

BEACON BP 221 \$2.25

ONE- DIMENSIONAL MAN

by Herbert Marcuse

**ONE
DIMENSIONAL
MAN**

*Studies in the Ideology of
Advanced Industrial Society*

by Herbert Marcuse

Beacon Press Boston

Second printing, October 1966

Copyright © 1964 by Herbert Marcuse

First published by the Beacon Press in 1964

First published as a Beacon Paperback in February 1966

Published simultaneously in Canada by Saunders of Toronto, Ltd.

All rights reserved

Beacon Press books are published under the auspices
of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction

The Paralysis of Criticism: Society Without Opposition

One-Dimensional Society

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. <i>The New Forms of Control</i> | 1 |
| 2. <i>The Closing of the Political Universe</i> | 19 |
| 3. <i>The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness: Repressive Desublimation</i> | 56 |
| 4. <i>The Closing of the Universe of Discourse</i> | 84 |

One-Dimensional Thought

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 5. <i>Negative Thinking: The Defeated Logic of Protest</i> | 123 |
| 6. <i>From Negative to Positive Thinking: Technological Rationality and the Logic of Domination</i> | 144 |
| 7. <i>The Triumph of Positive Thinking: One-Dimensional Philosophy</i> | 170 |

The Chance of the Alternatives

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 8. <i>The Historical Commitment of Philosophy</i> | 203 |
| 9. <i>The Catastrophe of Liberation</i> | 225 |
| 10. <i>Conclusion</i> | 247 |
| <i>Index</i> | 259 |

alternatives which haunt the established society as subversive tendencies and forces. The values attached to the alternatives do become facts when they are translated into reality by historical practice. The theoretical concepts terminate with social change.

But here, advanced industrial society confronts the critique with a situation which seems to deprive it of its very basis. Technical progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system and to defeat or refute all protest in the name of the historical prospects of freedom from toil and domination. Contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change—qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence. This containment of social change is perhaps the most singular achievement of advanced industrial society; the general acceptance of the National Purpose, bipartisan policy, the decline of pluralism, the collusion of Business and Labor within the strong State testify to the integration of opposites which is the result as well as the prerequisite of this achievement.

A brief comparison between the formative stage of the theory of industrial society and its present situation may help to show how the basis of the critique has been altered. At its origins in the first half of the nineteenth century, when it elaborated the first concepts of the alternatives, the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory and practice, values and facts, needs and goals. This historical mediation occurred in the consciousness and in the political action of the two great classes which faced each other in the society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the capitalist world, they are still the basic classes. However, the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes

in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation. An overriding interest in the preservation and improvement of the institutional status quo unites the former antagonists in the most advanced areas of contemporary society. And to the degree to which technical progress assures the growth and cohesion of communist society, the very idea of qualitative change recedes before the realistic notions of a non-explosive evolution. In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back to a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet. Even the most empirical analysis of historical alternatives appears to be unrealistic speculation, and commitment to them a matter of personal (or group) preference.

And yet: does this absence refute the theory? In the face of apparently contradictory facts, the critical analysis continues to insist that the need for qualitative change is as pressing as ever before. Needed by whom? The answer continues to be the same: by the society as a whole, for every one of its members. The union of growing productivity and growing destruction; the brinkmanship of annihilation; the surrender of thought, hope, and fear to the decisions of the powers that be; the preservation of misery in the face of unprecedented wealth constitute the most impartial indictment—even if they are not the *raison d'être* of this society but only its by-product: its sweeping rationality, which propels efficiency and growth, is itself irrational.

The fact that the vast majority of the population accepts, and is made to accept, this society does not render it less irrational and less reprehensible. The distinction between true and false consciousness, real and immediate interest still is meaningful. But this distinction itself must be validated. Men must come to see it and to find their way from false to true consciousness, from their immediate to

their real interest. They can do so only if they live in need of changing their way of life, of denying the positive, of refusing. It is precisely this need which the established society manages to repress to the degree to which it is capable of "delivering the goods" on an increasingly large scale, and using the scientific conquest of nature for the scientific conquest of man.

Confronted with the total character of the achievements of advanced industrial society, critical theory is left without the rationale for transcending this society. The vacuum empties the theoretical structure itself, because the categories of a critical social theory were developed during the period in which the need for refusal and subversion was embodied in the action of effective social forces. These categories were essentially negative and oppositional concepts, defining the actual contradictions in nineteenth century European society. The category "society" itself expressed the acute conflict between the social and political sphere—society as antagonistic to the state. Similarly, "individual," "class," "private," "family" denoted spheres and forces not yet integrated with the established conditions—spheres of tension and contradiction. With the growing integration of industrial society, these categories are losing their critical connotation, and tend to become descriptive, deceptive, or operational terms.

An attempt to recapture the critical intent of these categories, and to understand how the intent was cancelled by the social reality, appears from the outset to be regression from a theory joined with historical practice to abstract, speculative thought: from the critique of political economy to philosophy. This ideological character of the critique results from the fact that the analysis is forced to proceed from a position "outside" the positive as well as negative, the productive as well as destructive tendencies in society. Modern industrial society is the pervasive identity of these opposites—it is the whole that is in question. At the same time, the po-

sition of theory cannot be one of mere speculation. It must be a historical position in the sense that it must be grounded on the capabilities of the given society.

This ambiguous situation involves a still more fundamental ambiguity. *One-Dimensional Man* will vacillate throughout between two contradictory hypotheses: (1) that advanced industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the foreseeable future; (2) that forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society. I do not think that a clear answer can be given. Both tendencies are there, side by side—and even the one in the other. The first tendency is dominant, and whatever preconditions for a reversal may exist are being used to prevent it. Perhaps an accident may alter the situation, but unless the recognition of what is being done and what is being prevented subverts the consciousness and the behavior of man, not even a catastrophe will bring about the change.

The analysis is focused on advanced industrial society, in which the technical apparatus of production and distribution (with an increasing sector of automation) functions, not as the sum-total of mere instruments which can be isolated from their social and political effects, but rather as a system which determines *a priori* the product of the apparatus as well as the operations of servicing and extending it. In this society, the productive apparatus tends to become totalitarian to the extent to which it determines not only the socially needed occupations, skills, and attitudes, but also individual needs and aspirations. It thus obliterates the opposition between the private and public existence, between individual and social needs. Technology serves to institute new, more effective, and more pleasant forms of social control and social cohesion. The totalitarian tendency of these controls seems to assert itself in still another sense

—by spreading to the less developed and even to the pre-industrial areas of the world, and by creating similarities in the development of capitalism and communism.

In the face of the totalitarian features of this society, the traditional notion of the “neutrality” of technology can no longer be maintained. Technology as such cannot be isolated from the use to which it is put; the technological society is a system of domination which operates already in the concept and construction of techniques.

The way in which a society organizes the life of its members involves an initial *choice* between historical alternatives which are determined by the inherited level of the material and intellectual culture. The choice itself results from the play of the dominant interests. It *anticipates* specific modes of transforming and utilizing man and nature and rejects other modes. It is one “project” of realization among others.² But once the project has become operative in the basic institutions and relations, it tends to become exclusive and to determine the development of the society as a whole. As a technological universe, advanced industrial society is a *political* universe, the latest stage in the realization of a specific historical project—namely, the experience, transformation, and organization of nature as the mere stuff of domination.

As the project unfolds, it shapes the entire universe of discourse and action, intellectual and material culture. In the medium of technology, culture, politics, and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives. The productivity and growth potential of this system stabilize the society and contain technical progress within the framework of domination. Technological rationality has become political rationality.

2. The term “project” emphasizes the element of freedom and responsibility in historical determination: it links autonomy and contingency. In this sense, the term is used in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre. For a further discussion see chapter VIII below.

1: The New Forms of Control

A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects; the curtailment of prerogatives and national sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellectual coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development.

The rights and liberties which were such vital factors in the origins and earlier stages of industrial society yield to a higher stage of this society: they are losing their traditional rationale and content. Freedom of thought, speech, and conscience were—just as free enterprise, which they served to promote and protect—essentially *critical* ideas, designed to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one. Once institutionalized, these rights and liberties shared the fate of the society of which they had become an integral part. The achievement cancels the premises.

To the degree to which freedom from want, the concrete substance of all freedom, is becoming a real possibility, the liberties which pertain to a state of lower productivity are losing their former content. Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individuals through the way in which it is organized. Such

a society may justly demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce the opposition to the discussion and promotion of alternative policies *within* the status quo. In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system. Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole. Indeed, at least in so far as the necessities of life are involved, there seems to be no reason why the production and distribution of goods and services should proceed through the competitive concurrence of individual liberties.

Freedom of enterprise was from the beginning not altogether a blessing. As the liberty to work or to starve, it spelled toil, insecurity, and fear for the vast majority of the population. If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements of civilization. The technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world's imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but render it possible.

This is a goal within the capabilities of advanced industrial civilization, the "end" of technological rationality. In actual fact, however, the contrary trend operates: the appa-

ratus imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor time and free time, on the material and intellectual culture. By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.¹

Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity mobilizes society as a whole, above and beyond any particular individual or group interests. The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic organization is that of the machine process. But the political trend may be reversed; essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man. To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man.

Contemporary industrial civilization demonstrates that it has reached the stage at which "the free society" can no

1. See p. 50.

longer be adequately defined in the traditional terms of economic, political, and intellectual liberties, not because these liberties have become insignificant, but because they are too significant to be confined within the traditional forms. New modes of realization are needed, corresponding to the new capabilities of society.

