simplified for specialized

19. On the logical structure of the critique of political economy, cf. the essay "Zum Problem der Wahrheit," in Horkheimer *Kritische Theorie*, vol. I (Frankfurt, 1968). p 265ff

use. Instead, every step rests on knowledge of man and nature which is stored up in the sciences and in historical experience. This is obvious, of course, for the theory of industrial technology. But in other areas too a detailed knowledge of how men react is applied throughout the doctrinal developments to which we have been referring. For example, the statement that under certain conditions the lowest strata of society have the most children plays an important role in explaining how the bourgeois society built on exchange necessarily leads to capitalism with its army of industrial reserves and its crises. To give the psychological reasons behind the observed fact about the lower classes is left to traditional science.

Thus the critical theory of society begins with the idea of the simple exchange of commodities and defines the idea with the help of relatively universal concepts. It then moves further, using all knowledge available and taking suitable material from the research of others as well as from specialized research. Without denying its own principles as established by the special discipline of political economy, the theory shows how an exchange economy, given the condition of men (which, of course, changes under the very influence of such an economy), must necessarily lead to a heightening of those social tensions which in the present historical era lead in turn to wars and revolutions.

The necessity just mentioned, as well as the abstractness of the concepts, are both like and unlike the same phenomena in traditional theory. In both types of theory there is a strict deduction if the claim of validity for general definitions is shown to include a claim that certain factual relations will occur. For example, if you are dealing with electricity, such and such an event must occur because such and such characteristics belong to the very concept of electricity. To the extent that the critical theory of society deduces present conditions from the concept of simple exchange, it includes this kind of necessity, although it is relatively unimportant that the hypothetical form of statement be used. That is, the stress is not on the idea that wherever a society based on simple exchange prevails, capitalism must develop—although this is true. The stress is rather on the fact

that the existent capitalist society, which has spread all over the world from Europe and for which the theory is declared valid, derives from the basic relation of exchange. Even the classificatory judgments of specialized science have a fundamentally hypothetical character, and existential judgments are allowed, if at all, only in certain areas, namely the descriptive and practical parts of the discipline.²⁰ But the critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgment. To put it in broad terms, the theory says that the basic form of the historically given commodity economy on which modern history rests contains in itself the internal and external tensions of the modern era; it generates these tensions over and over again in an increasingly heightened form; and after a period of progress, development of human powers, and emancipation for the individual, after an enormous extension of human control over nature, it finally hinders further development and drives humanity into a new barbarism.

The individual steps within the theory are, at least in intention, as rigorous as the deductions in a specialized scientific theory; each is an element in the building up of that comprehensive existential judgment. Particular parts of the theory can be changed into general or specific hypothetical judgments and applied after the fashion of traditional theory; for example, the idea that increasing productivity usually devalues capital. In many areas of the theory there thus arise propositions the relation of which to reality is difficult to determine. From the fact that the representation of a unified object is true as a whole, it is possible to conclude only under special conditions the extent to which isolated parts of the representation can validly be applied, in their isolation, to isolated parts of the

20. There are connections between the forms of judgment and the historical periods. A brief indication will show what is meant. The classificatory judgment is typical of prebourgeois society: this is the way it is, and man can do nothing about it. The hypothetical and disjunctive forms belong especially to the bourgeois world: under certain circumstances this effect can take place; it is either thus or so. Critical theory maintains: it need not be so; man can change reality, and the necessary conditions for such change already exist.

object. The problem that arises as soon as particular propositions of the critical theory are applied to unique or recurring events in contemporary society has to do not with the truth of the theory but with how suitable the theory is for traditional kinds of intellectual operation with progressively extended goals. The special sciences, and especially contemporary political economics, are unable to derive practical profit from the fragmentary questions they discuss. But this incapacity is due neither to these sciences nor to critical theory alone, but to their specific role in relation to reality.

Even the critical theory, which stands in opposition to other theories, derives its statements about real relationships from basic universal concepts, as we have indicated, and therefore presents the relationships as necessary. Thus both kinds of theoretical structure are alike when it comes to logical necessity. But there is a difference as soon as we turn from logical to real necessity, the necessity involved in factual sequences. The biologist's statement that internal processes cause a plant to wither or that certain processes in the human organism lead to its destruction leaves untouched the question whether any influences can alter the character of these processes or change them totally. Even when an illness is said to be curable, the fact that the necessary curative measures are actually taken is regarded as purely extrinsic to the curability, a matter of technology and therefore nonessential as far as the theory as such is concerned. The necessity which rules society can be regarded as biological in the sense described, and the unique character of critical theory can therefore be called in question on the grounds that in biology as in other natural sciences particular sequences of events can be theoretically constructed just as they are in the critical theory of society. The development of society, in this view, would simply be a particular series of events, for the presentation of which conclusions from various other areas of research are used, just as a doctor in the course of an illness or a geologist dealing with the earth's prehistory has to apply various other disciplines. Society here would be the individual

reality which is evaluated on the basis of theories in the special sciences.

However many valid analogies there may be between these different intellectual endeavors, there is nonetheless a decisive difference when it comes to the relation of subject and object and therefore to the necessity of the event being judged. The object with which the scientific specialist deals is not affected at all by his own theory. Subject and object are kept strictly apart. Even if it turns out that at a later point in time the objective event is influenced by human intervention, to science this is just another fact. The objective occurrence is independent of the theory, and this independence is part of its necessity: the observer as such can effect no change in the object. A consciously critical attitude, however, is part of the development of society: the construing of the course of history as the necessary product of an economic mechanism simultaneously contains both a protest against this order of things, a protest generated by the order itself, and the idea of self-determination for the human race, that is the idea of a state of affairs in which man's actions no longer flow from a mechanism but from his own decision. The judgment passed on the necessity inherent in the previous course of events implies here a struggle to change it from a blind to a meaningful necessity. If we think of the object of the theory in separation from the theory, we falsify it and fall into quietism or conformism. Every part of the theory presupposes the critique of the existing order and the struggle against it along lines determined by the theory itself.

The theoreticians of knowledge who started with physics had reason, even if they were not wholly right, to condemn the confusion of cause and operation of forces and to substitute the idea of condition or function for the idea of cause. For the kind of thinking which simply registers facts there are always only series of phenomena, never forces and counterforces; but this, of course, says something about this kind of thinking, not about nature. If such a method is applied to society, the result is statistics and descriptive sociology, and these can be important for many purposes, even for critical theory.

For traditional science either everything is necessary or nothing is necessary, according as necessity means the independence of event from observer or the possibility of absolutely certain prediction. But to the extent that the subject does not totally isolate himself, even as thinker, from the social struggles of which he is a part and to the extent that he does not think of knowledge and action as distinct concepts, necessity acquires another meaning for him. If he encounters necessity which is not mastered by man, it takes shape either as that realm of nature which despite the far-reaching conquests still to come will never wholly vanish, or as the weakness of the society of previous ages in carrying on the struggle with nature in a consciously and purposefully organized way. Here we do have forces and counterforces. Both elements in this concept of necessity—the power of nature and the weakness of society—are interconnected and are based on the experienced effort of man to emancipate himself from coercion by nature and from those forms of social life and of the juridical, political, and cultural orders which have become a straitjacket for him. The struggle on two fronts, against nature and against society's weakness, is part of the effective striving for a future condition of things in which whatever man wills is also necessary and in which the necessity of the object becomes the necessity of a rationally mastered event.

The application, even the understanding, of these and other concepts in the critical mode of thought, demand activity and effort, an exercise of will power, in the knowing subject. The effort may be made, of course, to supply for a deficient understanding of these ideas and of how they are linked together, simply by greater attention to their logical implications and the elaboration of apparently more exact definitions, even of a "unified language," but the effort cannot succeed. The issue is not simply one of misunderstanding but of a real opposition of outlooks. The concept of necessity in the critical theory is itself a critical concept; it presupposes freedom, even if a not yet existent freedom. But the idea of freedom as a purely interior reality which is always there even when men are en-

slaved is typical of the idealist mentality. The tendency immanent in this not wholly false but surely distorted conception of freedom was most clearly expressed by the young Fichte: "I am now fully convinced that the human will is free and that the purpose of our existence is not to be happy but only to deserve happiness."²¹ Here we see the real identity underlying fundamental metaphysical polarities and schools. The claim that events are absolutely necessary means in the last analysis the same thing as the claim to be really free here and now: resignation in practice.

The inability to grasp in thought the unity of theory and practice and the limitation of the concept of necessity to inevitable events are both due, from the viewpoint of theory of knowledge, to the Cartesian dualism of thought and being. That dualism is congenial both to nature and to bourgeois society in so far as the latter resembles a natural mechanism. The idea of a theory which becomes a genuine force, consisting in the self-awareness of the subjects of a great historical revolution, is beyond the grasp of a mentality typified by such a dualism. If scholars do not merely think about such a dualism but really take it seriously, they cannot act independently. In keeping with their own way of thinking, they can put into practice only what the closed causal system of reality determines them to do, or they count only as individual units in a statistic for which the individual unit really has no significance. As rational beings they are helpless and isolated. The realization that such a state of affairs exists is indeed a step towards changing it, but unfortunately the situation enters bourgeois awareness only in a metaphysical, ahistorical shape. In the form of a faith in the unchangeableness of the social structure it dominates the present. Reflecting on themselves men see themselves only as on-lookers, passive participants in a mighty process which may be foreseen but not modified. Necessity for them refers not to events which man masters to his own purposes but only to events which he anticipates as probable. Where the intercon-

21. Fichte, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by H. Schulz, volume 1 (Leipzig, 1925), p. 127.

nection of willing and thinking, thought and action is admitted as in many sectors of the most recent sociology, it is seen only as adding to that objective complexity which the observer must take into account. The thinker must relate all the theories which are proposed to the practical attitudes and social strata which they reflect. But he removes himself from the affair; he has no concern except—science.

The hostility to theory as such which prevails in contemporary public life is really directed against the transformative activity associated with critical thinking. Opposition starts as soon as theorists fail to limit themselves to verification and classification by means of categories which are as neutral as possible, that is, categories which are indispensable to inherited ways of life. Among the vast majority of the ruled there is the unconscious fear that theoretical thinking might show their painfully won adaptation to reality to be perverse and unnecessary. Those who profit from the status quo entertain a general suspicion of any intellectual independence. The tendency to conceive theory as the opposite of a positive outlook is so strong that even the inoffensive traditional type of theory suffers from it at times. Since the most advanced form of thought at present is the critical theory of society and every consistent intellectual movement that cares about man converges upon it by its own inner logic, theory in general falls into disrepute. Every other kind of scientific statement which does not offer a deposit of facts in the most familiar categories and, if possible, in the most neutral form, the mathematical, is already accused of being theoretical.

This positivist attitude need not be simply hostile to progress. Although in the intensified class conflicts of recent decades rulers have had to rely increasingly on the real apparatus of power, ideology is nonetheless still a fairly important cohesive force for holding together a social structure threatened with collapse. In the determination to look at facts alone and to surrender every kind of illusion there still lurks, even today, something like a reaction against the alliance of metaphysics and oppression.

It would be a mistake, however, not to see the essential

distinction between the empiricist Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and that of today. In the eighteenth century a new society had already been developed within the framework of the old. The task now was to free an already existent bourgeois economy from its feudal limitations and to let it operate freely. Bourgeois scientific thought, too, needed, fundamentally, only to shake off the old dogmatic chains in order to progress along a path it had already mapped out. Today, on the contrary, in the transition from the present form of society to a future one mankind will for the first time be a conscious subject and actively determine its own way of life. There is still need of a conscious reconstruction of economic relationships. Indiscriminate hostility to theory, therefore, is a hindrance today. Unless there is continued theoretical effort, in the interest of a rationally organized future society, to shed critical light on present-day society and to interpret it in the light of traditional theories elaborated in the special sciences, the ground is taken from under the hope of radically improving human existence. The demand therefore for a positive outlook and for acceptance of a subordinate position threatens, even in progressive sectors of society, to overwhelm any openness to theory. The issue, however, is not simply the theory of emancipation; it is the practice of it as well.

The individual parts of a theory which attempts to deduce the complicated reality of liberal capitalism and ultimately of the capitalism of the huge combines from the model of a simple commodity economy cannot be as indifferent to the time-element as the steps in a deductive system of classification are. Within the hierarchic systems of organisms, the digestive function, so important for men too, finds its pure expression, as it were, in the class of the Aschelminthes. Similarly there are historical forms of society which show, at least approximately, a simple commodity economy. As we indicated above, the conceptual development is, if not parallel, at least in verifiable relation to the historical development. But the essential relatedness of theory to time does not reside in the correspondence between individual parts of the conceptual construction and

successive periods of history; that is a view on which Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* and *Logic* and Marx's *Capital*, examples of the same method, are in agreement. It consists rather in the continuous alteration of the theoretician's existential judgment on society, for this judgment is conditioned by its conscious relation to the historical practice of society.