Such new modes can be indicated only in negative terms because they would amount to the negation of the prevailing modes. Thus economic freedom would mean freedom from the economy—from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals from politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of “public opinion” together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization. The most effective and enduring form of warfare against liberation is the implanting of material and intellectual needs that perpetuate obsolete forms of the struggle for existence.

The intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond the biological level, have always been preconditioned. Whether or not the possibility of doing or leaving, enjoying or destroying, possessing or rejecting something is seized as a *need* depends on whether or not it can be seen as desirable and necessary for the prevailing societal institutions and interests. In this sense, human needs are historical needs and, to the extent to which the society demands the repressive development of the individual, his needs themselves and their claim for satisfaction are subject to overriding critical standards.

We may distinguish both true and false needs. “False”

are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery, and injustice. Their satisfaction might be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained and protected if it serves to arrest the development of the ability (his own and others) to recognize the disease of the whole and grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.

Such needs have a societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control; the development and satisfaction of these needs is heteronomous. No matter how much such needs may have become the individual's own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning—products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.

The prevalence of repressive needs is an accomplished fact, accepted in ignorance and defeat, but a fact that must be undone in the interest of the happy individual as well as all those whose misery is the price of his satisfaction. The only needs that have an unqualified claim for satisfaction are the vital ones—nourishment, clothing, lodging at the attainable level of culture. The satisfaction of these needs is the prerequisite for the realization of *all* needs, of the unsublimated as well as the sublimated ones.

For any consciousness and conscience, for any experience which does not accept the prevailing societal interest as the supreme law of thought and behavior, the established universe of needs and satisfactions is a fact to be questioned

individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation. To be sure, to impose Reason upon an entire society is a paradoxical and scandalous idea—although one might dispute the righteousness of a society which ridicules this idea while making its own population into objects of total administration. All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual's own. The process always replaces one system of preconditioning by another; the optimal goal is the replacement of false needs by true ones, the abandonment of repressive satisfaction.

The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation—liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable—while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefaction; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.

Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but *what* can be chosen and *what is chosen* by the individual. The criterion for free choice can never be an absolute one, but neither is it entirely relative. Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these

goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear—that is, if they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrinating power of the “media,” and that by themselves the people would feel and satisfy the needs which are now imposed upon them. The objection misses the point. The preconditioning does not start with the mass production of radio and television and with the centralization of their control. The people enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long standing; the decisive difference is in the flattening out of the contrast (or conflict) between the given and the possible, between the satisfied and the unsatisfied needs. Here, the so-called equalization of class distinctions reveals its ideological function. If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population.

Indeed, in the most highly developed areas of contemporary society, the transplantation of social into individual needs is so effective that the difference between them seems to be purely theoretical. Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination? Between the automobile as nuisance and as convenience? Between the horrors and the comforts of functional architecture? Between the work for national defense

and the work for corporate gain? Between the private pleasure and the commercial and political utility involved in increasing the birth rate?

We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.

The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense. To be sure, the technical structure and efficacy of the productive and destructive apparatus has been a major instrumentality for subjecting the population to the established social division of labor throughout the modern period. Moreover, such integration has always been accompanied by more obvious forms of compulsion: loss of livelihood, the administration of justice, the police, the armed forces. It still is. But in the contemporary period, the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests—to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.

No wonder then that, in the most advanced areas of this civilization, the social controls have been introjected to the point where even individual protest is affected at its roots. The intellectual and emotional refusal “to go along” appears neurotic and impotent. This is the socio-psychological aspect

of the political event that marks the contemporary period: the passing of the historical forces which, at the preceding stage of industrial society, seemed to represent the possibility of new forms of existence.

But the term "introjection" perhaps no longer describes the way in which the individual by himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls exercised by his society. Introjection suggests a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a Self (Ego) transposes the "outer" into the "inner." Thus introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies—an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious *apart from* public opinion and behavior.³ The idea of "inner freedom" here has its reality: it designates the private space in which man may become and remain "himself."

Today this private space has been invaded and whittled down by technological reality. Mass production and mass distribution claim the *entire* individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory. The manifold processes of introjection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical reactions. The result is, not adjustment but *mimesis*: an immediate identification of the individual with his society and, through it, with the society as a whole.

This immediate, automatic identification (which may have been characteristic of primitive forms of association) reappears in high industrial civilization; its new "immediacy," however, is the product of a sophisticated, scientific management and organization. In this process, the "inner" dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down. The loss of this dimension, in

3. The change in the function of the family here plays a decisive role: its "socializing" functions are increasingly taken over by outside groups and media. See my *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 96 ff.

which the power of negative thinking—the critical power of Reason—is at home, is the ideological counterpart to the very material process in which advanced industrial society silences and reconciles the opposition. The impact of progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life, and to the dynamic capability of producing more and bigger facts of the same sort of life. The efficiency of the system blunts the individuals' recognition that it contains no facts which do not communicate the repressive power of the whole. If the individuals find themselves in the things which shape their life, they do so, not by giving, but by accepting the law of things—not the law of physics but the law of their society.

I have just suggested that the concept of alienation seems to become questionable when the individuals identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them and have in it their own development and satisfaction. This identification is not illusion but reality. However, the reality constitutes a more progressive stage of alienation. The latter has become entirely objective; the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms. The achievements of progress defy ideological indictment as well as justification; before their tribunal, the "false consciousness" of their rationality becomes the true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not, however, signify the "end of ideology." On the contrary, in a specific sense advanced industrial culture is *more* ideological than its predecessor, inasmuch as today the ideology is in the process of production itself.⁴ In a provocative form, this proposition reveals the political aspects of the prevailing technological rationality. The productive apparatus and the

4. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1955), p. 24 f.

goods and services which it produces "sell" or impose the social system as a whole. The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life—much better than before—and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of *one-dimensional thought and behavior* in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.

The trend may be related to a development in scientific method: operationalism in the physical, behaviorism in the social sciences. The common feature is a total empiricism in the treatment of concepts; their meaning is restricted to the representation of particular operations and behavior. The operational point of view is well illustrated by P. W. Bridgman's analysis of the concept of length:⁵

5. P. W. Bridgman, *The Logic of Modern Physics* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 5. The operational doctrine has since been refined and qualified. Bridgman himself has extended the concept of "operation" to include the "paper-and-pencil" operations of the theorist (in Philipp J. Frank, *The Validation of Scientific Theories* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1954], Chap. II). The main impetus remains the same: it is "desirable" that the paper-and-pencil operations "be capable of eventual contact, although perhaps indirectly, with instrumental operations."

prevailing system, to enclose them in the system, and to repel those which are irreconcilable with the system. The reign of such a one-dimensional reality does not mean that materialism rules, and that the spiritual, metaphysical, and bohemian occupations are petering out. On the contrary, there is a great deal of "Worship together this week," "Why not try God," Zen, existentialism, and beat ways of life, etc. But such modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo and no longer negative. They are rather the ceremonial part of practical behaviorism, its harmless negation, and are quickly digested by the status quo as part of its healthy diet.

One-dimensional thought is systematically promoted by the makers of politics and their purveyors of mass information. Their universe of discourse is populated by self-validating hypotheses which, incessantly and monopolistically repeated, become hypnotic definitions or dictations. For example, "free" are the institutions which operate (and are operated on) in the countries of the Free World; other transcending modes of freedom are by definition either anarchism, communism, or propaganda. "Socialistic" are all encroachments on private enterprises not undertaken by private enterprise itself (or by government contracts), such as universal and comprehensive health insurance, or the protection of nature from all too sweeping commercialization, or the establishment of public services which may hurt private profit. This totalitarian logic of accomplished facts has its Eastern counterpart. There, freedom is the way of life instituted by a communist regime, and all other transcending modes of freedom are either capitalistic, or revisionist, or leftist sectarianism. In both camps, non-operational ideas are non-behavioral and subversive. The movement of thought is stopped at barriers which appear as the limits of Reason itself.

Today's fight against this historical alternative finds a firm mass basis in the underlying population, and finds its ideology in the rigid orientation of thought and behavior to the given universe of facts. Validated by the accomplishments of science and technology, justified by its growing productivity, the status quo defies all transcendence. Faced with the possibility of pacification on the grounds of its technical and intellectual achievements, the mature industrial society closes itself against this alternative. Operationalism, in theory and practice, becomes the theory and practice of *containment*. Underneath its obvious dynamics, this society is a thoroughly static system of life: self-propelling in its oppressive productivity and in its beneficial coordination. Containment of technical progress goes hand in hand with its growth in the established direction. In spite of the political fetters imposed by the status quo, the more technology appears capable of creating the conditions for pacification, the more are the minds and bodies of man organized against this alternative.

The most advanced areas of industrial society exhibit throughout these two features: a trend toward consummation of technological rationality, and intensive efforts to contain this trend within the established institutions. Here is the internal contradiction of this civilization: the irrational element in its rationality. It is the token of its achievements. The industrial society which makes technology and science its own is organized for the ever-more-effective domination of man and nature, for the ever-more-effective utilization of its resources. It becomes irrational when the success of these efforts opens new dimensions of human realization. Organization for peace is different from organization for war; the institutions which served the struggle for existence cannot serve the pacification of existence. Life as an end is qualitatively different from life as a means.

been weakened and their objectives altered by the transformation of the capitalist system (as have the objectives of the Soviet Union which has endorsed this change in policy). These national Communist parties play the historical role of legal opposition parties "condemned" to be non-radical. They testify to the depth and scope of capitalist integration, and to the conditions which make the qualitative difference of conflicting interests appear as quantitative differences within the established society.