This kind of alteration has nothing to do with the principle by which modern metaphysics and philosophy of religion have rejected every consistently developed theoretical structure: any specific theoretical content must be constantly and "radically questioned," and the thinker must be constantly beginning anew. Critical theory does not have one doctrinal substance today, another tomorrow. The changes in it do not mean a shift to a wholly new outlook, as long as the age itself does not radically change. The stability of the theory is due to the fact that amid all change in society the basic economic structure, the class relationship in its simplest form, and therefore the idea of the supersession of these two remain identical. The decisive substantive elements in the theory are conditioned by these unchanging factors and they themselves therefore cannot change until there has been a historical transformation of society. On the other hand, however, history does not stand still until such a point of transformation has been reached. The historical development of the conflicts in which the critical theory is involved leads to a reassignment of degrees of relative importance to individual elements of the theory, forces further concretizations, and determines which results of specialized science are to be significant for critical theory and practice at any given time.

In order to explain more fully what is meant, we shall use the concept of the social class which disposes of the means of production. In the liberalist period economic predominance was in great measure connected with legal ownership of the means of production. The large class of private property owners exercised leadership in the society, and the whole culture of the age bears the impress of this fact. Industry was still broken up into a large number of independent enterprises which were small by modern standards. The directors of factories, as was suitable for

this stage of technological development, were either one or more of the owners or their direct appointees. Once, however, the development of technology in the last century had led to a rapidly increasing concentration and centralization of capital, the legal owners were largely excluded from the management of the huge combines which absorbed their small factories, and management became something quite distinct from ownership before the law. Industrial magnates, the leaders of the economy, came into being.

In many cases these managers were initially the major owners of the concerns. Today, however, such ownership has become unimportant, and there are now some powerful managers who dominate whole sectors of industry while owning a steadily decreasing part of the businesses they direct. This economic process brings with it a change in the way the political and legal apparatus functions, as well as in ideologies. Without the juridical definition of ownership being changed at all, owners become increasingly powerless before the directors and their staffs. In a lawsuit which owners might bring against managers in the course of a difference of views, the managers' direct control of the means which these huge enterprises have at their disposal gives them such an advantage that a victory of their opponents is for the most part hardly possible. The influence of management, which may initially be exercised only over lower judicial and administrative authorities, finally extends to the higher ones and ultimately to the State and its power apparatus.

Once the legal owners are cut off from the real productive process and lose their influence, their horizon narrows; they become increasingly unfitted for important social positions, and finally the share which they still have in industry due to ownership and which they have done nothing to augment comes to seem socially useless and morally dubious. These and other changes are accompanied by the rise of ideologies centering on the great personality and the distinction between productive and parasitic capitalists. The idea of a right with a fixed content and independent of society at large loses its importance. The very same sector of society which brutally maintains its private

power to dispose of the means of production (and this power is at the heart of the prevailing social order) sponsors political doctrines which claim that unproductive property and parasitic incomes must disappear. The circle of really powerful men grows narrower, but the possibility increases of deliberately constructing ideologies, of establishing a double standard of truth (knowledge for insiders, a cooked-up story for the people), and of cynicism about truth and thought generally. The end result of the process is a society dominated no longer by independent owners but by cliques of industrial and political leaders.

Such changes do not leave the structure of the critical theory untouched. It does not indeed fall victim to the illusion that property and profit no longer play a key role, an illusion carefully fostered in the social sciences. On the one hand, even earlier it had regarded juridical relations not as the substance but as the surface of what was really going on in society. It knows that the disposition of men and things remains in the hands of a particular social group which is in competition with other economic power groups, less so at home but all the more fiercely at the international level. Profit continues to come from the same social sources and must in the last analysis be increased by the same means as before. On the other hand, in the judgment of the critical theorist the loss of all rights with a determined content, a loss conditioned by the concentration of economic power and given its fullest form in the authoritarian state, has brought with it the disappearance not only of an ideology but also of a cultural factor which has a positive value and not simply a negative one.

When the theory takes into account these changes in the inner structure of the entrepreneurial class, it is led to differentiate others of its concepts as well. The dependence of culture on social relationships must change as the latter change, even in details, if society indeed be a single whole. Even in the liberalist period political and moral interpretations of individuals could be derived from their economic situation. Admiration for nobility of character, fidelity to one's word, independence of

judgment, and so forth, are traits of a society of relatively independent economic subjects who enter into contractual relationships with each other. But this cultural dependence was in good measure psychologically mediated, and morality itself acquired a kind of stability because of its function in the individual. (The truth that dependence on the economy thoroughly pervaded even this morality was brought home when in the recent threat to the economic position of the liberalist bourgeoisie the attitude of freedom and independence began to disintegrate.) Under the conditions of monopolistic capitalism, however, even such a relative individual independence is a thing of the past. The individual no longer has any ideas of his own. The content of mass belief, in which no one really believes, is an immediate product of the ruling economic and political bureaucracies, and its disciples secretly follow their own atomistic and therefore untrue interests; they act as mere functions of the economic machine.

The concept of the dependence of the cultural on the economic has thus changed. With the destruction of the classically typical individual, the concept has as it were become more materialistic, in the popular sense of the term, than before. The explanation of social phenomena has become simpler yet also more complicated. Simpler, because economic factors more directly and consciously determine men and because the solidity and relative capacity for resistance of the cultural spheres are disappearing. More complicated, because the economic dynamism which has been set in motion and in relation to which most individuals have been reduced to simple means, quickly brings ever new visions and portents. Even advanced sectors of society are discouraged and gripped by the general sense of helplessness.

The permanency of truth, too, is connected with the constellations of reality. In the eighteenth century truth had on its side a bourgeoisie that was already economically developed. But under the conditions of later capitalism and the impotence of the workers before the authoritarian state's apparatus of oppression, truth has sought refuge among small groups of ad-

mirable men. But these have been decimated by terrorism and have little time for refining the theory. Charlatans profit by this situation and the general intellectual level of the great masses is rapidly declining.

What has been said is intended to show that the continuous change of social relationships, due immediately to economic developments and finding its most direct expression in the formation of the ruling class, does not affect only some areas of the culture. It also affects the way in which the culture depends on the economy and, thus, the key ideas in the whole conception. This influence of social development on the structure of the theory is part of the theory's doctrinal content. Thus new contents are not just mechanically added to already existent parts. Since the theory is a unified whole which has its proper meaning only in relation to the contemporary situation, the theory as a whole is caught up in an evolution. The evolution does not change the theory's foundations, of course, any more than recent changes essentially alter the object which the theory reflects, namely contemporary society. Yet even the apparently more remote concepts of the theory are drawn into the evolution. The logical difficulties which understanding meets in every thought that attempts to reflect a living totality are due chiefly to this fact.

If we take individual concepts and judgments out of their context in the theory and compare them with concepts and judgments from an earlier version of the theory, contradictions arise. This is true whether we think of the historical developmental stages through which the theory passes or of the logical steps within the theory itself. Amid all the abiding identity of the concepts of enterprise and entrepreneur there is nonetheless distinction, according as the concepts are taken from the presentation of the early form of bourgeois economy or from the presentation of developed capitalism, and according as they are taken from the nineteenth-century critique of political economy which has the liberalist manufacturer in view or from the twentieth-century critique which envisages the monopolist. The

representation of the entrepreneur, like the entrepreneur himself, passes through an evolution.

The contradictions which arise when parts of the theory are taken as independent entities are thus not due to errors or to a neglect of clear definitions. They are due to the fact that the theory has a historically changing object which, however, remains identical amid all the changes. The theory is not a storehouse of hypotheses on the course of particular events in society. It constructs a developing picture of society as a whole, an existential judgment with a historical dimension. What the bourgeois entrepreneur or even the bourgeois man as such was (the fact, for example, that his character showed not only rationalist traits but also an element of that irrationalism which presently prevails in middle-class mass movements) depends on the original economic situation of the bourgeoisie. The basic concepts of the theory capture this reality. But those economic origins manifest themselves so clearly only in the conflicts of the present day. The reason for this is not that the bourgeois is understanding change at the present time but that in connection with present-day change the interests and attention of the theoretician lead him to accentuate new aspects of this object.

It may be of systematic interest and not entirely useless to classify and juxtapose the various kinds of dependency, commodity, class, entrepreneur, and so forth, as they occur in the logical and historical phases of the theory. But the sense of these concepts ultimately becomes clear only when we grasp the whole conceptual structure with its demands for adaptation to ever new situations. Consequently such systems of classes and subclasses, of definitions and specifications of concepts, which are extracted from the critical theory do not have even the value of the conceptual inventories found in other specialized science, for the latter are at least applied in the relatively uniform practice of daily life. To transform the critical theory of society into a sociology is, on the whole, an undertaking beset with serious difficulties.

The question we have been touching on, concerning the rela-

tion between thought and time, has, it must be admitted, a special difficulty connected with it. The objection is urged that it is impossible to speak in any strict sense of changes in a theory properly so called. The claim that such changes occur presupposes rather a theory that only glosses over the difficulty. No one can turn himself into a different subject than what he is at this historical moment. To speak of the constancy or changeableness of truth is strictly meaningful only in a polemical context. That is, one would be opposing the idea of an absolute, suprahistorical subject or the possibility of exchanging subjects, as though a person could remove himself from his present historical juncture and truly insert himself into any other he wished.

How far this last is in fact possible or impossible is not our concern here. In any event the critical theory is indeed incompatible with the idealist belief that any theory is independent of men and even has a growth of its own. Documents have a history but a theory does not have its vicissitudes. The claim, then, that certain elements have been added to it and that it must adapt itself to new situations in the future without changing its essential content is rather an integral part of the theory as it exists today and seeks to affect practice. Those who have the theory in their heads have it there in its totality and act according to that totality. The continuous progress of a truth that is independent of the thinking subject or a trust in the advance of science can refer in the proper and strict sense only to that function of knowledge which will continue to be necessary even in a future society, namely the mastering of nature. This knowledge, too, admittedly belongs to the existent social totality. Here, however, the presupposition of claims that this knowledge lasts or changes, namely the continuance of economic production and reproduction in familiar forms, really has, in a certain way, the same meaning as the claim that the subjects of knowledge are interchangeable. The fact that class society is divided does not render illusory, in this context, the equivalence of human subjects. Knowledge in this instance is itself a thing which one generation passes on to another; to the extent that

men must live, they need it. In this respect, too, then, the traditional scientist can be reassured.

The idea of a transformed society, however, does not have the advantage of widespread acceptance, as long as the idea has not yet had its real possibility tested. To strive for a state of affairs in which there will be no exploitation or oppression, in which an all-embracing subject, namely self-aware mankind, exists, and in which it is possible to speak of a unified theoretical creation and a thinking that transcends individuals—to strive for all this is not yet to bring it to pass. The transmission of the critical theory in its strictest possible form is, of course, a condition of its historical success. But the transmission will not take place via solidly established practice and fixed ways of acting but via concern for social transformation. Such a concern will necessarily be aroused ever anew by prevailing injustice, but it must be shaped and guided by the theory itself and in turn react upon the theory.

The circle of transmitters of this tradition is neither limited nor renewed by organic or sociological laws. It is constituted and maintained not by biological or testamentary inheritance, but by a knowledge which brings its own obligations with it. And even this knowledge guarantees only a contemporary, not a future community of transmitters. The theory may be stamped with the approval of every logical criterion, but to the end of the age it will lack the seal of approval which victory brings. Until then, too, the struggle will continue to grasp it aright and to apply it. A version of it which has the propaganda apparatus and a majority on its side is not therefore the better one. In the general historical upheaval the truth may reside with numerically small groups of men. History teaches us that such groups, hardly noticed even by those opposed to the status quo, outlawed but imperturbable, may at the decisive moment become the leaders because of their deeper insight.

Today, when the whole weight of the existing state of affairs is pushing mankind towards the surrender of all culture and relapse into darkest barbarism, the circle of solidarity is narrow enough. The opponents, the masters of this age of decline,

possess indeed neither fidelity nor solidarity. Such concepts, on the contrary, are elements of the right theory and practice. Cut loose from such theory and practice, these concepts change their meaning as do all parts of a living whole. It is true, of course, that in a gang of thieves, for example, positive traits of human community can make their appearance, but this very possibility points to a deficiency in the larger community within which the gang exists. In an unjust society criminals are not necessarily inferior as human beings, whereas in a fully just society they would be unhuman. Only in a context can particular judgments about what is human acquire their correct meaning.

There are no general criteria for judging the critical theory as a whole, for it is always based on the recurrence of events and thus on a self-reproducing totality. Nor is there a social class by whose acceptance of the theory one could be guided. It is possible for the consciousness of every social stratum today to be limited and corrupted by ideology, however much, for its circumstances, it may be bent on truth. For all its insight into the individual steps in social change and for all the agreement of its elements with the most advanced traditional theories, the critical theory has no specific influence on its side, except concern for the abolition of social injustice. This negative formulation, if we wish to express it abstractly, is the materialist content of the idealist concept of reason.

In a historical period like the present true theory is more critical than affirmative, just as the society that corresponds to it cannot be called "productive." The future of humanity depends on the existence today of the critical attitude, which of course contains within it elements from traditional theories and from our declining culture generally. Mankind has already been abandoned by a science which in its imaginary self-sufficiency thinks of the shaping of practice, which it serves and to which it belongs, simply as something lying outside its borders and is content with this separation of thought and action. Yet the characteristic mark of the thinker's activity is to determine for itself what it is to accomplish and serve, and this not in fragmentary

fashion but totally. Its own nature, therefore, turns it towards a changing of history and the establishment of justice among men. Behind the loud calls for "social spirit" and "national community," the opposition between individual and society grows ever greater. The self-definition of science grows ever more abstract. But conformism in thought and the insistence that thinking is a fixed vocation, a self-enclosed realm within society as a whole, betrays the very essence of thought.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

POSTSCRIPT¹

IN the preceding essay I pointed out two ways of knowing: one is based on the *Discourse on Method*, the other on Marx's critique of political economy. Theory in the traditional sense established by Descartes and everywhere practiced in the pursuit of the specialized sciences organizes experience in the light of questions which arise out of life in present-day society. The resultant network of disciplines contains information in a form which makes it useful in any particular circumstances for the greatest possible number of purposes. The social genesis of problems, the real situations in which science is put to use, and the purposes which it is made to serve are all regarded by science as external to itself.

The critical theory of society, on the other hand, has for its object men as producers of their own historical way of life in its totality. The real situations which are the starting-point of science are not regarded simply as data to be verified and to be predicted according to the laws of probability. Every datum depends not on nature alone but also on the power man has over it. Objects, the kind of perception, the questions asked, and the meaning of the answers all bear witness to human activity and the degree of man's power.

In thus relating matter—that is, the apparently irreducible facts which the scientific specialist must respect—to human

1. The "Postscript" appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, volume 6, number 3, along with an essay by Herbert Marcuse entitled "Philosophie und kritische Theorie." Marcuse's essay has since been reprinted in his *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, volume 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), pages 102ff. English translation: "Philosophy and critical theory," in: *Negations. Essays in Critical Theory*, with translations from the German by Jeremy J. Shapiro (Postor: Beacon Press, 1968).

production, the critical theory of society agrees with German idealism. Ever since Kant, idealism has insisted on the dynamic moment in the relationship and has protested against the adoration of facts and the social conformism this brings with it. "As in mathematics," says Fichte, "so in one's whole view of the world; the only difference is that in interpreting the world one is unconscious that he is interpreting, for the interpretation takes place necessarily, not freely."² This thought was a commonplace in German idealism. But the activity exercised on the matter presented to man was regarded as intellectual; it was the activity of a metempirical consciousness-in-itself, an absolute ego, the spirit, and consequently the victory over the dumb, unconscious, irrational side of this activity took place in principle in the person's interior, in the realm of thought.

In the materialist conception, on the contrary, the basic activity involved is work in society, and the class-related form of this work puts its mark on all human patterns of reaction, including theory. The intervention of reason in the processes whereby knowledge and its object are constituted, or the subordination of these processes to conscious control, does not take place therefore in a purely intellectual world, but coincides with the struggle for certain real ways of life.

The elaboration of theories in the traditional sense is regarded in our society as an activity set off from other scientific and nonscientific activities, needing to know nothing of the historical goals and tendencies of which such activity is a part. But the critical theory in its concept formation and in all phases of its development very consciously makes its own that concern for the rational organization of human activity which it is its task to illumine and legitimate. For this theory is not concerned only with goals already imposed by existent ways of life, but with men and all their potentialities.

To that extent the critical theory is the heir not only of German idealism but of philosophy as such. It is not just a re-

2. Fichte, "Logik und Metaphysik," in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, volume 2 (Berlin, 1937), p. 47.

search hypothesis which shows its value in the ongoing business of men; it is an essential element in the historical effort to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of men. However extensive the interaction between the critical theory and the special sciences whose progress the theory must respect and on which it has for decades exercised a liberating and stimulating influence, the theory never aims simply at an increase of knowledge as such. Its goal is man's emancipation from slavery. In this it resembles Greek philosophy, not so much in the Hellenistic age of resignation as in the golden age of Plato and Aristotle. After the fruitless political projects of both these men the Stoics and Epicureans confined themselves to developing a doctrine of individualistic practices. The new dialectical philosophy, however, has held on to the realization that the free development of individuals depends on the rational constitution of society. In radically analyzing present social conditions it became a critique of the economy.

Critique, however, is not identical with its object. Philosophy has not provided a teaching on national economy. The curves of the mathematical political economics of our day are no more able to maintain a link with essentials than are positivist or existential philosophy. Concepts in these disciplines have lost any relation to the fundamental situations of the age. Rigorous investigation has always required the isolating of structures, but today the guidelines for this process are no longer being supplied, as in Adam Smith's time, by conscious, inspiring, historical concerns. Modern analyses have lost all connection with any rounded knowledge that deals with historical reality. It is left to others or to a later generation or to accident to establish a relation of the analyses to reality and specific goals. As long as there is a social demand for and recognition of such activity, the sciences are not disturbed by reality or leave the care of it to other disciplines, for example sociology or philosophy, which of course act the same way in turn. The forces which guide the life of society, those rulers of the day, are thereby tacitly accepted by science itself as judges of its meaning and value, and knowledge is declared powerless.

Unlike modern specialized science, however, the critical theory of society has continued to be a philosophical discipline even when it engages in a critique of the economy. For its content is the transformation of the concepts which dominate the economy into their opposites: fair exchange into a deepening of social injustice, a free economy into monopolistic control, productive work into rigid relationships which hinder production, the maintenance of society's life into the pauperization of the peoples. Of central importance here is not so much what remains unchanged as the historical movement of the period which is now approaching its end. *Capital* is no less exact in its analyses than the political economics it criticizes, but in even its most refined estimates of particular, periodically recurring events knowledge of the historical course of society as a whole supplies the dynamic motif. Its distinction from the views of the pure economic specialist is due not to some special philosophical object but to its regard for the tendencies of society as a whole, which regard plays a decisive role even in the most abstract logical and economic discussions.

The philosophical character of the critical theory emerges by comparison not only with political economy but also with economism in practice. The struggle against the illusory harmonies of liberalism and the broadcasting of the contradictions immanent in it and in the abstractness of its concept of freedom have been taken up verbally in very different parts of the world and turned into reactionary slogans. The economy must serve man, not man the economy: this is in the mouths of the very men who have always meant by the economy their own patrons. Society as a whole and the community are being glorified by people who cannot think of them in their simple and proper meaning but only in opposition to the individual. They are identified with the depraved order of things which these people themselves represent. In the concept of "holy egoism" and of the vital concerns of the imaginary "national community," the concern of real men for an uninhibited development and a happy existence is confused with the hunger of influential groups for power.

The popular materialism of practice pure and simple, which dialectical materialism criticizes, is camouflaged by idealist slogans whose very transparency makes them attractive to its most faithful practitioners, and it has become the real religion of the age.⁸ Professional scholars, eager to conform, may reject every connection of their disciplines with so-called value judgments and firmly pursue the separation of thought and political attitude. But the real wielders of power in their nihilism take such rejections of illusion with brutal seriousness. Value judgments, they say, belong either in the nation's poetry or in the people's courts but certainly not in the tribunals of thought. The critical theory, on the contrary, having the happiness of all individuals as its goal, does not compromise with continued misery, as do the scientific servants of authoritarian States. Reason's intuition of itself, regarded by philosophy in former times as the highest degree of happiness, is transformed in modern philosophy into the materialist concept of a free, self-determining society, while retaining from idealism the conviction that men have other possibilities than to lose themselves in the status quo or to accumulate power and profit.

Some elements of the critical theory reappear, with a distorted meaning, in the theory and practice of its opponents. To such an extent, since the setback of all progressive efforts in the developed countries of Europe, has confusion spread even among the enemies of such efforts. The abolition of social relationships which presently hinder development is in fact the next historical goal. But abolition is a dialectical concept. The takeover of what belongs to the individual into the state's keeping, the spread of industry, even in the widespread satisfaction

3. The form and the content of faith are not indifferent to each other. What is believed influences the act of holding something to be true. The contents of nationalist ideology, which are inconsistent with the level the mind has reached in the industrial world, are not known the way a truth is known. Even the most devoted accept these contents only at the surface of their minds, and all know what the real truth of the matter is. If the listeners realize that the speaker does not believe what he is saying, his power over them is only increased. They bask in the sun of his maliciousness. When circumstances get very much worse, such a community, of course, will not survive.

of the masses are facts whose historical significance is determined only by the nature of the totality to which they belong. However important they may be in comparison with realities which are survivals from the past, they can nonetheless be swept up with the latter into a retrogressive movement. The old world is in decline because of an outdated principle of economic organization, and the cultural collapse is bound up with it as well. The economy is the first cause of wretchedness, and critique, theoretical and practical, must address itself primarily to it.

It would be mechanistic, not dialectical thinking, however, to judge the future forms of society solely according to their economy. Historical change does not leave untouched the relations between the spheres of culture, and if in the present state of society economy is the master of man and therefore the lever by which he is to be moved to change, in the future men must themselves determine all their relationships in the face of natural necessities. Economics in isolation will therefore not provide the norm by which the community of men is to be measured. This is also true for the period of transition in which politics will win a new independence from the economy. Only at the end of that period will political problems be reduced to simple problems of administration. Before that point is reached the whole situation can change; thus even the character of the transition remains indeterminate.

Economism, to which the critical theory is often reduced, does not consist in giving too much importance to the economy, but in giving it too narrow a scope. The theory is concerned with society as a whole, but this broad scope is forgotten in economism where limited phenomena are made the final court of appeal. According to critical theory the present economy is essentially determined by the fact that the goods which men produce beyond their needs do not pass directly into the hands of society but are privately acquired and exchanged. The abolition of this state of affairs aims at a higher principle of economic organization and not at all at some philosophical utopia. The old principle drives mankind into a series of catastrophes. But the concept of socialization, which describes the change to a new

state of society, contains more than elements from political economy or jurisprudence. If industrial production is under state control, this is a historical fact the significance of which in the critical theory would have to be analyzed for each state. Whether a real socialization is going on, that is, whether a higher principle of economic life is actually being developed, does not depend simply on, for example, a change in certain property relations or on increased productivity in new forms of social collaboration. It depends just as much on the nature and development of the society in which all these particular developments are taking place. The issue, then, is the real nature of the new relations of production.

Even if "natural privileges" which depend on individual talent and efficiency continue to exist for a while, at least no new social privileges are to replace them. In such a provisional situation inequality must not be allowed to become fixed but must be increasingly eliminated. What is to be produced and how, whether relatively fixed social groups with special interests are to exist and social distinctions to be preserved or even deepened, furthermore the active relation of the individual to government, the relation of key administrative acts involving individuals to their own knowledge and will, the dependence of all situations that can be mastered by men upon real agreement—in brief, the degree of development of the essential elements in real democracy and partnership is part of the concept of socialization.

None of these elements is separable from the economic. The critique of economism, however, consists not in turning away from economic analysis but in engaging in it more fully and along the lines indicated by history. The dialectic theory does not practice any criticism based solely on ideas. Even in its idealist form it had rejected the notion of a good-in-itself wholly set over against reality. It does not judge by what is beyond time but by what is within time. When a totalitarian State proceeds to a partial nationalization of property, it justifies itself by appeals to community and collectivist practices. Here the falsehood is obvious. But even where steps are honestly taken,

the critical theory has the dialectical function of measuring every historical stage in the light not only of isolated data and concepts but of its primary and total content, and of being concerned that this content be vitally operative. The right philosophy today does not take the form of withdrawing from concrete economic and social analyses in order to work on empty minutiae which are related to nothing and are calculated to hide reality at every point. The critical theory has never been reducible to specialized economic science. The dependence of politics on the economy has been its object, not its program.