No analysis in depth seems to be necessary in order to find the reasons for these developments. As to the West: the former conflicts within society are modified and arbitrated under the double (and interrelated) impact of technical progress and international communism. Class struggles are attenuated and "imperialist contradictions" suspended before the threat from without. Mobilized against this threat, capitalist society shows an internal union and cohesion unknown at previous stages of industrial civilization. It is a cohesion on very material grounds; mobilization against the enemy works as a mighty stimulus of production and employment, thus sustaining the high standard of living.

On these grounds, there arises a universe of administration in which depressions are controlled and conflicts stabilized by the beneficial effects of growing productivity and threatening nuclear war. Is this stabilization "temporary" in the sense that it does not affect the *roots* of the conflicts which Marx found in the capitalist mode of production (contradiction between private ownership of the means of production and social productivity), or is it a transformation of the antagonistic structure itself, which resolves the contradictions by making them tolerable? And, if the second alternative is true, how does it change the relationship between capitalism and socialism which made the latter appear the historical negation of the former?

a precondition for the socialist development of all productive forces.

To be sure, Marx held that organization and direction of the productive apparatus by the "immediate producers" would introduce a *qualitative* change in the technical continuity: namely, production toward the satisfaction of freely developing individual needs. However, to the degree to which the established technical apparatus engulfs the public and private existence in all spheres of society—that is, becomes the medium of control and cohesion in a political universe which incorporates the laboring classes—to that degree would the qualitative change involve a change in the *technological structure itself*. And such change would *presuppose* that the laboring classes are alienated from this universe in their very existence, that their consciousness is that of the total impossibility to continue to exist in this universe, so that the need for qualitative change is a matter of life and death. Thus, the negation exists *prior* to the change itself, the notion that the liberating historical forces develop *within* the established society is a cornerstone of Marxian theory.²

Now it is precisely this new consciousness, this "space within," the space for the transcending historical practice, which is being barred by a society in which subjects as well as objects constitute instrumentalities in a whole that has its *raison d'être* in the accomplishments of its overpowering productivity. Its supreme promise is an ever-more-comfortable life for an ever-growing number of people who, in a strict sense, cannot imagine a qualitatively different universe of discourse and action, for the capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination and effort is an integral part of the given society. Those whose life is the hell of the Affluent Society are kept in line by a brutality which revives medieval and early modern practices. For the other, less

2. See p. 41.

"pas par l'obéissance, ni par la rudesse des labeurs, mais par le statu d'instrument et la réduction de l'homme à l'état de chose." ²³

This is the pure form of servitude: to exist as an instrument, as a thing. And this mode of existence is not abrogated if the thing is animated and chooses its material and intellectual food, if it does not feel its being-a-thing, if it is a pretty, clean, mobile thing. Conversely, as reification tends to become totalitarian by virtue of its technological form, the organizers and administrators themselves become increasingly dependent on the machinery which they organize and administer. And this mutual dependence is no longer the dialectical relationship between Master and Servant, which has been broken in the struggle for mutual recognition, but rather a vicious circle which encloses both the Master and the Servant. Do the technicians rule, or is their rule that of the others, who rely on the technicians as their planners and executors?

"... the pressures of today's highly technological arms race have taken the initiative and the power to make the crucial decisions out of the hands of responsible government officials and placed it in the hands of technicians, planners and scientists employed by vast industrial empires and charged with responsibility for their employers' interests. It is their job to dream up new weapons systems and persuade the military that the future of their military profession, as well as the country, depends upon buying what they have dreamed up." ²⁴

As the productive establishments rely on the military for self-preservation and growth, so the military relies on the corporations "not only for their weapons, but also for knowledge of what kind of weapons they need, how much they

23. "neither by obedience nor by hardness of labor but by the status of being a mere instrument, and the reduction of man to the state of a thing." François Perroux, *La Coexistence pacifique*, (Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1958), vol. III, p. 600.

24. Stewart Meacham, *Labor and the Cold War* (American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia 1959), p. 9.

will cost, and how long it will take to get them.”²⁵ A vicious circle seems indeed the proper image of a society which is self-expanding and self-perpetuating in its own preestablished direction—driven by the growing needs which it generates and, at the same time, contains.

Prospects of Containment

Is there any prospect that this chain of growing productivity and repression may be broken? An answer would require an attempt to project contemporary developments into the future, assuming a relatively normal evolution, that is, neglecting the very real possibility of a nuclear war. On this assumption, the Enemy would remain “permanent”—that is, communism would continue to coexist with capitalism. At the same time, the latter would continue to be capable of maintaining and even increasing the standard of living for an increasing part of the population—in spite of and through intensified production of the means of destruction, and methodical waste of resources and faculties. This capability has asserted itself in spite of and through two World Wars and immeasurable physical and intellectual regression brought about by the fascist systems.

The material base for this capability would continue to be available in

- (a) the growing productivity of labor (technical progress);
- (b) the rise in the birth rate of the underlying population;
- (c) the permanent defense economy;
- (d) the economic-political integration of the capitalist countries, and the building up of their relations with the underdeveloped areas.

25. *Ibid.*

production. . . . Human labor then no longer appears as enclosed in the process of production—man rather relates himself to the process of production as supervisor and regulator (*Wächter und Regulator*). . . . He stands outside of the process of production instead of being the principal agent in the process of production. . . . In this transformation, the great pillar of production and wealth is no longer the immediate labor performed by man himself, nor his labor time, but the appropriation of his own universal productivity (*Produktivkraft*), i.e., his knowledge and his mastery of nature through his societal existence—in one word: the development of the societal individual (*des gesellschaftlichen Individuums*). The *theft of another man's labor time, on which the [social] wealth still rests today*, then appears as a miserable basis compared with the new basis which large-scale industry itself has created. As soon as human labor, in its immediate form, has ceased to be the great source of wealth, labor time will cease, and must of necessity cease to be the measure of wealth, and the exchange value must of necessity cease to be the measure of use value. The *surplus labor of the mass* [of the population] has thus ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth (*des allgemeinen Reichtums*), and the idleness of the few has ceased to be the condition for the development of the universal intellectual faculties of man. The mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses . . .²⁷

Automation indeed appears to be the great catalyst of advanced industrial society. It is an explosive or non-explosive catalyst in the material base of qualitative change, the technical instrument of the turn from quantity to quality. For the social process of automation expresses the transformation, or rather transubstantiation of labor power, in which the latter, separated from the individual, becomes an independent producing object and thus a subject itself.

Automation, once it became *the* process of material production, would revolutionize the whole society. The reifica-

27. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1953), p. 592 f. See also p. 596. My translation.

3: The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness: Repressive Desublimation

Having discussed the political integration of advanced industrial society, an achievement rendered possible by growing technological productivity and the expanding conquest of man and nature, we will now turn to a corresponding integration in the realm of culture. In this chapter, certain key notions and images of literature and their fate will illustrate how the progress of technological rationality is liquidating the oppositional and transcending elements in the "higher culture." They succumb in fact to the process of *desublimation* which prevails in the advanced regions of contemporary society.

The achievements and the failures of this society invalidate its higher culture. The celebration of the autonomous personality, of humanism, of tragic and romantic love appears to be the ideal of a backward stage of the development. What is happening now is not the deterioration of higher culture into mass culture but the refutation of this culture by the reality. The reality surpasses its culture. Man today can do *more* than the culture heroes and half-gods; he has solved many insoluble problems. But he has also betrayed the hope and destroyed the truth which were preserved in the sublimations of higher culture. To be sure, the higher culture was always in contradiction with social reality, and only a privileged minority enjoyed its blessings and represented its ideals. The two antagonistic spheres of society have always coexisted; the higher culture has always been accommodating, while the reality was rarely disturbed by its ideals and its truth.

Today's novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension* of reality. This liquidation of *two-dimensional* culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the "cultural values," but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale.

In fact, they serve as instruments of social cohesion. The greatness of a free literature and art, the ideals of humanism, the sorrows and joys of the individual, the fulfillment of the personality are important items in the competitive struggle between East and West. They speak heavily against the present forms of communism, and they are daily administered and sold. The fact that they contradict the society which sells them does not count. Just as people know or feel that advertisements and political platforms must not be necessarily true or right, and yet hear and read them and even let themselves be guided by them, so they accept the traditional values and make them part of their mental equipment. If mass communications blend together harmoniously, and often unnoticeably, art, politics, religion, and philosophy with commercials, they bring these realms of culture to their common denominator—the commodity form. The music of the soul is also the music of salesmanship. Exchange value, not truth value counts. On it centers the rationality of the status quo, and all alien rationality is bent to it.

As the great words of freedom and fulfillment are pronounced by campaigning leaders and politicians, on the screens and radios and stages, they turn into meaningless sounds which obtain meaning only in the context of propaganda, business, discipline, and relaxation. This assimilation of the ideal with reality testifies to the extent to which the

ideal has been surpassed. It is brought down from the sublimated realm of the soul or the spirit or the inner man, and translated into operational terms and problems. Here are the progressive elements of mass culture. The perversion is indicative of the fact that advanced industrial society is confronted with the possibility of a materialization of ideals. The capabilities of this society are progressively reducing the sublimated realm in which the condition of man was represented, idealized, and indicted. Higher culture becomes part of the material culture. In this transformation, it loses the greater part of its truth.