Among those who appeal to the critical theory today some with full awareness degrade it to being a pure rationalization of their current enterprises. Others restrict themselves to shallow concepts which even verbally have become odd-sounding and make of it a leveling-down ideology which everyone understands because no thoughts at all pass through anyone's mind. Since its beginning, however, dialectical thought has meant the most advanced state of knowledge, and it is only from this, in the last analysis, that decisive action can come. Its representatives in times of setback have always been relatively few, something it has in common with philosophy. As long as thought has not won a definitive victory, it cannot feel secure in the shadow of power. But if its concepts, which sprang from social movements, today seem empty because no one stands behind them but its pursuing persecutors, yet the truth of them will out. For the thrust towards a rational society, which admittedly seems to exist today only in the realms of fantasy, is really innate in every man.

That is not a claim that should bring a sigh of relief. For the realization of possibilities depends on historical conflicts. The truth about the future does not take the form of a verification of data which differ from others only in having some special importance. Rather, man's own will plays a part in that truth, and he may not take his ease if the prognosis is to come true. And even after the new society shall have come into existence, the happiness of its members will not make up for the wretchedness of those who are being destroyed in our contemporary society.

Nor does the theory bring salvation to those who hold it. Inseparable from drive and will, it preaches no psychic condition, as does the Stoa or Christianity. The martyrs of freedom have not sought their own peace of soul. Their philosophy was politics, and if their souls remained calm in the face of terror, this was not their goal. Nor could the dread they experienced bear witness against them.

The apparatus of power has not really gotten less refined since Galileo's penance and recantation; if it took second place to other kinds of machination in the nineteenth century, it has more than made up for its backwardness in the twentieth. Here again the end of the era proves to be a return to its beginnings, but on a higher level. Goethe said that individuality is happiness. Another poet added that its possession is a social achievement and can be lost at any time; Pirandello, who leaned towards fascism, knew his own times better than he realized. Under the totalitarian lordship of evil, men may retain not simply their lives but their very selves only by accident, and recantations mean less today than in the Renaissance. A philosophy that thinks to find peace within itself, in any kind of truth whatsoever, has therefore nothing to do with the critical theory.

Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

WHEN the words physics, chemistry, medicine, or history are mentioned in a conversation, the participants usually have something very definite in mind. Should any difference of opinion arise, we could consult an encyclopedia or accepted textbook or turn to one or more outstanding specialists in the field in question. The definition of any one of these sciences derives immediately from its place in present-day society. Though these sciences may make the greatest advances in the future, though it is even conceivable that several of them, physics and chemistry for example, may some day be merged, no one is really interested in defining these concepts in any other way than by reference to the scientific activities now being carried on under such headings.

It is different with philosophy. Suppose we ask a professor of philosophy what philosophy is. If we are lucky and happen to find a specialist who is not averse to definitions in general, he will give us one. If we then adopt this definition, we should probably soon discover that it is by no means the universally accepted meaning of the word. We might then appeal to other authorities, and pore over textbooks, modern and old. The confusion would only increase. Many thinkers, accepting Plato and Kant as their authorities, regard philosophy as an exact science in its own right, with its own field and subject matter. In our epoch this conception is chiefly represented by the late Edmund Husserl. Other thinkers, like Ernst Mach, conceive philosophy as the critical elaboration and synthesis of the special sciences into a unified whole. Bertrand Russell, too, holds that the task

of philosophy is "that of logical analysis, followed by logical synthesis"¹ He thus fully agrees with L. T. Hobhouse, who declares that "Philosophy . . . has a synthesis of the sciences as its goal."² This conception goes back to Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, for whom philosophy constituted the total system of human knowledge. Philosophy, therefore, is an independent science for some, a subsidiary or auxiliary discipline for others.

If most writers of philosophical works agree on the scientific character of philosophy, a few, but by no means the worst, have emphatically denied it. For the German poet Schiller, whose philosophical essays have had an influence perhaps even more profound than his dramas, the purpose of philosophy was to bring aesthetic order into our thoughts and actions. Beauty was the criterion of its results. Other poets, like Hölderlin and Novalis, held a similar position, and even pure philosophers, Schelling for instance, came very close to it in some of their formulations. Henri Bergson, at any rate, insists that philosophy is closely related to art, and is not a science.

As if the different views on the general character of philosophy were not enough, we also find the most diverse notions about its content and its methods. There are still some thinkers who hold that philosophy is concerned exclusively with the highest concepts and laws of Being, and ultimately with the cognition of God. This is true of the Aristotelian and Neo-Thomist schools. Then there is the related view that philosophy deals with the so-called *a priori*. Alexander describes philosophy as "the experiential or empirical study of the non-empirical or *a priori*, and of such questions as arise out of the relation of the empirical to the *a priori*" (space, time and deity).³ Others, who derive from the English sensualists and the German school of Fries and Apelt, conceive of it as the science of inner experi-

1. Bertrand Russell, "Logical Atomism," in: *Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. by J. H. Muirhead, I (1925), p. 379.

2. L. T. Hobhouse, "The Philosophy of Development," in: *Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. by J. H. Muirhead, I (1925), p. 152.

3. S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. I (1920), p. 4.

ence. According to logical empiricists like Carnap, philosophy is concerned essentially with scientific language; according to the school of Windelband and Rickert (another school with many American followers), it deals with universal values, above all with truth, beauty, goodness, and holiness.

Finally, everyone knows that there is no agreement in method. The Neo-Kantians all believe that the procedure of philosophy must consist in the analysis of concepts and their reduction to the ultimate elements of cognition. Bergson and Max Scheler consider intuition ("*Wesensschau, Wesenserschauung*") to be the decisive philosophical act. The phenomenological method of Husserl and Heidegger is flatly opposed to the empirio-criticism of Mach and Avenarius. The logic of Bertrand Russell, Whitehead, and their followers, is the avowed enemy of the dialectic of Hegel. The kind of philosophizing one prefers depends, according to William James, on one's character and experience.

These definitions have been mentioned in order to indicate that the situation in philosophy is not the same as in other intellectual pursuits. No matter how many points of dispute there may be in those fields, at least the general line of their intellectual work is universally recognized. The prominent representatives more or less agree on subject matter and methods. In philosophy, however, refutation of one school by another usually involves complete rejection, the negation of the substance of its work as fundamentally false. This attitude is not shared by all schools, of course. A dialectical philosophy, for example, in keeping with its principles, will tend to extract the relative truths of the individual points of view and introduce them in its own comprehensive theory. Other philosophical doctrines, such as modern positivism, have less elastic principles, and they simply exclude from the realm of knowledge a very large part of the philosophical literature, especially the great systems of the past. In short, it cannot be taken for granted that anyone who uses the term "philosophy" shares with his audience more than a few very vague conceptions.

The individual sciences apply themselves to problems which must be treated because they arise out of the life process of pres-

ent-day society. Both the individual problems and their allotment to specific disciplines derive, in the last analysis, from the needs of mankind in its past and present forms of organization. This does not mean that every single scientific investigation satisfies some urgent need. Many scientific undertakings produced results that mankind could easily do without. Science is no exception to that misapplication of energy which we observe in every sphere of cultural life. The development of branches of science which have only a dubious practical value for the immediate present is, however, part of that expenditure of human labor which is one of the necessary conditions of scientific and technological progress. We should remember that certain branches of mathematics, which appeared to be mere playthings at first, later turned out to be extraordinarily useful. Thus, though there are scientific undertakings which can lead to no immediate use, all of them have some potential applicability within the given social reality, remote and vague as it may be. By its very nature, the work of the scientist is capable of enriching life in its present form. His fields of activity are therefore largely marked out for him, and the attempts to alter the boundaries between the several domains of science, to develop new disciplines, as well as continuously to differentiate and integrate them, are always guided by social need, whether consciously or not. This need is also operative, though indirectly, in the laboratories and lecture halls of the university, not to mention the chemical laboratories and statistical departments of large industrial enterprises and in the hospitals.

Philosophy has no such guide. Naturally, many desires play upon it; it is expected to find solutions for problems which the sciences either do not deal with or treat unsatisfactorily. But the practice of social life offers no criterion for philosophy; philosophy can point to no successes. Insofar as individual philosophers occasionally do offer something in this respect, it is a matter of services which are not specifically philosophical. We have, for example, the mathematical discoveries of Descartes and Leibniz, the psychological researches of Hume, the physical theories of Ernst Mach, and so forth. The opponents of philos-

ophy also say that insofar as it has value, it is not philosophy but positive science. Everything else in philosophical systems is mere talk, they claim, occasionally stimulating, but usually boring and always useless. Philosophers, on the other hand, show a certain obstinate disregard for the verdict of the outside world. Ever since the trial of Socrates, it has been clear that they have a strained relationship with reality as it is, and especially with the community in which they live. The tension sometimes takes the form of open persecution; at other times merely failure to understand their language. They must live in Liding, physically or intellectually. Scientists, too, have come into conflict with the societies of their time. But here we must resume the distinction between the philosophical and the scientific elements of which we have already spoken, and reverse the picture, because the reasons for the persecution usually lay in the philosophical views of these thinkers, not in their scientific theories. Galileo's bitter persecutors among the Jesuits admitted that he would have been free to publish his heliocentric theory if he had placed it in the proper philosophical and theological context. Albertus Magnus himself discussed the heliocentric theory in his *Summa*, and he was never attacked for it. Furthermore, the conflict between scientists and society, at least in modern times, is not connected with fundamentals but only with individual doctrines, not tolerated by this or that authority in one country at one time, tolerated and even celebrated in some other country at the same time or soon afterwards.

The opposition of philosophy to reality arises from its principles. Philosophy insists that the actions and aims of man must not be the product of blind necessity. Neither the concepts of science nor the form of social life, neither the prevailing way of thinking nor the prevailing mores should be accepted by custom and practiced uncritically. Philosophy has set itself against mere tradition and resignation in the decisive problems of existence, and it has shouldered the unpleasant task of throwing the light of consciousness even upon those human relations and modes of reaction which have become so deeply rooted that they seem natural, immutable, and eternal. One could reply that the

sciences, too, and particularly their inventions and technological changes, save mankind from the deep-worn grooves of habit. When we compare present-day life with that thirty, fifty, or a hundred years ago, we cannot truthfully accept the notion that the sciences have not disturbed human habits and customs. Not only industry and transportation, but even art, has been rationalized. A single illustration will suffice. In former years a playwright would work out his individual conception of human problems in the seclusion of his personal life. When his work finally reached the public, he thereby exposed his world of ideas to conflict with the existing world and thus contributed to the development of his own mind and of the social mind as well. But today both the production and reception of works of art on the screen and the radio have been completely rationalized. Movies are not prepared in a quiet studio; a whole staff of experts is engaged. And from the outset the goal is not harmony with some idea, but harmony with the current views of the public, with the general taste, carefully examined and calculated beforehand by these experts. If, sometimes, the pattern of an artistic product does not harmonize with public opinion, the fault usually does not lie in an intrinsic disagreement, but in an incorrect estimate by the producers of the reaction of public and press. This much is certain: no sphere of industry, either material or intellectual, is ever in a state of complete stability; customs have no time in which to settle down. The foundations of present-day society are constantly shifting through the intervention of science. There is hardly an activity in business or in government which thought is not constantly engaged in simplifying and improving.

But if we probe a little deeper, we discover that despite all these manifestations, man's way of thinking and acting is not progressing as much as one might be led to believe. On the contrary, the principles now underlying the actions of men, at least in a large portion of the world, are certainly more mechanical than in other periods when they were grounded in living consciousness and conviction. Technological progress has helped to make it even easier to cement old illusions more firmly, and

to introduce new ones into the minds of men without interference from reason. It is the very diffusion and industrialization of cultural institutions which cause significant factors of intellectual growth to decline and even disappear, because of shallowness of content, dullness of the intellectual organs, and elimination of some of man's individualistic creative powers. In recent decades, this dual aspect of the triumphal procession of science and technology has been repeatedly noted by both romantic and progressive thinkers. The French writer Paul Valéry has recently formulated the situation with particular cogency. He relates how he was taken to the theater as a child to see a fantasy in which a young man was pursued by an evil spirit who used every sort of devilish device to frighten him and make him do his bidding. When he lay in bed at night, the evil spirit surrounded him with hellish fiends and flames; suddenly his room would become an ocean and the bedspread a sail. No sooner did one ghost disappear, than a new one arrived. After a while these horrors ceased to affect the little boy, and finally, when a new one began, he exclaimed: *Voilà les bêtises qui recommencent!* (Here comes some more of that nonsense!) Some day, Valéry concludes, mankind might react in the same way to the discoveries of science and the marvels of technology.

Not all philosophers, and we least of all, share Paul Valéry's pessimistic conception of scientific progress. But it is true that neither the achievements of science by themselves, nor the advance in industrial method, are immediately identical with the real progress of mankind. It is obvious that man may be materially, emotionally, and intellectually impoverished at decisive points despite the progress of science and industry. Science and technology are only elements in an existing social totality, and it is quite possible that, despite all their achievements, other factors, even the totality itself, could be moving backwards, that man could become increasingly stunted and unhappy, that the individual could be ruined and nations headed toward disaster. We are fortunate that we live in a country which has done away with national boundaries and war situations over half a continent. But in Europe, while the means of communication be-

came more rapid and complete, while distances decreased, while the habits of life became more and more alike, tariff walls grew higher and higher, nations feverishly piled up armaments, and both foreign relations and internal political conditions approached and eventually arrived at a state of war. This antagonistic situation asserts itself in other parts of the world, too, and who knows whether, and for how long, the remainder of the world will be able to protect itself against the consequences in all their intensity. Rationalism in details can readily go with a general irrationalism. Actions of individuals, correctly regarded as reasonable and useful in daily life, may spell waste and even destruction for society. That is why in periods like ours, we must remember that the best will to create something useful may result in its opposite, simply because it is blind to what lies beyond the limits of its scientific specialty or profession, because it focuses on what is nearest at hand and misconstrues its true nature, for the latter can be revealed only in the larger context. In the New Testament, "They know not what they do" refers only to evildoers. If these words are not to apply to all mankind, thought must not be merely confined within the special sciences and to the practical learning of the professions, thought which investigates the material and intellectual presuppositions that are usually taken for granted, thought which impregnates with human purpose those relationships of daily life that are almost blindly created and maintained.

When it was said that the tension between philosophy and reality is fundamental, unlike the occasional difficulties against which science must struggle in social life, this referred to the tendency embodied in philosophy, not to put an end to thought, and to exercise particular control over all those factors of life which are generally held to be fixed, unconquerable forces or eternal laws. This was precisely the issue in the trial of Socrates. Against the demand for submission to the customs protected by the gods and unquestioning adaptation to the traditional forms of life, Socrates asserted the principle that man should know what he does, and shape his own destiny. His god dwells within him, that is to say, in his own reason and will. Today the con-

flicts in philosophy no longer appear as struggles over gods, but the situation of the world is no less critical. We should indeed be accepting the present situation if we were to maintain that reason and reality have been reconciled, and that man's autonomy was assured within this society. The original function of philosophy is still very relevant.

It may not be incorrect to suppose that these are the reasons why discussions within philosophy, and even discussions about the concept of philosophy, are so much more radical and un-conciliatory than discussions in the sciences. Unlike any other pursuit, philosophy does not have a field of action marked out for it within the given order. This order of life, with its hierarchy of values, is itself a problem for philosophy. While science is still able to refer to given data which point the way for it, philosophy must fall back upon itself, upon its own theoretical activity. The determination of its object falls within its own program much more than is the case with the special sciences, even today when the latter are so deeply engrossed with problems of theory and methodology. Our analysis also gives us an insight into the reason why philosophy has received so much more attention in European life than in America. The geographical expansion and historical development have made it possible for certain social conflicts, which have flared up repeatedly and sharply in Europe because of the existing relationships, to decline in significance in this continent under the strain of opening up the country and of performing the daily tasks. The basic problems of societal life found a temporary practical solution, and so the tensions which give rise to theoretical thought in specific historical situations, never became so important. In this country, theoretical thought usually lags far behind the determination and accumulation of facts. Whether that kind of activity still satisfies the demands which are justly made upon knowledge in this country too, is a problem which we do not have the time to discuss now.

It is true that the definitions of many modern authors, some of which have already been cited, hardly reveal that character of philosophy which distinguishes it from all the special sciences.

Many philosophers throw envious glances at their colleagues in other faculties who are much better off because they have a well-marked field of work whose fruitfulness for society cannot be questioned. These authors struggle to "sell" philosophy as a particular kind of science, or at least, to prove that it is very useful for the special sciences. Presented in this way, philosophy is no longer the critic, but the servant of science and the social forms in general. Such an attitude is a confession that thought which transcends the prevailing forms of scientific activity, and thus transcends the horizon of contemporary society, is impossible. Thought should rather be content to accept the tasks set for it by the ever renewed needs of government and industry, and to deal with these tasks in the form in which they are received. The extent to which the form and content of these tasks are the correct ones for mankind at the present historical moment, the question whether the social organization in which they arise is still suitable for mankind—such problems are neither scientific nor philosophical in the eyes of those humble philosophers; they are matters for personal decision, for subjective evaluation by the individual who has surrendered to his taste and temper. The only philosophical position which can be recognized in such a conception is the negative doctrine that there really is no philosophy, that systematic thought must retire at the decisive moments of life, in short, philosophical skepticism and nihilism.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to distinguish the conception of the social function of philosophy presented here from another view, best represented in several branches of modern sociology, which identifies philosophy with one general social function, namely ideology.⁴ This view maintains that philosophical thought, or, more correctly, thought as such, is merely the expression of a specific social situation. Every social group—the German Junkers, for example—develops a conceptual apparatus, certain methods of thought and a specific style of thought adapted to its social position. For centuries the life of the Junkers has been associated with a specific order of succession; their relationship to the princely dynasty upon which

4. Cf. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London, 1937).

they were dependent and to their own servants had patriarchal features. Consequently, they tended to base their whole thought on the forms of the organic, the ordered succession of generations, on biological growth. Everything appeared under the aspect of the organism and natural ties. Liberal bourgeoisie, on the other hand, whose happiness and unhappiness depend upon business success, whose experience has taught them that everything must be reduced to the common denominator of money, have developed a more abstract, more mechanistic way of thinking. Not hierarchical but leveling tendencies are characteristic of their intellectual style, of their philosophy. The same approach applies to other groups, past and present. With the philosophy of Descartes, for example, we must ask whether his notions corresponded to the aristocratic and Jesuit groups of the court, or to the noblesse de robe, or to the lower bourgeoisie and the masses. Every pattern of thought, every philosophical or other cultural work, belongs to a specific social group with which it originates and with whose existence it is bound up. Every pattern of thought is "ideology."

There can be no doubt that there is some truth in this attitude. Many ideas prevalent today are revealed to be mere illusions when we consider them from the point of view of their social basis. But it is not enough merely to correlate these ideas with some one social group, as that sociological school does. We must penetrate deeper and develop them out of the decisive historical process from which the social groups themselves are to be explained. Let us take an example. In Descartes' philosophy, mechanistic thinking, particularly mathematics, plays an important part. We can even say that this whole philosophy is the universalization of mathematical thought. Of course, we can now try to find some group in society whose character is correlative with this viewpoint, and we shall probably find some such definite group in the society of Descartes' time. But a more complicated, yet more adequate, approach is to study the productive system of those days and to show how a member of the rising middle class, by force of his very activity in commerce and manufacture, was induced to make precise calculations if

he wished to preserve and increase his power in the newly developed competitive market, and the same holds true of his agents, so to speak, in science and technology whose inventions and other scientific work played so large a part in the constant struggle between individuals, cities, and nations in the modern era. For all these subjects, the given approach to the world was its consideration in mathematical terms. Because this class, through the development of society, became characteristic of the whole of society, that approach was widely diffused far beyond the middle class itself. Sociology is not sufficient. We must have a comprehensive theory of history if we wish to avoid serious errors. Otherwise we run the risk of relating important philosophical theories to accidental, or at any rate, not decisive groups, and of misconstruing the significance of the specific group in the whole of society, and, therefore, of misconstruing the culture pattern in question. But this is not the chief objection. The stereotyped application of the concept of ideology to every pattern of thought is, in the last analysis, based on the notion that there is no philosophical truth, in fact no truth at all for humanity, and that all thought is *seinsgebunden* (situationally determined). In its methods and results it belongs only to a specific stratum of mankind and is valid only for this stratum. The attitude to be taken to philosophical ideas does not comprise objective testing and practical application, but a more or less complicated correlation to a social group. And the claims of philosophy are thus satisfied. We easily recognize that this tendency, the final consequence of which is the resolution of philosophy into a special science, into sociology, merely repeats the skeptical view which we have already criticized. It is not calculated to explain the social function of philosophy, but rather to perform one itself, namely, to discourage thought from its practical tendency of pointing to the future.

The real social function of philosophy lies in its criticism of what is prevalent. That does not mean superficial fault-finding with individual ideas or conditions, as though a philosopher were a crank. Nor does it mean that the philosopher complains about this or that isolated condition and suggests remedies. The

chief aim of such criticism is to prevent mankind from losing itself in those ideas and activities which the existing organization of society instills into its members. Man must be made to see the relationship between his activities and what is achieved thereby, between his particular existence and the general life of society, between his everyday projects and the great ideas which he acknowledges. Philosophy exposes the contradiction in which man is entangled in so far as he must attach himself to isolated ideas and concepts in everyday life. My point can easily be seen from the following. The aim of Western philosophy in its first complete form, in Plato, was to cancel and negate onesidedness in a more comprehensive system of thought, in a system more flexible and better adapted to reality. In the course of some of the dialogues, the teacher demonstrates how his interlocutor is inevitably involved in contradictions if he maintains his position too onesidedly. The teacher shows that it is necessary to advance from this one idea to another, for each idea receives its proper meaning only within the whole system of ideas. Consider, for example, the discussion of the nature of courage in the *Laches*. When the interlocutor clings to his definition that courage means not running away from the battlefield, he is made to realize that in certain situations, such behavior would not be a virtue but foolhardiness, as when the whole army is retreating and a single individual attempts to win the battle all by himself. The same applies to the idea of *Sophrosyne*, inadequately translated as temperance or moderation. *Sophrosyne* is certainly a virtue, but it becomes dubious if it is made the sole end of action and is not grounded in knowledge of all the other virtues. *Sophrosyne* is conceivable only as a moment of correct conduct within the whole. Nor is the case less true for justice. Good will, the will to be just, is a beautiful thing. But this subjective striving is not enough. The title of justice does not accrue to actions which were good in intention but failed in execution. This applies to private life as well as to State activity. Every measure, regardless of the good intentions of its author, may become harmful unless it is based on comprehensive knowledge and is appropriate for the situation. *Summum jus*, says Hegel in a

similar context, may become *summa injuria*. We may recall the comparison drawn in the *Gorgias*. The trades of the baker, the cook, and the tailor are in themselves very useful. But they may lead to injury unless hygienic considerations determine their place in the lives of the individual and of mankind. Harbors, shipyards, fortifications, and taxes are good in the same sense. But if the happiness of the community is forgotten, these factors of security and prosperity become instruments of destruction.

Thus, in Europe, in the last decades before the outbreak of the present war, we find the chaotic growth of individual elements of social life: giant economic enterprises, crushing taxes, an enormous increase in armies and armaments, coercive discipline, one-sided cultivation of the natural sciences, and so on. Instead of rational organization of domestic and international relations, there was the rapid spread of certain portions of civilization at the expense of the whole. One stood against the other, and mankind as a whole was destroyed thereby. Plato's demand that the state should be ruled by philosophers does not mean that these rulers should be selected from among the authors of textbooks on logic. In business life, the *Fachgeist*, the spirit of the specialist, knows only profit, in military life power, and even in science only success in a special discipline. When this spirit is left unchecked, it typifies an anarchic state of society. For Plato, philosophy meant the tendency to bring and maintain the various energies and branches of knowledge in a unity which would transform these partially destructive elements into productive ones in the fullest sense. This is the meaning of his demand that the philosophers should rule. It means lack of faith in the prevailing popular thought. Unlike the latter, reason never loses itself in a single idea, though that idea might be the correct one at any given moment. Reason exists in the whole system of ideas, in the progression from one idea to another, so that every idea is understood and applied in its true meaning, that is to say, in its meaning within the whole of knowledge. Only such thought is rational thought.

This dialectical conception has been applied to the concrete problems of life by the great philosophers; indeed, the rational

organization of human existence is the real goal of their philosophies. Dialectical clarification and refinement of the conceptual world which we meet in daily and scientific life, education of the individual for right thinking and acting, has as its goal the realization of the good, and, during the flourishing periods of philosophy at least, that meant the rational organization of human society. Though Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*, regards the self-contemplation of the mind, theoretical activity, as the greatest happiness, he expressly states that this happiness is possible only on a specific material basis, that is, under certain social and economic conditions. Plato and Aristotle did not believe with Antisthenes and the Cynics that reason could forever continue to develop in people who literally led a dog's life, nor that wisdom could go hand in hand with misery. An equitable state of affairs was for them the necessary condition for the unfolding of man's intellectual powers, and this idea lies at the basis of all of Western humanism.