The higher culture of the West—whose moral, aesthetic, and intellectual values industrial society still professes—was a pre-technological culture in a functional as well as chronological sense. Its validity was derived from the experience of a world which no longer exists and which cannot be recaptured because it is in a strict sense invalidated by technological society. Moreover, it remained to a large degree a feudal culture, even when the bourgeois period gave it some of its most lasting formulations. It was feudal not only because of its confinement to privileged minorities, not only because of its inherent romantic element (which will be discussed presently), but also because its authentic works expressed a conscious, methodical alienation from the entire sphere of business and industry, and from its calculable and profitable order.

While this bourgeois order found its rich—and even affirmative—representation in art and literature (as in the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, in the English novel of the nineteenth century, in Thomas Mann), it remained an order which was overshadowed, broken, refuted by another dimension which was irreconcilably antagonistic to the order of business, indicting it and denying it. And in the literature, this other dimension

is represented *not* by the religious, spiritual, moral heroes (who often sustain the established order) but rather by such disruptive characters as the artist, the prostitute, the adulteress, the great criminal and outcast, the warrior, the rebel-poet, the devil, the fool—those who don't earn a living, at least not in an orderly and normal way.

To be sure, these characters have not disappeared from the literature of advanced industrial society, but they survive essentially transformed. The vamp, the national hero, the beatnik, the neurotic housewife, the gangster, the star, the charismatic tycoon perform a function very different from and even contrary to that of their cultural predecessors. They are no longer images of another way of life but rather freaks or types of the same life, serving as an affirmation rather than negation of the established order.

Surely, the world of their predecessors was a backward, pre-technological world, a world with the good conscience of inequality and toil, in which labor was still a fated misfortune; but a world in which man and nature were not yet organized as things and instrumentalities. With its code of forms and manners, with the style and vocabulary of its literature and philosophy, this past culture expressed the rhythm and content of a universe in which valleys and forests, villages and inns, nobles and villains, salons and courts were a part of the experienced reality. In the verse and prose of this pre-technological culture is the rhythm of those who wander or ride in carriages, who have the time and the pleasure to think, contemplate, feel and narrate.

It is an outdated and surpassed culture, and only dreams and childlike regressions can recapture it. But this culture is, in some of its decisive elements, also a *post*-technological one. Its most advanced images and positions seem to survive their absorption into administered comforts and stimuli; they continue to haunt the consciousness with the possibility of their rebirth in the consummation of technical progress. They are

literary obsolescence. Some of these images pertain to contemporary literature and survive in its most advanced creations. What has been invalidated is their subversive force, their destructive content—their truth. In this transformation, they find their home in everyday living. The alien and alienating oeuvres of intellectual culture become familiar goods and services. Is their massive reproduction and consumption only a change in quantity, namely, growing appreciation and understanding, democratization of culture?

The truth of literature and art has always been granted (if it was granted at all) as one of a "higher" order, which should not and indeed did not disturb the order of business. What has changed in the contemporary period is the difference between the two orders and their truths. The absorbent power of society depletes the artistic dimension by assimilating its antagonistic contents. In the realm of culture, the new totalitarianism manifests itself precisely in a harmonizing pluralism, where the most contradictory works and truths peacefully coexist in indifference.

Prior to the advent of this cultural reconciliation, literature and art were essentially alienation, sustaining and protecting the contradiction—the unhappy consciousness of the divided world, the defeated possibilities, the hopes unfulfilled, and the promises betrayed. They were a rational, cognitive force, revealing a dimension of man and nature which was repressed and repelled in reality. Their truth was in the illusion evoked, in the insistence on creating a world in which the terror of life was called up and suspended—mastered by recognition. This is the miracle of the *chef-d'oeuvre*; it is the tragedy, sustained to the last, and the end of tragedy—its impossible solution. To live one's love and hatred, to live that which one is means defeat, resignation, and death. The crimes of society, the hell that man has made for man become unconquerable cosmic forces.

The tension between the actual and the possible is trans-

Their truth value depended to a large degree on an uncomprehended and unconquered dimension of man and nature, on the narrow limits placed on organization and manipulation, on the "insoluble core" which resisted integration. In the fully developed industrial society, this insoluble core is progressively whittled down by technological rationality. Obviously, the physical transformation of the world entails the mental transformation of its symbols, images, and ideas. Obviously, when cities and highways and National Parks replace the villages, valleys, and forests; when motorboats race over the lakes and planes cut through the skies—then these areas lose their character as a qualitatively different reality, as areas of contradiction.

And since contradiction is the work of the Logos—rational confrontation of "that which is not" with "that which is"—it must have a medium of communication. The struggle for this medium, or rather the struggle against its absorption into the predominant one-dimensionality, shows forth in the avant-garde efforts to create an estrangement which would make the artistic truth again communicable.

Bertolt Brecht has sketched the theoretical foundations for these efforts. The total character of the established society confronts the playwright with the question of whether it is still possible to "represent the contemporary world in the theater"—that is, represent it in such a manner that the spectator recognizes the truth which the play is to convey. Brecht answers that the contemporary world can be thus represented only if it is represented as subject to change³—as the state of negativity which is to be negated. This is doctrine which has to be learned, comprehended, and acted upon; but the theater is and ought to be entertainment, pleasure. However, entertainment and learning are not op-

3. Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften zum Theater* (Berlin and Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1957), p. 7, 9.

le travail qui fait vivre en nous ce qui n'existe pas.⁷

Naming the "things that are absent" is breaking the spell of the things that are; moreover, it is the ingression of a different order of things into the established one—"le commencement d'un monde."⁸

For the expression of this other order, which is transcendence within the one world, the poetic language depends on the transcendent elements in ordinary language.⁹ However, the total mobilization of all media for the defense of the established reality has coordinated the means of expression to the point where communication of transcending contents becomes technically impossible. The spectre that has haunted the artistic consciousness since Mallarmé—the impossibility of speaking a non-reified language, of communicating the negative—has ceased to be a spectre. It has materialized.

The truly avant-garde works of literature communicate the break with communication. With Rimbaud, and then with dadaism and surrealism, literature rejects the very structure of discourse which, throughout the history of culture, has linked artistic and ordinary language. The propositional system¹⁰ (with the sentence as its unit of meaning) was the medium in which the two dimensions of reality could meet, communicate and be communicated. The most sublime poetry and the lowest prose shared this medium of expression. Then, modern poetry "détruisait les rapports du langage et ramenait le discours à des stations de mots."¹¹

The word refuses the unifying, sensible rule of the

7. "the effort which makes live in us that which does not exist." *Ibid.*, p. 1333.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 1327 (with reference to the language of music).

9. See chapter VII below.

10. See chapter V below.

11. "destroyed the relationships of the language and brought discourse back to the stage of words." Roland Barthes, *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture*. Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1953, p. 72 (my emphasis).

sentence. It explodes the pre-established structure of meaning and, becoming an "absolute object" itself, designates an intolerable, self-defeating universe—a discontinuum. This subversion of the linguistic structure implies a subversion of the experience of nature:

La Nature y devient un discontinu d'objets solitaires et terribles, parce qu'ils n'ont que des liaisons virtuelles; personne ne choisit pour eux un sens privilégié ou un emploi ou un service, personne ne les réduit à la signification d'un comportement mental ou d'une intention, c'est-à-dire finalement d'une tendresse . . . Ces mots-objets sans liaison, parés de toute la violence de leur éclatement . . . ces mots poétiques excluent les hommes; il n'y a pas d'humanisme poétique de la modernité: ce discours debout est un discours plein de terreur, c'est-à-dire qu'il met l'homme en liaison non pas avec les autres hommes, mais avec les images les plus inhumaines de la Nature; le ciel, l'enfer, le sacré, l'enfance, la folie, la matière pure, etc.¹²

The traditional stuff of art (images, harmonies, colors) reappears only as "quotes," residues of past meaning in a context of refusal. Thus, the surrealist paintings

sind der Inbegriff dessen, was die Sachlichkeit mit einem Tabu zudeckt, weil es sie an ihr eigenes dinghaftes Wesen gemahnt und daran, dass sie nicht damit fertig wird, dass ihre Rationalität irrational bleibt. Der Surrealismus sammelt ein, was die Sachlichkeit den Menschen versagt; die Entstellungen bezeugen, was das Verbot dem Begehrten antat. Durch sie errettete er das Veraltete, ein Album von Idiosynkrasieen, in denen der Glücksanspruch

12. "Nature becomes a discontinuum of solitary and terrible objects because they have only virtual links. No one chooses for them a privileged meaning or use or service. No one reduces them to mean a mental attitude or an intention, that is to say, in the last analysis, a tenderness. . . . These word objects without link, armed with all the violence of their explosive power . . . these poetic words exclude men. There is no poetic humanism in "modernity": this heady discourse is a discourse full of terror which means that it relates man not to other men, but to the most inhuman images of nature, heaven, hell, the sacred, childhood, madness, pure matter etc. *Ibid.*, p. 73 f.

trast between the modern traveler and the wandering poet or artisan, between assembly line and handicraft, town and city, factory-produced bread and the home-made loaf, the sailboat and the outboard motor, etc. True, this romantic pre-technical world was permeated with misery, toil, and filth, and these in turn were the background of all pleasure and joy. Still, there was a "landscape," a medium of libidinal experience which no longer exists.