Anyone who studies modern philosophy, not merely in the standard compendia, but through his own historical researches, will perceive the social problem to be a very decisive motive. I need only mention Hobbes and Spinoza. The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of Spinoza was the only major work which he published during his lifetime. With other thinkers, Leibniz and Kant for instance, a more penetrating analysis reveals the existence of social and historical categories in the foundations of the most abstract chapters of their works, their metaphysical and transcendental doctrines. Without those categories, it is impossible to understand or solve their problems. A basic analysis of the content of purely theoretical philosophical doctrines is therefore one of the most interesting tasks of modern research in the history of philosophy. But this task has little in common with the superficial correlation to which reference has already been made. The historian of art or literature has corresponding tasks.

Despite the important part played in philosophy by the examination of social problems, expressed or unexpressed, conscious or unconscious, let us again emphasize that the social function

of philosophy is not to be found just there, but rather in the development of critical and dialectical thought. Philosophy is the methodical and steadfast attempt to bring reason into the world. Its precarious and controversial position results from this. Philosophy is inconvenient, obstinate, and with all that, of no immediate use—in fact it is a source of annoyance. Philosophy lacks criteria and compelling proofs. Investigation of facts is strenuous, too, but one at least knows what to go by. Man is naturally quite reluctant to occupy himself with the confusion and entanglements of his private and public life: he feels insecure and on dangerous ground. In our present division of labor, those problems are assigned to the philosopher or theologian. Or, man consoles himself with the thought that the discords are merely transient and that fundamentally everything is all right. In the past century of European history, it has been shown conclusively that, despite a semblance of security, man has not been able to arrange his life in accordance with his conceptions of humanity. There is a gulf between the ideas by which men judge themselves and the world on the one hand, and the social reality which they reproduce through their actions on the other hand. Because of this circumstance, all their conceptions and judgments are two-sided and falsified. Now man sees himself heading for disaster or already engulfed in it, and in many countries he is so paralyzed by approaching barbarism that he is almost completely unable to react and protect himself. He is the rabbit before the hungry stoat. There are times perhaps when one can get along without theory, but his deficiency lowers man and renders him helpless against force. The fact that theory may rise into the rarefied atmosphere of a hollow and bloodless idealism or sink into tiresome and empty phrasemongering, does not mean that these forms are its true forms. As far as tedium and banality are concerned, philosophy often finds its match in the so-called investigation of facts. Today, at any event, the whole historical dynamic has placed philosophy in the center of social actuality, and social actuality in the center of philosophy.

Attention should be drawn to a particularly important change which has taken place along these lines since classical antiquity.

Plato held that Eros enables the sage to know the ideas. He linked knowledge with a moral or psychological state, Eros, which in principle may exist at every historical moment. For this reason, his proposed State appeared to him as an eternal ideal of reason, not bound up with any historical condition. The dialogue on the *Laws*, then, was a compromise, accepted as a preliminary step which did not affect the eternal ideal. Plato's State is an Utopia, like those projected at the beginning of the modern era and even in our own days. But Utopia is no longer the proper philosophic form for dealing with the problem of society. It has been recognized that the contradictions in thought cannot be resolved by purely theoretical reflection. That requires an historical development beyond which we cannot leap in thought. Knowledge is bound up not only with psychological and moral conditions, but also with social conditions. The enunciation and description of perfect political and social forms out of pure ideas is neither meaningful nor adequate.

Utopia as the crown of philosophical systems is therefore replaced by a scientific description of concrete relationships and tendencies, which can lead to an improvement of human life. This change has the most far-reaching consequences for the structure and meaning of philosophical theory. Modern philosophy shares with the ancients their high opinion of the potentialities of the human race, their optimism over man's potential achievements. The proposition that man is by nature incapable of living a good life or of achieving the highest levels of social organization, has been rejected by the greatest thinkers. Let us recall Kant's famous remarks about Plato's Utopia: "The Platonic Republic has been supposed to be a striking example of purely imaginary perfection. It has become a byword, as something that could exist in the brain of an idle thinker only, and Bruckner thinks it ridiculous that Plato could have said that no prince could ever govern well, unless he participated in the ideas. We should do better, however, to follow up this thought and endeavor (where that excellent philosopher leaves us without his guidance) to place it in a clearer light by our own efforts, rather than to throw it aside as useless, under the miserable

and very dangerous pretext of its impracticability . . . For nothing can be more mischievous and more unworthy a philosopher than the vulgar appeal to what is called adverse experience, which possibly might never have existed, if at the proper time institutions had been framed according to those ideas, and not according to crude concepts, which, because they were derived from experience only, have marred all good intentions."⁵

Since Plato, philosophy has never deserted the true idealism that it is possible to introduce reason among individuals and among nations. It has only discarded the *false* idealism that it is sufficient to set up the picture of perfection with no regard for the way in which it is to be attained. In modern times, loyalty to the highest ideas has been linked, in a world opposed to them, with the sober desire to know how these ideas can be realized on earth.

Before concluding, let us return once more to a misunderstanding which has already been mentioned. In philosophy, unlike business and politics, criticism does not mean the condemnation of a thing, grumbling about some measure or other, or mere negation and repudiation. Under certain conditions, criticism may actually take this destructive turn; there are examples in the Hellenistic age. By criticism, we mean that intellectual, and eventually practical, effort which is not satisfied to accept the prevailing ideas, actions, and social conditions unthinkingly and from mere habit; effort which aims to coordinate the individual sides of social life with each other and with the general ideas and aims of the epoch, to deduce them genetically, to distinguish the appearance from the essence, to examine the foundations of things, in short, really to know them. Hegel, the philosopher to whom we are most indebted in many respects, was so far removed from any querulous repudiation of specific conditions, that the King of Prussia called him to Berlin to inculcate the students with the proper loyalty and to immunize them against political opposition. Hegel did his best in that direction, and declared the Prussian state to be the embodiment

5. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by F. Max Müller (New York, 1920), pp. 257-258.

of the divine Idea on earth. But thought is a peculiar factor. To justify the Prussian state, Hegel had to teach man to overcome the onesidedness and limitations of ordinary human understanding and to see the interrelationship between all conceptual and real relations. Further, he had to teach man to construe human history in its complex and contradictory structure, to search out the ideas of freedom and justice in the lives of nations, to know how nations perish when their principle proves inadequate and the time is ripe for new social forms. The fact that Hegel thus had to train his students in theoretical thought, had highly equivocal consequences for the Prussian state. In the long run, Hegel's work did more serious harm to that reactionary institution than all the use the latter could derive from his formal glorification. Reason is a poor ally of reaction. A little less than ten years after Hegel's death (his chair remained unoccupied that long), the King appointed a successor to fight the "dragon's teeth of Hegelian pantheism," and the "arrogance and fanaticism of his school."

We cannot say that, in the history of philosophy, the thinkers who had the most progressive effect were those who found most to criticize or who were always on hand with so-called practical programs. Things are not that simple. A philosophical doctrine has many sides, and each side may have the most diverse historical effects. Only in exceptional historical periods, such as the French Enlightenment, does philosophy itself become politics. In that period, the word philosophy did not call to mind logic and epistemology so much as attacks on the Church hierarchy and on an inhuman judicial system. The removal of certain preconceptions was virtually equivalent to opening the gates of the new world. Tradition and faith were two of the most powerful bulwarks of the old regime, and the philosophical attacks constituted an immediate historical action. Today, however, it is not a matter of eliminating a creed, for in the totalitarian states, where the noisiest appeal is made to heroism and a lofty *Weltanschauung*, neither faith nor *Weltanschauung* rule, but only dull indifference and the apathy of the individual towards destiny and to what comes from above. Today our task

is rather to ensure that, in the future, the capacity for theory and for action which derives from theory will never again disappear, even in some coming period of peace when the daily routine may tend to allow the whole problem to be forgotten once more. Our task is continually to struggle, lest mankind become completely disheartened by the frightful happenings of the present, lest man's belief in a worthy, peaceful and happy direction of society perish from the earth.

ART AND MASS CULTURE¹

AT times in history, art was intimately associated with other avenues of social life. The plastic arts, in particular, were devoted to the production of objects for daily use, secular as well as religious. In the modern period, however, sculpture and painting were dissociated from town and building, and the creation of these arts reduced to a size suitable to any interior; during the same historic process, esthetic feeling acquired independent status, separate from fear, awe, exuberance, prestige, and comfort. It became "pure." The purely esthetic feeling is the reaction of the private atomic subject, it is the judgment of an individual who abstracts from prevailing social standards. The definition of the beautiful as an object of disinterested pleasure had its roots in this relation. The subject expressed himself in the esthetic judgment without consulting social values and ends. In his esthetic behavior, man so to speak divested himself of his functions as a member of society and reacted as the isolated individual he had become. Individuality, the true factor in artistic creation and judgment, consists not in idiosyncrasies and crotchets, but in the power to withstand the plastic surgery of the prevailing economic system which carves all men to one pattern. Human beings are free to recognize themselves in works of art in so far as they have not succumbed to the general leveling. The individual's experience embodied in a work of art has no less validity than the organized experience society brings to bear for the control of nature. Although its criterion lies in itself alone, art is knowledge no less than science is.

Kant examines the justification of this claim. How, he in-

1. These remarks were provoked by Mortimer J. Adler's book, *Art and Prudence* (New York and Toronto, 1937).

quires, can the esthetic judgment, in which subjective feelings are made known, become a collective or "common" judgment?² Science rejects feeling as evidence, how then can one explain the community of feeling evoked by art works? Current feelings among the masses, to be sure, are easy to explain; they have always been the effect of social mechanisms. But what is that hidden faculty in every individual to which art appeals? What is that unmistakable feeling on which it relies time and again despite all contradicting experiences? Kant attempts to answer this question by introducing the notion of a *sensus communis aestheticus* to which the individual assimilates his esthetic judgment. This notion must be carefully distinguished from "common sense" in its usual meaning. Its principles are those of a kind of thinking that is "unprejudiced," "consecutive," and "enlarged," that is, inclusive of the viewpoints of others.³ In other words, Kant thinks that every man's esthetic judgment is suffused with the humanity he has in himself. Despite the deadly competition in business culture, men are in accord concerning the possibilities they envision. Great art, says Pater, must "have something of the human soul in it,"⁴ and Guyau declares that art occupies itself with the possible,⁵ erecting a "new world above the familiar world . . . a new society in which we really live." An element of resistance is inherent in the most aloof art.

Resistance to the restraints imposed by society, now and then flooding forth in political revolution, has been steadily fermenting in the private sphere. The middle-class family, though it has frequently been an agency of obsolescent social patterns, has made the individual aware of other potentialities than his labor or vocation opened for him. As a child, and later as a lover, he saw reality not in the hard light of its practical bid-dings but in a distant perspective which lessened the force of its commandments. This realm of freedom, which originated out-

2. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, translated by F. H. Bernard. §22, p. 94.

3. *Ibid.*, §40, p. 171.

4. Walter Pater, *Appreciations* (London, 1918), p. 38.

5. J. M. Guyau, *L'art au point de vue sociologique* (Paris, 1930), p. 21.

side the workshop, was adulterated with the drugs of all past cultures, yet it was man's private preserve in the sense that he could there transcend the function society imposed upon him by way of its division of labor. Seen at such a distance, the appurtenances of reality fuse into images that are foreign to the conventional systems of ideas, into esthetic experience and production. To be sure, the experiences of the subject as an individual are not absolutely different from his normal experiences as a member of society. Yet works of art—objective products of the mind detached from the context of the practical world—harbor principles through which the world that bore them appears alien and false. Not only Shakespeare's wrath and melancholy, but the detached humanism of Goethe's poetry as well, and even Proust's devoted absorption in ephemeral features *mondanité*, awaken memories of a freedom that makes prevailing standards appear narrow-minded and barbarous. Art, since it became autonomous, has preserved the utopia that evaporated from religion.

The private realm, however, to which art is related, has been steadily menaced. Society tends to liquidate it. Ever since Calvinism sanctified man's calling in this world, poverty, contrary to the accepted notion, has in practice been a taint to be washed away only by toil. The same process that freed each man from slavery and serfdom, and returned him to himself, also broke him into two parts, the private and the social, and burdened the private with a mortgage. Life outside the office and shop was appointed to refresh a man's strength for office and shop; it was thus a mere appendage, a kind of tail to the comet of labor, measured, like labor, by time, and termed "free time." Free time calls for its own curtailment, for it has no independent value. If it goes beyond recreation of expended energies, it is regarded as wasteful, unless it is utilized to train men for work. The children of the early nineteenth century who were taken from workshop to dormitory and from dormitory to workshop, and fed while at work, lived exclusively for their calling, like Japanese factory girls of today. The labor contract, in which this condition was grounded, proved itself a mere formality.