With its disappearance (itself a historical prerequisite of progress), a whole dimension of human activity and passivity has been de-eroticized. The environment from which the individual could obtain pleasure—which he could cathect as gratifying almost as an extended zone of the body—has been rigidly reduced. Consequently, the "universe" of libidinous cathexis is likewise reduced. The effect is a localization and contraction of libido, the reduction of erotic to sexual experience and satisfaction.¹⁶

For example, compare love-making in a meadow and in an automobile, on a lovers' walk outside the town walls and on a Manhattan street. In the former cases, the environment partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis and tends to be eroticized. Libido transcends beyond the immediate erotogenic zones—a process of nonrepressive sublimation. In contrast, a mechanized environment seems to block such self-transcendence of libido. Impelled in the striving to extend the field of erotic gratification, libido becomes less "polymorphous," less capable of eroticism beyond localized sexuality, and the *latter* is intensified.

Thus diminishing erotic and intensifying sexual energy, the technological reality limits the scope of sublimation. It also reduces the need for sublimation. In the mental apparatus, the tension between that which is desired and that which

16. In accordance with the terminology used in the later works of Freud: sexuality as "specialized" partial drive; Eros as that of the entire organism.

privacy in massive apartment houses and suburban homes breaks the barrier which formerly separated the individual from the public existence and exposes more easily the attractive qualities of other wives and other husbands.

This socialization is not contradictory but complementary to the de-erotization of the environment. Sex is integrated into work and public relations and is thus made more susceptible to (controlled) satisfaction. Technical progress and more comfortable living permit the systematic inclusion of libidinal components into the realm of commodity production and exchange. But no matter how controlled the mobilization of instinctual energy may be (it sometimes amounts to a scientific management of libido), no matter how much it may serve as a prop for the status quo—it is also gratifying to the managed individuals, just as racing the outboard motor, pushing the power lawn mower, and speeding the automobile are fun.

This mobilization and administration of libido may account for much of the voluntary compliance, the absence of terror, the pre-established harmony between individual needs and socially-required desires, goals, and aspirations. The technological and political conquest of the transcending factors in human existence, so characteristic of advanced industrial civilization, here asserts itself in the instinctual sphere: satisfaction in a way which generates submission and weakens the rationality of protest.

The range of socially permissible and desirable satisfaction is greatly enlarged, but through this satisfaction, the Pleasure Principle is reduced—deprived of the claims which are irreconcilable with the established society. Pleasure, thus adjusted, generates submission.

In contrast to the pleasures of adjusted desublimation, sublimation preserves the consciousness of the renunciations which the repressive society inflicts upon the individual, and thereby preserves the need for liberation. To be sure, all

style, the language in which the story is told—sexuality turns into a vehicle for the bestsellers of oppression. It could not be said of any of the sexy women in contemporary literature what Balzac says of the whore Esther: that hers was the tenderness which blossoms only in infinity. This society turns everything it touches into a potential source of progress and of exploitation, of drudgery and satisfaction, of freedom and of oppression. Sexuality is no exception.

The concept of controlled desublimation would imply the possibility of a simultaneous release of repressed sexuality and aggressiveness, a possibility which seems incompatible with Freud's notion of the fixed quantum of instinctual energy available for distribution between the two primary drives. According to Freud, strengthening of sexuality (libido) would necessarily involve weakening of aggressiveness, and vice versa. However, if the socially permitted and encouraged release of libido would be that of partial and localized sexuality, it would be tantamount to an actual compression of erotic energy, and this desublimation would be compatible with the growth of unsublimated as well as sublimated forms of aggressiveness. The latter is rampant throughout contemporary industrial society.

Has it attained a degree of normalization where the individuals are getting used to the risk of their own dissolution and disintegration in the course of normal national preparedness? Or is this acquiescence entirely due to their impotence to do much about it? In any case, the risk of avoidable, man-made destruction has become normal equipment in the mental as well as material household of the people, so that it can no longer serve to indict or refute the established social system. Moreover, as part of their daily household, it may even tie them to this system. The economic and political connection between the absolute enemy and the high standard of living (and the desired level of em-

ployment!) is transparent enough, but also rational enough to be accepted.

Assuming that the Destruction Instinct (in the last analysis: the Death Instinct) is a large component of the energy which feeds the technical conquest of man and nature, it seems that society's growing capacity to manipulate technical progress also increases its *capacity to manipulate and control this instinct*, i.e., to satisfy it "productively." Then social cohesion would be strengthened at the deepest instinctual roots. The supreme risk, and even the fact of war would meet, not only with helpless acceptance, but also with instinctual approval on the part of the victims. Here too, we would have controlled desublimation.

Institutionalized desublimation thus appears to be an aspect of the "conquest of transcendence" achieved by the one-dimensional society. Just as this society tends to reduce, and even absorb opposition (the qualitative difference!) in the realm of politics and higher culture, so it does in the instinctual sphere. The result is the atrophy of the mental organs for grasping the contradictions and the alternatives and, in the one remaining dimension of technological rationality, the *Happy Consciousness* comes to prevail.

It reflects the belief that the real is rational, and that the established system, in spite of everything, delivers the goods. The people are led to find in the productive apparatus the effective agent of thought and action to which their personal thought and action can and must be surrendered. And in this transfer, the apparatus also assumes the role of a moral agent. Conscience is absolved by reification, by the general necessity of things.

In this general necessity, guilt has no place. One man can give the signal that liquidates hundreds and thousands of people, then declare himself free from all pangs of conscience, and live happily ever after. The antifascist powers who beat fascism on the battlefields reap the benefits of the

superiority. And in the same way the destruction of resources and the proliferation of waste demonstrate its opulence and the "high levels of well-being"; "the Community is too well off to care!"¹

The Language of Total Administration

This sort of well-being, the productive superstructure over the unhappy base of society, permeates the "media" which mediate between the masters and their dependents. Its publicity agents shape the universe of communication in which the one-dimensional behavior expresses itself. Its language testifies to identification and unification, to the systematic promotion of positive thinking and doing, to the concerted attack on transcendent, critical notions. In the prevailing modes of speech, the contrast appears between two-dimensional, dialectical modes of thought and technological behavior or social "habits of thought."

In the expression of these habits of thought, the tension between appearance and reality, fact and factor, substance and attribute tend to disappear. The elements of autonomy, discovery, demonstration, and critique recede before designation, assertion, and imitation. Magical, authoritarian and ritual elements permeate speech and language. Discourse is deprived of the mediations which are the stages of the process of cognition and cognitive evaluation. The concepts which comprehend the facts and thereby transcend the facts are losing their authentic linguistic representation. Without these mediations, language tends to express and promote the immediate identification of reason and fact, truth and established truth, essence and existence, the thing and its function.

These identifications, which appeared as a feature of operationalism,² reappear as features of discourse in social

1. John K. Galbraith, *American Capitalism*; (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 96.

2. See p. 12.

At the nodal points of the universe of public discourse, self-validating, analytical propositions appear which function like magic-ritual formulas. Hammered and re-hammered into the recipient's mind, they produce the effect of enclosing it within the circle of the conditions prescribed by the formula.

I have already referred to the self-validating hypothesis as propositional form in the universe of political discourse.⁶ Such nouns as "freedom," "equality," "democracy," and "peace" imply, analytically, a specific set of attributes which occur invariably when the noun is spoken or written. In the West, the analytic predication is in such terms as free enterprise, initiative, elections, individual; in the East in terms of workers and peasants, building communism or socialism, abolition of hostile classes. On either side, transgression of the discourse beyond the closed analytical structure is incorrect or propaganda, although the means of enforcing the truth and the degree of punishment are very different. In this universe of public discourse, speech moves in synonyms and tautologies; actually, it never moves toward the qualitative difference. The analytic structure insulates the governing noun from those of its contents which would invalidate or at least disturb the accepted use of the noun in statements of policy and public opinion. The ritualized concept is made immune against contradiction.

Thus, the fact that the prevailing mode of freedom is servitude, and that the prevailing mode of equality is superimposed inequality is barred from expression by the closed definition of these concepts in terms of the powers which shape the respective universe of discourse. The result is the familiar Orwellian language ("peace is war" and "war is peace," etc.), which is by no means that of terroristic totalitarianism only. Nor is it any less Orwellian if the contradiction is not made explicit in the sentence but is enclosed in

6. See p. 14.

logic and no language should be capable of correctly joining luxury and fall-out. However, the logic and the language become perfectly rational when we learn that a "nuclear-powered, ballistic-missile-firing submarine" "carries a price tag of \$120,000,000" and that "carpeting, scrabble and TV" are provided in the \$1,000 model of the shelter. The validation is not primarily in the fact that this language sells (it seems that the fall-out business was not so good) but rather that it promotes the immediate identification of the particular with the general interest, Business with National Power, prosperity with the annihilation potential. It is only a slip of the truth if a theater announces as a "Special Election Eve Perf., Strindberg's *Dance of Death*."⁹ The announcement reveals the connection in a less ideological form than is normally admitted.

The unification of opposites which characterizes the commercial and political style is one of the many ways in which discourse and communication make themselves immune against the expression of protest and refusal. How can such protest and refusal find the right word when the organs of the established order admit and advertise that peace is really the brink of war, that the ultimate weapons carry their profitable price tags, and that the bomb shelter may spell coziness? In exhibiting its contradictions as the token of its truth, this universe of discourse closes itself against any other discourse which is not on its own terms. And, by its capacity to assimilate all other terms to its own, it offers the prospect of combining the greatest possible tolerance with the greatest possible unity. Nevertheless its language testifies to the repressive character of this unity. This language speaks in constructions which impose upon the recipient the slanted and abridged meaning, the blocked de-

9. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1960.

the combine is quite gentle—as in the case of the “bull-shouldered missileman”—or it conveys a threat, or an inspiring dynamic. But the effect is similar. The imposing structure unites the actors and actions of violence, power, protection, and propaganda in one lightning flash. We see the man or the thing in operation and only in operation—it cannot be otherwise.

Note on abridgment. NATO, SEATO, UN, AFL-CIO, AEC, but also USSR, DDR, etc. Most of these abbreviations are perfectly reasonable and justified by the length of the unabbreviated designata. However, one might venture to see in some of them a “cunning of Reason”—the abbreviation may help to repress undesired questions. NATO does not suggest what North Atlantic Treaty Organization says, namely, a treaty among the nations on the North-Atlantic—in which case one might ask questions about the membership of Greece and Turkey. USSR abbreviates Socialism and Soviet; DDR: democratic. UN dispenses with undue emphasis on “united”; SEATO with those Southeast-Asian countries which do not belong to it. AFL-CIO entombs the radical political differences which once separated the two organizations, and AEC is just one administrative agency among many others. The abbreviations denote that and only that which is institutionalized in such a way that the transcending connotation is cut off. The meaning is fixed, doctored, loaded. Once it has become an official vocable, constantly repeated in general usage, “sanctioned” by the intellectuals, it has lost all cognitive value and serves merely for recognition of an unquestionable fact.

This style is of an overwhelming *concreteness*. The “thing identified with its function” is more real than the thing distinguished from its function, and the linguistic expression of this identification (in the functional noun, and

in the many forms of syntactical abridgment) creates a basic vocabulary and syntax which stand in the way of differentiation, separation, and distinction. This language, which constantly imposes *images*, militates against the development and expression of *concepts*. In its immediacy and directness, it impedes conceptual thinking; thus, it impedes thinking. For the concept does *not* identify the thing and its function. Such identification may well be the legitimate and perhaps even the only meaning of the operational and technological concept, but operational and technological definitions are specific usages of concepts for specific purposes. Moreover, they dissolve concepts in operations and exclude the conceptual intent which is opposed to such dissolution. Prior to its operational usage, the concept *denies* the identification of the thing with its function; it distinguishes that which the thing *is* from the contingent functions of the thing in the established reality.

The prevalent tendencies of speech, which repulse these distinctions, are expressive of the changes in the modes of thought discussed in the earlier chapters—the functionalized, abridged and unified language is the language of one-dimensional thought. In order to illustrate its novelty, I shall contrast it briefly with a classical philosophy of grammar which transcends the behavioral universe and relates linguistic to ontological categories.

According to this philosophy, the grammatical subject of a sentence is first a “substance” and remains such in the various states, functions, and qualities which the sentence predicates of the subject. It is actively or passively related to its predicates but remains different from them. If it is not a proper noun, the subject is more than a noun: it names the *concept* of a thing, a universal which the sentence defines as in a particular state or function. The grammatical subject thus carries a meaning in *excess* of that expressed in the sentence.

encies reveal the one-dimensional mind in the language it speaks.

If the linguistic behavior blocks conceptual development, if it militates against abstraction and mediation, if it surrenders to the immediate facts, it repels recognition of the factors behind the facts, and thus repels recognition of the facts, and of their historical content. In and for the society, this organization of functional discourse is of vital importance; it serves as a vehicle of coordination and subordination. The unified, functional language is an irreconcilably anti-critical and anti-dialectical language. In it, operational and behavioral rationality absorbs the transcendent, negative, oppositional elements of Reason.

I shall discuss¹⁷ these elements in terms of the tension between the "is" and the "ought," between essence and appearance, potentiality and actuality—ingression of the negative in the positive determinations of logic. This sustained tension permeates the two-dimensional universe of discourse which is the universe of critical, abstract thought. The two dimensions are antagonistic to each other; the reality partakes of both of them, and the dialectical concepts develop the real contradictions. In its own development, dialectical thought came to comprehend the historical character of the contradictions and the process of their mediation as historical process. Thus the "other" dimension of thought appeared to be *historical* dimension—the potentiality as historical possibility, its realization as historical event.

The suppression of this dimension in the societal universe of operational rationality is a suppression of history, and this is not an academic but a political affair. It is suppression of the society's own past—and of its future, inasmuch as this future invokes the qualitative change, the negation of the present. A universe of discourse in which the categories of freedom have become interchangeable and

17. In chapter V below.

istics of the Marxian style. They can also be found (though in different modes) in the style of the great conservative and liberal critique of the unfolding bourgeois society. For example, the language of Burke and Tocqueville on the one side, of John Stuart Mill on the other is a highly demonstrative, conceptual, "open" language, which has not yet succumbed to the hypnotic-ritual formulas of present-day neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism.

However, the authoritarian ritualization of discourse is more striking where it affects the dialectical language itself. The requirements of competitive industrialization, and the total subjection of man to the productive apparatus appears in the authoritarian transformation of the Marxist into the Stalinist and post-Stalinist language. These requirements, as interpreted by the leadership which controls the apparatus, define what is right and wrong, true and false. They leave no time and no space for a discussion which would project disruptive alternatives. This language no longer lends itself to "discourse" at all. It pronounces and, by virtue of the power of the apparatus, establishes facts—it is self-validating enunciation. Here,²² it must suffice to quote and paraphrase the passage in which Roland Barthes describes its magic-authoritarian features: "il n'y a plus aucun sursis entre la dénomination et le jugement, et la clôture du langage est parfaite . . ." ²³

The closed language does not demonstrate and explain—it communicates decision, dictum, command. Where it defines, the definition becomes "separation of good from evil"; it establishes unquestionable rights and wrongs, and one value as justification of another value. It moves in tautologies, but the tautologies are terribly effective "sentences." They pass judgment in a "prejudged form"; they pronounce

22. See my *Soviet Marxism*, loc. cit., p. 87 ff.

23. "there is no longer any delay between the naming and the judgment, and the closing of the language is complete."

longer appears in alternative modes of life, it comes to rest in alternative techniques of manipulation and control. Language not only reflects these controls but becomes itself an instrument of control even where it does not transmit orders but information; where it demands, not obedience but choice, not submission but freedom.

This language controls by reducing the linguistic forms and symbols of reflection, abstraction, development, contradiction; by substituting images for concepts. It denies or absorbs the transcendent vocabulary; it does not search for but establishes and imposes truth and falsehood. But this kind of discourse is not terroristic. It seems unwarranted to assume that the recipients believe, or are made to believe, what they are being told. The new touch of the magic-ritual language rather is that people don't believe it, or don't care, and yet act accordingly. One does not "believe" the statement of an operational concept but it justifies itself in action—in getting the job done, in selling and buying, in refusal to listen to others, etc.

If the language of politics tends to become that of advertising, thereby bridging the gap between two formerly very different realms of society, then this tendency seems to express the degree to which domination and administration have ceased to be a separate and independent function in the technological society. This does not mean that the power of the professional politicians has decreased. The contrary is the case. The more global the challenge they build up in order to meet it, the more normal the vicinity of total destruction, the greater their freedom from effective popular sovereignty. But their domination has been incorporated into the daily performances and relaxation of the citizens, and the "symbols" of politics are also those of business, commerce, and fun.

The vicissitudes of the language have their parallel in the vicissitudes of political behavior. In the sale of equip-

ment for relaxing entertainment in bomb shelters, in the television show of competing candidates for national leadership, the juncture between politics, business, and fun is complete. But the juncture is fraudulent and fatally premature—business and fun are still the politics of domination. This is not the satire-play after the tragedy; it is not *finis tragoediae*—the tragedy may just begin. And again, it will not be the hero but the people who will be the ritual victims.

The Research of Total Administration

Functional communication is only the outer layer of the one-dimensional universe in which man is trained to forget—to translate the negative into the positive so that he can continue to function, reduced but fit and reasonably well. The institutions of free speech and freedom of thought do not hamper the mental coordination with the established reality. What is taking place is a sweeping redefinition of thought itself, of its function and content. The coordination of the individual with his society reaches into those layers of the mind where the very concepts are elaborated which are designed to comprehend the established reality. These concepts are taken from the intellectual tradition and translated into operational terms—a translation which has the effect of reducing the tension between thought and reality by weakening the negative power of thought.

This is a philosophical development, and in order to elucidate the extent to which it breaks with the tradition, the analysis will have to become increasingly abstract and ideological. It is the sphere farthest removed from the concreteness of society which may show most clearly the extent of the conquest of thought by society. Moreover, the analysis will have to go back into the history of the philosophic

they arrive at a false concreteness—a concreteness isolated from the conditions which constitute its reality. In this context, the operational treatment of the concept assumes a political function. The individual and his behavior are analyzed in a therapeutic sense—adjustment to his society. Thought and expression, theory and practice are to be brought in line with the facts of his existence without leaving room for the conceptual critique of these facts.

The therapeutic character of the operational concept shows forth most clearly where conceptual thought is methodically placed into the service of exploring and improving the existing social conditions, within the framework of the existing societal institutions—in industrial sociology, motivation research, marketing and public opinion studies.

If the given form of society is and remains the ultimate frame of reference for theory and practice, there is nothing wrong with this sort of sociology and psychology. It is more human and more productive to have good labor-management relations than bad ones, to have pleasant rather than unpleasant working conditions, to have harmony instead of conflict between the desires of the customers and the needs of business and politics.