Later in the nineteenth century, the chains became looser, but self-interest subordinated private life to business even more effectively than before, until the structural unemployment of the twentieth century shook the whole order. The permanently unemployed cannot improve a career that is closed in advance. The contrast between the social and private is blurred when mere waiting becomes a calling and when work is nothing but waiting for work.

For a few decades broad strata in industrial countries were able to have some measure of private life, though within strict limits. In the twentieth century, the population is surrounded by large trusts and bureaucracies; the early division of man's existence between his occupation and family (always valid only with reservations so far as the majority was concerned) is gradually melting away. The family served to transmit social demands to the individual, thus assuming responsibility not only for his natural birth but for his social birth as well. It was a kind of second womb, in whose warmth the individual gathered the strength necessary to stand alone outside it. Actually, it fulfilled this function adequately only among the well-to-do. Among the lower strata the process was generally frustrated; the child was left only too early to his own devices. His aptitudes were prematurely hardened, and the shock he suffered brought in its wake stunted mental growth, pent-up rage, and all that went with it. Behind the "natural" behavior of ordinary folk, so frequently glorified by intellectuals, there lurk fear, convulsion and agony. The juvenile sex crimes as well as national outbursts of our time are indices of the same process. Evil does not stem from nature, but from the violence committed by society against human nature striving to develop.

In the last stages of industrial society even well-to-do parents educate their children not so much as their heirs as for a coming adjustment to mass culture. They have experienced the insecurities of fortune and draw the consequences. Among the lower strata, the protective authority of the parents, which was always menaced, has worn away entirely, until finally the Balilla has slipped into its place. Totalitarian governments are themselves

taking in hand the preparation of the individual for his role as a member of the masses. They pretend that the conditions of urbanized life clamor for it. The problem so brutally solved by Fascism has existed in modern society for the last hundred years. A straight line runs from the children's groups of the Camorra to the cellar clubs of New York,⁶ except that the Camorra still had an educational value.

Today, in all strata, the child is intimately familiar with economic life. He expects of the future not a kingdom, but a living, calculated in dollars and cents, from some profession which he considers promising. He is as tough and shrewd as an adult. The modern make-up of society sees to it that the utopian dreams of childhood are cut short in earliest youth, that the much praised "adjustment" replaces the defamed Oedipus complex. If it is true that family life has at all times reflected the baseness of public life, the tyranny, the lies, the stupidity of the existing reality, it is also true that it has produced the forces to resist these. The experiences and images which gave inner direction to the life of every individual could not be acquired outside. They flashed forth when the child hung on his mother's smile, showed off in front of his father, or rebelled against him, when he felt someone shared his experiences—in brief, they were fostered by that cozy and snug warmth which was indispensable for the development of the human being.

The gradual dissolution of the family, the transformation of personal life into leisure and of leisure into routines supervised to the last detail, into the pleasures of the ball park and the movie, the best seller and the radio, has brought about the disappearance of the inner life. Long before culture was replaced by these manipulated pleasures, it had already assumed an escapist character. Men had fled into a private conceptual world and rearranged their thoughts when the time was ripe for rearranging reality. The inner life and the ideal had become conservative factors. But with the loss of his ability to take this kind of refuge—an ability that thrives neither in slums nor in

6. On the subject of cellar clubs, cf. Brill and Payne, *The Adolescent Court and Crime Prevention* (New York, 1938).

modern settlements—man has lost his power to conceive a world different from that in which he lives. This other world was that of art. Today it survives only in those works which uncompromisingly express the gulf between the monadic individual and his barbarous surrounding—prose like Joyce's and paintings like Picasso's *Guernica*. The grief and horror such works convey are not identical with the feelings of those who, for rational reasons, are turning away from reality or rising against it. The consciousness behind them is rather one cut off from society as it is, and forced into queer, discordant forms. These inhospitable works of art, by remaining loyal to the individual as against the infamy of existence, thus retain the true content of previous great works of art and are more closely related to Raphael's madonnas and Mozart's operas than is anything that harps on the same harmonies today, at a time when the happy countenance has assumed the mask of frenzy and only the melancholy faces of the frenzied remain a sign of hope.

Today art is no longer communicative. In Guyau's theory, the esthetic quality arises from the fact that a man recognizes the feelings expressed by a work of art as his own.⁷ The "life analogous to our own," however, in the portrayal of which our own life becomes visible, is no longer the conscious and active life of the nineteenth century middle class. Today, persons merely appear to be persons; both "elites" and masses obey a mechanism that leaves them only one single reaction in any given situation. Those elements of their nature which have not yet been canalized have no possibility of understandable expression. Under the surface of their organized civic life, of their optimism and enthusiasm, men are apprehensive and bewildered and lead a miserable, almost prehistoric existence. The last works of art are symbols of this, cutting through the veneer of rationality that covers all human relationships. They destroy all superficial unanimity and conflict, which are all in truth clouded and chaotic, and it is only in such sagas as those of Galsworthy or Jules Romains, in white papers and in popular

7. Cf. J. M. Guyau, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

biographies, that they attain an artificial coherence. The last substantial works of art, however, abandon the idea that real community exists; they are the monuments of a solitary and despairing life that finds no bridge to any other or even to its own consciousness. Yet they are monuments, not mere symptoms. The despair is also revealed outside the field of pure art, in so-called entertainment and the world of "cultural goods," but this can only be inferred from without, through the means of psychological or sociological theory. The work of art is the only adequate objectification of the individual's deserted state and despair.

Dewey says that art is "the most universal and freest form of communication."⁸ But the gulf between art and communication is perforce wide in a world in which accepted language only intensifies the confusion, in which the dictators speak the more gigantic lies the more deeply they appeal to the heart of the masses. "Art breaks through barriers . . . which are impermeable in ordinary association."⁹ These barriers consist precisely in the accepted forms of thought, in the show of unreserved adjustment, in the language of propaganda and marketable literature. Europe has reached the point where all the highly developed means of communication serve constantly to strengthen the barriers "that divide human beings";¹⁰ in this, radio and cinema in no way yield the palm to airplane and gun. Men as they are today understand each other. If they were to cease to understand either themselves or others, if the forms of their communication were to become suspect to them, and the natural unnatural, then at least the terrifying dynamic would come to a standstill. To the extent that the last works of art still communicate, they denounce the prevailing forms of communication as instruments of destruction, and harmony as a delusion of decay.

The present world, denounced though it is by its last works of

8. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934), p. 270.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

10. *Ibid.*

art, may change its course. The omnipotence of technics, the increasing independence of production from its location, the transformation of the family, the socialization of existence, all these tendencies of modern society may enable men to create the conditions for eradicating the misery these processes have brought over the earth. Today, however, the substance of the individual remains locked up in himself. His intellectual acts are no longer intrinsically connected with his human essence. They take whatever course the situation may dictate. Popular judgment, whether true or false, is directed from above, like other social functions. No matter how expertly public opinion may be inquired into, no matter how elaborate the statistical or psychological soundings, what they reach is always a mechanism, never the human essence. What comes to the fore when men most candidly reveal their inner selves, is precisely the predatory, evil, cunning beings whom the demagogue knows so well how to handle. A pre-established harmony prevails between his outward purposes and their crumbled inner lives. Everybody knows himself to be wicked and treacherous, and those who confirm this, Freud, Pareto and others, are quickly forgiven. Yet, every new work of art makes the masses draw back in horror. Unlike the Führers, it does not appeal to their psychology, nor, like psychoanalysis, does it contain a promise to guide this psychology towards "adjustment." In giving downtrodden humans a shocking awareness of their own despair, the work of art professes a freedom which makes them foam at the mouth. The generation that allowed Hitler to become great takes its adequate pleasure in the convulsions which the animated cartoon imposes upon its helpless characters, not in Picasso, who offers no recreation and cannot be "enjoyed" anyhow. Misanthropic, spiteful creatures, who secretly know themselves as such, like to be taken for the pure, childish souls who applaud with innocent approval when Donald Duck gets a cuffing. There are times when faith in the future of mankind can be kept alive only through absolute resistance to the prevailing responses of men. Such a time is the present.

At the end of his book on esthetic problems, Mortimer Adler

defines the external marks of the great work of art: gross popularity at any one time or over a period of time, and the ability to satisfy the most varied levels of taste.¹¹ Consistently with this, Adler praises Walt Disney as the great master because he reaches a perfection in his field that surpasses our best critical capacity to analyze and at the same time pleases children and simple folk.¹² Adler has tried like few other critics for a view of art independent of time. But his unhistorical method makes him fall a prey to time all the more. While undertaking to raise art above history and keep it pure, he betrays it to the contemptible trash of the day. Elements of culture isolated and dissevered from the historical process may appear as similar as drops of water; yet they are as different as Heaven and Hell. For a long time now, Raphael's blue horizons have been quite properly a part of Disney's landscapes, in which *amoretto* frolic more unrestrainedly than they ever did at the feet of the Sistine Madonna. The sunbeams almost beg to have the name of a soap or a toothpaste emblazoned on them; they have no meaning except as a background for such advertising. Disney and his audiences, as well as Adler, unswervingly stand for the purity of the blue horizon, but perfect loyalty to principles isolated from the concrete situation makes them turn into their very opposite and finally results in perfect relativism.

Adler's book is devoted to the film which he loyally measures according to Aristotle's esthetic principles, thereby professing his faith in the suprahistorical validity of philosophy. The essence of art, he says, is imitation that combines the greatest similarity of form with the greatest difference of content.¹³ This Aristotelian doctrine has become a cliché the opposite of which—the greatest similarity of content with the greatest difference of form—would do as well. Both belong to those axioms which are so calculated that they can easily be adjusted to the conventional doctrine in each field. The content of such principles, whether favored by metaphysicians or empiricists, will

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 581.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25 and 450f

not hurt anybody's feelings. If, for instance, science is defined as the aggregate of all verifiable statements, one may be certain of every scientist's approval. But even an empty generality such as this discloses its double-dealing potency as soon as it is related to the real world, which "verifies" the judgment of the powerful and gives the lie to the powerless. A dogmatic definition of the beautiful protects philosophy no better from capitulating to the powers-that-be than a concept of art derived from the uncritical applause of the masses, to which it bows only too readily.

The dogmatists succumb to relativism and conformism not only in their discussions of abstract esthetic problems, but also in their views of the moral significance of art. "There is no question," says Adler, "that prudence should govern art to whatever extent the work of art or the artist comes within the sphere of morality."¹⁴ One of the main purposes of Adler's book is to discover principles for art education. The concept of morality which he advances for this is, however, as unhistorical as his concept of art. "Crime is only one kind of antisocial behavior. Any behavior which does not conform to established customs is antisocial in essentially the same sense. . . . Men who act antisocially, whether criminally or contrary to the customs generally prevailing, are in the same sense morally vicious."¹⁵ He recognizes the difficulty arising from the fact that different views and customs prevail in different social strata. But he thinks that the resulting practical difficulties do not impair his principle. The problem simply becomes one of fixing upon which mores are more and which are less desirable for society as a whole. This problem, moreover, only exists for him when there is a conflict between the prevailing habits of different social groups; and not when there is a conflict between an individual and all the groups, a situation which incidentally contains within itself the most serious moral problem of all. Thus, with regard to morality, the disparity is obliterated between the principles of metaphysics and those of positivism. Adler is irresistibly led to

14. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

conclusions drawn long ago by Lévy-Bruhl¹⁶ and other sociologists: what is moral is determined by the positive content of existing customs and habits, and morality consists in formulating and approving what is accepted by the prevailing social order. But even if the whole of a society, such as the coordinated German nation, is of one mind in this regard, it still does not follow that its judgment is true. Error has no less often united men than truth.

Even though truth, of its nature, coincides with the common interest, it has usually been at loggerheads with the sentiment of the community at large. Socrates was put to death for asserting the rights of his conscience against the accepted Athenian religion. According to Hegel, the sentence was just, for the individual "must bend before the general power, and the real and noblest power is the Nation."¹⁷ And yet, according to Hegel, the principle Socrates upheld was superior to this one. Contrariety is even more pronounced in Christianity, which came to the world as a "scandal." The first Christians impugned "the generally prevailing customs" and were therefore persecuted in line with the prevailing law and mores. But this did not make them "morally depraved," as would follow from Adler's definition; on the contrary, *they* were the ones to unmask the depravity of the Roman world. Just as the essence of art cannot be arrested through rigid supra-temporal principles, ideas such as justice, morality, and public cannot be interconnected through rigid, supra-temporal relations. Kierkegaard's doctrine that the spread of Christianity in the public consciousness has nowise overcome the true Christian's wary attitude to the state is more valid today than ever. "For the concept of the Christian is a polemical concept; it is possible to be a Christian only in opposition to others, or in a manner opposed to that of others."¹⁸ Those modern apologists were ill-advised who attempted to validate the atti-

16. L. Lévy-Bruhl, *La Morale et La Science des Moeurs* (Paris, 1904).

17. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane (our version), Vol. I, p. 441.