But the rationality of this kind of social science appears in a different light if the given society, while remaining the frame of reference, becomes the object of a critical theory which aims at the very structure of this society, present in all particular facts and conditions and determining their place and their function. Then their ideological and political character becomes apparent, and the elaboration of adequately cognitive concepts demands going beyond the fallacious concreteness of positivist empiricism. The therapeutic and operational concept becomes false to the extent to which it insulates and atomizes the facts, stabilizes them within the repressive whole, and accepts the terms of this whole as

"Pragmatic science has the view of nature that is fitting for a technical age."¹⁷

To the degree to which this operationalism becomes the center of the scientific enterprise, rationality assumes the form of methodical construction; organization and handling of matter as the mere stuff of control, as instrumentality which lends itself to all purposes and ends—instrumentality *per se*, "in itself."

The "correct" attitude toward instrumentality is the *technical* approach, the correct logos is *techno-logy*, which projects and responds to a *technological reality*.¹⁸ In this reality, matter as well as science is "neutral"; objectivity has neither a telos in itself nor is it structured toward a telos. But it is precisely its neutral character which relates objectivity to a specific historical Subject—namely, to the consciousness that prevails in the society by which and for which this neutrality is established. It operates in the very abstractions which constitute the new rationality—as an internal rather than external factor. Pure and applied operationalism, theoretical and practical reason, the scientific and the business enterprise execute the reduction of secondary to primary qualities, quantification and abstraction from "particular sorts of entities."

True, the rationality of pure science is value-free and does not stipulate any practical ends, it is "neutral" to any extraneous values that may be imposed upon it. But this neutrality is a *positive* character. Scientific rationality makes for a specific societal organization precisely because it

17. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

18. I hope I will not be misunderstood as suggesting that the concepts of mathematical physics are designed as "tools," that they have a technical, practical intent. Techno-logical is rather the *a priori* "intuition" or apprehension of the universe in which science moves, in which it constitutes itself as *pure* science. Pure science remains committed to the *a priori* from which it abstracts. It might be clearer to speak of the instrumentalist *horizon* of mathematical physics. See Suzanne Bachelard, *La Conscience de rationalité* (Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1958), p. 31.

projects mere form (or mere matter—here, the otherwise opposite terms converge) which can be bent to practically all ends. Formalization and functionalization are, *prior* to all application, the “pure form” of a concrete societal practice. While science freed nature from inherent ends and stripped matter of all but quantifiable qualities, society freed men from the “natural” hierarchy of personal dependence and related them to each other in accordance with quantifiable qualities—namely, as units of abstract labor power, calculable in units of time. “By virtue of the rationalization of the modes of labor, the elimination of qualities is transferred from the universe of science to that of daily experience.”¹⁹

Between the two processes of scientific and societal quantification, is there parallelism and causation, or is their connection simply the work of sociological hindsight? The preceding discussion proposed that the new scientific rationality was in itself, in its very abstractness and purity, operational inasmuch as it developed under an instrumentalist horizon. Observation and experiment, the methodical organization and coordination of data, propositions, and conclusions never proceed in an unstructured, neutral, theoretical space. The project of cognition involves operations on objects, or abstractions from objects which occur in a given universe of discourse and action. Science observes, calculates, and theorizes from a position in this universe. The stars which Galileo observed were the same in classical antiquity, but the different universe of discourse and action—in short, the different social reality—opened the new direction and range of observation, and the possibilities of ordering the observed data. I am not concerned here with the historical relation between scientific and societal rationality in the beginning of the modern period. It is my purpose to demonstrate the *internal* instrumentalist character of this scientific

19. M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, loc. cit., p. 50 (my translation).

rationality by virtue of which it is *a priori* technology, and the *a priori* of a *specific* technology—namely, technology as form of social control and domination.

Modern scientific thought, inasmuch as it is pure, does not project particular practical goals nor particular forms of domination. However, there is no such thing as domination *per se*. As theory proceeds, it abstracts from, or rejects, a factual teleological context—that of the given, concrete universe of discourse and action. It is within this universe itself that the scientific project occurs or does not occur, that theory conceives or does not conceive the possible alternatives, that its hypotheses subvert or extend the pre-established reality.

The principles of modern science were *a priori* structured in such a way that they could serve as conceptual instruments for a universe of self-propelling, productive control; theoretical operationalism came to correspond to practical operationalism. The scientific method which led to the ever-more-effective domination of nature thus came to provide the pure concepts as well as the instrumentalities for the ever-more-effective domination of man by man through the domination of nature. Theoretical reason, remaining pure and neutral, entered into the service of practical reason. The merger proved beneficial to both. Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but *as* technology, and the latter provides the great legitimation of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture.

In this universe, technology also provides the great rationalization of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the “technical” impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one’s own life. For this unfreedom appears neither as irrational nor as political, but rather as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the productivity of labor. Technological rationality

which has its evident limits—in theory as well as in practice, in its pure as well as applied methods.

The preceding discussion seems to suggest not only the inner limitations and prejudices of scientific method but also its historical subjectivity. Moreover, it seems to imply the need for some sort of “qualitative physics,” revival of teleological philosophies, etc. I admit that this suspicion is justified, but at this point, I can only assert that no such obscurantist ideas are intended.²⁶

No matter how one defines truth and objectivity, they remain related to the human agents of theory and practice, and to their ability to comprehend and change their world. This ability in turn depends on the extent to which matter (whatever it may be) is recognized and understood as that which it *is* itself in all particular forms. In these terms, contemporary science is of immensely greater objective validity than its predecessors. One might even add that, at present, the scientific method is the only method that can claim such validity; the interplay of hypotheses and observable facts validates the hypotheses and establishes the facts. The point which I am trying to make is that science, *by virtue of its own method* and concepts, has projected and promoted a universe in which the domination of nature has remained linked to the domination of man—a link which tends to be fatal to this universe as a whole. Nature, scientifically comprehended and mastered, reappears in the technical apparatus of production and destruction which sustains and improves the life of the individuals while subordinating them to the masters of the apparatus. Thus the rational hierarchy merges with the social one. If this is the case, then the change in the direction of progress, which might sever this fatal link, would also affect the very structure of science—the scientific project. Its hypotheses, without losing their rational character, would develop in an essentially different

26. See chapter IX and X below.

tically certain, that it's the taste of, say, laurel. In all such cases, I am endeavouring to recognize the current item by searching in my past experience for something like it, some likeness in virtue of which it deserves, more or less positively, to be described by the same descriptive word, and I am meeting with varying degrees of success.

- (b) The other case is different, though it very naturally combines itself with the first. Here, what I try to do is to *savour* the current experience, to *peer* at it, to *sense* it vividly. I'm not sure it is the taste of pineapple: isn't there perhaps just *something* about it, a tang, a bite, a lack of bite, a cloying sensation, which isn't *quite* right for pineapple? Isn't there perhaps just a peculiar hint of green, which would rule out mauve and would hardly do for heliotrope? Or perhaps it is faintly odd: I must look more intently, scan it over and over: maybe just possibly there is a suggestion of an unnatural shimmer, so that it doesn't look quite like ordinary water. There is a lack of sharpness in what we actually sense, which is to be cured not, or not merely, by thinking, but by acuter discernment, by sensory discrimination (though it is of course true that thinking of other, and more pronounced, cases in our past experience can and does assist our powers of discrimination)."

What can be objectionable in this analysis? In its exactness and clarity, it is probably unsurpassable—it is correct. But that is all it is, and I argue that not only is it not enough, but it is destructive of philosophic thought, and of critical thought as such. From the philosophic point of view, two questions arise: (1) can the explication of concepts (or words) ever orient itself to, and terminate, in the actual universe of ordinary discourse? (2) are exactness and clarity ends in themselves, or are they committed to other ends?

I answer the first question in the affirmative as far as its first part is concerned. The most banal examples of speech may, precisely because of their banal character, elucidate the empirical world in its reality, and serve to explain our think-

TV
imminent!

ing, and clarifying of ambiguities and obscurities, neo-positivism is not concerned with the great and general ambiguity and obscurity which is the established universe of experience. And it must remain unconcerned because the method adopted by this philosophy discredits or "translates" the concepts which could guide the understanding of the established reality in its repressive and irrational structure—the concepts of negative thinking. The transformation of critical into positive thinking takes place mainly in the therapeutic treatment of universal concepts; their translation into operational and behavioral terms parallels closely the sociological translation discussed above.

The therapeutic character of the philosophic analysis is strongly emphasized—to cure from illusions, deceptions, obscurities, unsolvable riddles, unanswerable questions, from ghosts and spectres. Who is the patient? Apparently a certain sort of intellectual, whose mind and language do not conform to the terms of ordinary discourse. There is indeed a goodly portion of psychoanalysis in this philosophy—analysis without Freud's fundamental insight that the patient's trouble is rooted in a general sickness which cannot be cured by analytic therapy. Or, in a sense, according to Freud, the patient's disease is a protest reaction against the sick world in which he lives. But the physician must disregard the "moral" problem. He has to restore the patient's health, to make him capable of functioning normally in his world.

The philosopher is not a physician; his job is not to cure individuals but to comprehend the world in which they live—to understand it in terms of what it has done to man, and what it can do to man. For philosophy is (historically, and its history is still valid) the contrary of what Wittgenstein made it out to be when he proclaimed it as the renunciation of all theory, as the undertaking that "leaves everything as it is." And philosophy knows of no more useless "discovery"

Whereas the truth value of the former consists precisely in its relevance to and interference with the latter.