18. Soeren Kierkegaard, *Angriff auf die Christenheit*, herausgegeben von A. D. Dorner und Christoph Schrempf (Stuttgart, 1896), p. 239.

tude of the Church toward witch-burning as a concession to popular ideas.¹⁹ Truth can make no pacts with "prevailing customs." It finds no guiding thread in them. In the era of witch hunts, opposition to the public spirit would have been moral.

Adler's book breathes the conviction that mankind must orient to fixed values, as these have been set forth by great teachers, above all by Aristotle and St. Thomas. To positivism and relativism he opposes sturdy Christian metaphysics. It is true that modern disbelief does find its theoretical expression in scientivism, which explains that binding values exist for "psychological" reasons, because there is need for them.²⁰ Success, which in Calvinism was not the same as being a member of the Elect, but was only an indication that one might be, becomes the only standard of human life. In this way, according to Adler, positivism grants a charter to Fascism. For, if there can be no meaningful discussion of questions of value, action alone decides. Metaphysics draws from this a conclusion advantageous to itself: since the denial of eternal principles handicaps the struggle against the new barbarism, the old faith must be reestablished. Men are asked to risk their lives for freedom, democracy, the nation. Such a demand seems absurd when there are no binding values. Metaphysics alone, Adler supposes, can give humanity the hold it has lost, metaphysics makes true community possible.

Such ideas misconstrue the present historical situation. Positivism, indeed, articulates the state of mind of the unbelieving younger generation, and it does so as adequately as sport and jazz. The younger no longer have faith in anything, and for this reason they are able to shift to any belief. But the fault lies just as much with the dogmatism they have forgotten as with themselves. The middle class confined religion to a kind of reservation. Following Hobbes' advice, they swallowed its doctrines whole, like pills, and never completely questioned its truth. Reli-

19. Cf., e.g., Johannes Janssen, *Kulturzustände des Deutschen Volkes*, 4. Buch (Freiburg i.B., 1903), p. 546.

20. Cf. R. v. Mises, *Kleines Lehrbuch des Positivismus* (The Hague, 1939), pp. 368f.

gion for modern men tended to be a memory of childhood. With the disintegration of the family, the experiences that have invigorated religion also lose their power. Today, men exercise restraints not out of belief but out of hard necessity. That is why they are so saddened. The weaker they are and the more deeply disappointed, the more violently do they espouse brutality. They have cast aside all ties to the principle of heavenly love. Any demand that they should return to it for reasons of state is not tenable in religious terms. Religion has a claim on faith not insofar as it is useful but insofar as it is true. Agreement between political and religious interests is by no means guaranteed. The naïve presupposition of such agreement, made by those who defend absolute values, confutes their doctrines. Positivism is as strongly in conformity with our time as Adler thinks, but it contains an element of honesty for that very reason. The young who adopt this philosophy exhibit greater probity of mind than those who out of pragmatic motives bow to an absolute in which they do not quite believe. Uncritical return to religion and metaphysics is as questionable today as the road back to the beautiful paintings and compositions of classicism, no matter how enticingly such havens may beckon. The revivals of Greek and medieval philosophers, such as Adler recommends, are not so far remote from certain revivals of melodies by Bach, Mozart and Chopin in current popular music.

Adler denounces in impressive passages the hopeless spiritual plight of the young.²¹ He unmasks "the religion of science and the religion of the state." But it would be a fatal misunderstanding to summon the young away from these doctrines and lead them back to older authorities. What is to be deplored is not that scientific thought has replaced dogmatism, but rather that such thought, still prescientific in the literal sense, is always confined within the limits of the various specialized disciplines. It is wrong to rely on science so long as the formulation of its problems is conditioned by an obsolete division into disciplines. Economy of thought and technique alone do not exhaust the

21. Cf. Mortimer Adler, "This Pre-War Generation" in: *Harpers Magazine*, Oct 1940, p. 524f

meaning of science, which is also will to truth. The way toward overcoming positivistic thinking does not lie in a regressive revision of science, but in driving this will to truth further until it conflicts with present reality. Illuminating insights are not to be found in high and eternal principles, with which everybody agrees anyway (who does not profess faith in freedom and justice!), or in the routine arrangement of facts into customary patterns.

Preference for static principles was the great delusion of Husserl's original "Eidetics," one of the precursors of Neo-Thomism. Adler seems to fall into the same error. Sublime principles are always abstract—positivism is right in speaking here of fictions or auxiliary constructions—but insights always refer to the particular. In the process of cognition, each concept, which in isolation has its conventional meaning, takes part in forming new configurations, in which it acquires a new and specific logical function. Aristotle's metaphysics taken as a whole marks such a configuration, as do the doctrines of St. Thomas on whom Adler draws. The categories become distorted or meaningless unless they enter new, more adequate structures that are required by the particular historical situations in which they play a part. The reason for this is not that each period has its own truth assigned to it, as historical and sociological relativism would like us to believe, or that one can dispense with philosophic and religious traditions, but rather that intellectual loyalty, without which truth cannot exist, consists both in preserving past insights and contradicting and transforming them. Abstract formulations of the highest values are always adjustable to the practice of stake and guillotine. Knowledge really concerned with values does not look to higher realms. It rather tries to penetrate the cultural pretences of its time, in order to distinguish the features of a frustrated humanity. Values are to be disclosed by uncovering the historical practice that destroys them.

In our time thinking is endangered not so much by the wrong paths it may pursue as by its being prematurely cut short. Positivism rests content with the prearranged routines or official

science, whereas metaphysics invites intuitions that have their content in the prevailing modes of consciousness. The demand for purity and clarity, applicability and matter-of-factness which is immediately raised to challenge any act of thinking that is not free from imagination, expresses a repugnance to going beyond the limitations of the "statement," to intellectual restlessness and "negativism," all of which are indispensable elements of thought. The truth of ideas is demonstrated not when they are held fast but when they are driven further.

The pedantry of matter-of-factness produces, conversely, a fetishism of ideas. Today ideas are approached with a sullen seriousness; each as soon as it appears is regarded as either a ready-made prescription that will cure society or as a poison that will destroy it. All the ambivalent traits of obedience assert themselves in the attitude to ideas. People desire to submit to them or to rebel against them, as if they were gods. Ideas begin by playing the role of professional guides, and end as authorities and Führers. Whoever articulates them is regarded as a prophet or a heretic, as an object to be adored by the masses or as a prey to be hunted by the Gestapo. This taking of ideas only as verdicts, directives, signals, characterizes the enfeebled man of today. Long before the era of the Gestapo, his intellectual function had been reduced to statements of fact. The movement of thought stops short at slogans, diagnoses and prognoses. Every man is classified: bourgeois, communist, fascist, Jew, alien or "one of us." And this determines the attitude once and for all. According to such patterns dependent masses and dependable sages throughout the world history have always thought. They have been united under "ideas," mental products that have become fetishes. Thinking, faithful to itself, in contrast to this, knows itself at any moment to be a whole and to be uncompleted. It is less like a sentence spoken by a judge than like the prematurely interrupted last words of a condemned man. The latter looks upon things under a different impulsion than that of dominating them.

Adler appreciates the public as it is, and in consequence popularity is a positive criterion to him. He treats the film as popu-

lar poetry and compares it with the theater of the Elizabethan period, when for the first time "writers had the double role of artist and merchant competing in a free market for both plaudits and profits."²² According to him the middle-class theater has been determined by market economy and democracy. Communists or sentimental aristocrats may regret commercialization, says Adler, but its influence on Shakespeare was not so bad. The film must please not merely the masses, but beyond them "the organized groups which have become the unofficial custodians of public manners and the common good."²³ Adler does realize the difficulties encountered by the film, as compared with the theater, because of the size of its public and the differentiated needs of modern society, but he overlooks the dialectics of popularity. Quite against his intention to differentiate and evaluate social phenomena, his static way of thinking tends to level everything. Just as he is tempted to confuse Raphael's and Disney's scenic backgrounds, he seems to identify the Hays Office and the guardians of the Platonic Republic.

His whole approach to the film as an art bears witness to the confusion of entirely different cultural orders. He defends the movies against the accusation that they are not art because of the collective character of their production.²⁴ But the discrepancy between art and film, which exists despite the potentialities of the motion picture, is not the result of the surface phenomenon of the number of people employed in Hollywood as much as of the economic circumstances. The economic necessity for rapid return of the considerable capital invested in each picture forbids the pursuit of the inherent logic of each work of art—of its own autonomous necessity. What today is called popular entertainment is actually demands evoked, manipulated and by implication deteriorated by the cultural industries. It has little to do with art, least of all where it pretends to be such.

Popularity has to be understood with reference to social change, not merely as a quantitative but as a qualitative process.

22. *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.

23. *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

24. *Op. cit.*, pp. 483-4.

It was never directly determined by the masses, but always by their representatives in other social strata. Under Elizabeth and even as late as the nineteenth century, the educated were the spokesmen for the individual. Since the interests of the individual and those of the rising middle classes did not fully coincide, the works of art always contained a crucial element. Ever since that time, the concepts of individual and society have been reciprocal ones. The individual developed in harmony with and in opposition to society: society developed when individuals did, and it developed when individuals didn't. In the course of this process, social mechanisms, such as the national and international division of labor, crisis and prosperity, war and peace, strengthened their own independence of the individual, who became increasingly alien to them and faced them with growing impotence. Society slipped away from individuals and individuals from society.

The cleavage between private and social existence has taken on catastrophic proportions toward the end of the liberalistic period. New forms of social life are announcing themselves in which the individual, as he is, will be transshaped unless he is destroyed. But the educated are still indissolubly bound up with man as he existed in the past. They still have in mind the individual's harmony and culture, at a time when the task is no longer to humanize the isolated individual, which is impossible, but to realize humanity as a whole. Even Goethe had to concede that his ideal of the harmonious personality had foundered; in our own time, the pursuit of this ideal presupposes not only indifference toward the general suffering, but the very opposite of the ideal, a distorted personality.

In Europe, representation and leadership of the masses has shifted from the educated to powers more conscious of their task. Criticism in art and theory has been replaced by actual hatred or by the wisdom of obedience. The opposition of individual and society, and of private and social existence, which gave seriousness to the pastime of art, has become obsolete. The so-called entertainments, which have taken over the heritage of art, are today nothing but popular tonics, like swimming or

football. Popularity no longer has anything to do with the specific content or the truth of artistic productions. In the democratic countries, the final decision no longer rests with the educated but with the amusement industry. Popularity consists of the unrestricted accommodation of the people to what the amusement industry thinks they like. For the totalitarian countries, the final decision rests with the managers of direct and indirect propaganda, which is by its nature indifferent to truth. Competition of artists in the free market, a competition in which success was determined by the educated, has become a race for the favor of the powers-that-be, the outcome of which is influenced by the secret police. Supply and demand are no longer regulated by social need but by reasons of state. Popularity, in these countries, is as little a result of the free play of forces as any other prize; in other countries it shows a similar tendency.

In a beautiful passage of his book, Dewey explains that communication is the consequence and not the intention of the artistic work. "Indifference to response of the immediate audience is a necessary trait of all artists that have something new to say."²⁵ Today even the imaginary future audience has become questionable, because, once again, man within humanity is as solitary and abandoned as humanity within the infinite universe. But the artists, continues Dewey, "are animated by a deep conviction that since they can only say what they have to say, the trouble is not with their work but those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not."²⁶ The only hope remaining is that the deaf ears in Europe imply an opposition to the lies that are being hammered at men from all sides and that men are following their leaders with their eyes tight shut. One day we may learn that in the depths of their hearts, the masses, even in fascist countries, secretly knew the truth and disbelieved the lie, like catatonic patients who make known only at the end of their trance that nothing has escaped them. Therefore it may not be entirely senseless to continue speaking a language that is not easily understood.

25. *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

26. *Ibid.*

Philosophy

MAX HORKHEIMER

CRITICAL THEORY

These essays, written in the 1930s and 1940s, represent a first selection in English from the major work of the founder of the famous Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. Horkheimer's writings are essential to an understanding of the intellectual background of the New Left and to much current social-philosophical thought, including the work of Herbert Marcuse. Apart from their historical significance and even from their scholarly eminence, these essays contain an immediate relevance only now becoming fully recognized in this country.

"Those interested in Marcuse's intellectual background, the philosophical groundwork of the New Left, or a nonpositivist theory of knowledge should consult this first translation into English of Horkheimer's most trenchant essays."

—*Library Journal*

CONTINUUM · NEW YORK

\$24.95

ISBN 0-8264-0083-3