Under the repressive conditions in which men think and live, thought—any mode of thinking which is not confined to pragmatic orientation within the status quo—can recognize the facts and respond to the facts only by “going behind” them. Experience takes place before a curtain which conceals and, if the world is the appearance of something behind the curtain of immediate experience, then, in Hegel’s terms, it is we ourselves who are behind the curtain. We ourselves not as the subjects of common sense, as in linguistic analysis, nor as the “purified” subjects of scientific measurement, but as the subjects and objects of the historical struggle of man with nature and with society. Facts are what they are as occurrences in this struggle. Their factuality is historical, even where it is still that of brute, unconquered nature.

This intellectual dissolution and even subversion of the given facts is the historical task of philosophy and the philosophic dimension. Scientific method, too, goes beyond the facts and even against the facts of immediate experience. Scientific method develops in the tension between appearance and reality. The mediation between the subject and object of thought, however, is essentially different. In science, the medium is the observing, measuring, calculating, experimenting subject divested of all other qualities; the abstract subject projects and defines the abstract object.

In contrast, the objects of philosophic thought are related to a consciousness for which the concrete qualities enter into the concepts and into their interrelation. The philosophic concepts retain and explicate the pre-scientific mediations (the work of everyday practice, of economic organization, of political action) which have made the object-world that which it actually is—a world in which all facts are events, occurrences in a historical continuum.

and realistic notions of yesterday again appear to be mythological when confronted with the actual conditions. The reality of the laboring classes in advanced industrial society makes the Marxian "proletariat" a mythological concept; the reality of present-day socialism makes the Marxian idea a dream. The reversal is caused by the contradiction between theory and facts—a contradiction which, by itself, does not yet falsify the former. The unscientific, speculative character of critical theory derives from the specific character of its concepts, which designate and define the irrational in the rational, the mystification in the reality. Their mythological quality reflects the mystifying quality of the given facts—the deceptive harmonization of the societal contradictions.

The technical achievement of advanced industrial society, and the effective manipulation of mental and material productivity have brought about a *shift in the locus of mystification*. If it is meaningful to say that the ideology comes to be embodied in the process of production itself, it may also be meaningful to suggest that, in this society, the rational rather than the irrational becomes the most effective vehicle of mystification. The view that the growth of repression in contemporary society manifested itself, in the ideological sphere, first in the ascent of irrational pseudo-philosophies (*Lebensphilosophie*; the notions of Community against Society; Blood and Soil, etc.) was refuted by Fascism and National Socialism. These regimes denied these and their own irrational "philosophies" by the all-out technical rationalization of the apparatus. It was the total mobilization of the material and mental machinery which did the job and installed its mystifying power over the society. It served to make the individuals incapable of seeing "behind" the machinery those who used it, those who profited from it, and those who paid for it.

Today, the mystifying elements are mastered and em-

ployed in productive publicity, propaganda, and politics. Magic, witchcraft, and ecstatic surrender are practiced in the daily routine of the home, the shop, and the office, and the rational accomplishments conceal the irrationality of the whole. For example, the scientific approach to the vexing problem of mutual annihilation—the mathematics and calculations of kill and over-kill, the measurement of spreading or not-quite-so-spreading fallout, the experiments of endurance in abnormal situations—is mystifying to the extent to which it promotes (and even demands) behavior which accepts the insanity. It thus counteracts a truly rational behavior—namely, the refusal to go along, and the effort to do away with the conditions which produce the insanity.

Against this new mystification, which turns rationality into its opposite, the distinction must be upheld. The rational is *not* irrational, and the difference between an exact recognition and analysis of the facts, and a vague and emotional speculation is as essential as ever before. The trouble is that the statistics, measurements, and field studies of empirical sociology and political science are not rational enough. They become mystifying to the extent to which they are isolated from the truly concrete context which makes the facts and determines their function. This context is larger and other than that of the plants and shops investigated, of the towns and cities studied, of the areas and groups whose public opinion is polled or whose chance of survival is calculated. And it is also more real in the sense that it creates and determines the facts investigated, polled, and calculated. This real context in which the particular subjects obtain their real significance is definable only within a *theory* of society. For the factors in the facts are not immediate data of observation, measurement, and interrogation. They become data only in an analysis which is capable of identifying the structure that holds together the parts and processes of society and that determines their interrelation.

Analytic philosophy often spreads the atmosphere of denunciation and investigation by committee. The intellectual is called on the carpet. What do you mean when you say. . . ? Don't you conceal something? You talk a language which is suspect. You don't talk like the rest of us, like the man in the street, but rather like a foreigner who does not belong here. We have to cut you down to size, expose your tricks, purge you. We shall teach you to say what you have in mind, to "come clear," to "put your cards on the table." Of course, we do not impose on you and your freedom of thought and speech; you may think as you like. But once you speak, you have to communicate your thoughts to us—in our language or in yours. Certainly, you may speak your own language, but it must be translatable, and it will be translated. You may speak poetry—that is all right. We love poetry. But we want to understand your poetry, and we can do so only if we can interpret your symbols, metaphors, and images in terms of ordinary language.

The poet might answer that indeed he wants his poetry to be understandable and understood (that is why he writes it), but if what he says could be said in terms of ordinary language he would probably have done so in the first place. He might say: Understanding of my poetry presupposes the collapse and invalidation of precisely that universe of discourse and behavior into which you want to translate it. My language can be learned like any other language (in point of fact, it is also your own language), then it will appear that my symbols, metaphors, etc. are *not* symbols, metaphors, etc. but mean exactly what they say. Your tolerance is deceptive. In reserving for me a special niche of meaning and significance, you grant me exemption from sanity and reason, but in my view, the madhouse is somewhere else.

The poet may also feel that the solid sobriety of linguistic philosophy speaks a rather prejudiced and emotional

language—that of the angry old or young men. Their vocabulary abounds with the “improper,” “queer,” “absurd,” “puzzling,” “odd,” “gabbling,” and “gibbering.” Improper and puzzling oddities have to be removed if sensible understanding is to prevail. Communication ought not to be over the head of the people; contents that go beyond common and scientific sense should not disturb the academic and the ordinary universe of discourse.

But critical analysis must dissociate itself from that which it strives to comprehend; the philosophic terms must be other than the ordinary ones in order to elucidate the full meaning of the latter.¹⁹ For the established universe of discourse bears throughout the marks of the specific modes of domination, organization, and manipulation to which the members of a society are subjected. People depend for their living on bosses and politicians and jobs and neighbors who make them speak and mean as they do; they are compelled, by societal necessity, to identify the “thing” (including their own person, mind, feeling) with its functions. How do we know? Because we watch television, listen to the radio, read the newspapers and magazines, talk to people.

Under these circumstances, the spoken phrase is an expression of the individual who speaks it, *and* of those who make him speak as he does, *and* of whatever tension or contradiction may interrelate them. In speaking their own language, people also speak the language of their masters, benefactors, advertisers. Thus they do not only express *themselves*, their own knowledge, feelings, and aspirations, but also something other than themselves. Describing “by themselves” the political situation, either in their home town or in the international scene, they (and “they” includes *us*,

19. Contemporary analytic philosophy has in its own way recognized this necessity as the problem of *metalanguage*; see p. 179 above and 195 below.

This desideratum has been fulfilled in the work of Karl Kraus. He has demonstrated how an "internal" examination of speech and writing, of punctuation, even of typographical errors can reveal a whole moral or political system. This examination still moves within the ordinary universe of discourse; it needs no artificial, "higher-level" language in order to extrapolate and clarify the examined language. The word, the syntactic form, are read in the context in which they appear—for example, in a newspaper which, in a specific city or country, espouses specific opinions through the pen of specific persons. The lexicographic and syntactical context thus opens into another dimension—which is not extraneous but constitutive of the word's meaning and function—that of the Vienna press during and after the First World War; the attitude of its editors toward the slaughter, the monarchy, the republic, etc. In the light of this dimension, the usage of the word, the structure of the sentence assume a meaning and function which do not appear in "unmediated" reading. The crimes against language, which appear in the style of the newspaper, pertain to its political style. Syntax, grammar, and vocabulary become moral and political acts. Or, the context may be an aesthetic and philosophic one: literary criticism, an address before a learned society, or the like. Here, the linguistic analysis of a poem or an essay confronts the given (immediate) material (the language of the respective poem or essay) with that which the writer found in the literary tradition, and which he transformed.

For such an analysis, the meaning of a term or form demands its development in a multi-dimensional universe, where any expressed meaning partakes of several interrelated, overlapping, and antagonistic "systems." For example, it belongs:

- (a) to an individual project, i.e., the specific communication (a newspaper article, a speech) made at a specific occasion for a specific purpose;

stand each other only through whole areas of misunderstanding and contradiction. The real universe of ordinary language is that of the struggle for existence. It is indeed an ambiguous, vague, obscure universe, and is certainly in need of clarification. Moreover, such clarification may well fulfill a therapeutic function, and if philosophy would become therapeutic, it would really come into its own.

Philosophy approaches this goal to the degree to which it frees thought from its enslavement by the established universe of discourse and behavior, elucidates the negativity of the Establishment (its positive aspects are abundantly publicized anyway) and projects its alternatives. To be sure, philosophy contradicts and projects in thought only. It is ideology, and this ideological character is the very fate of philosophy which no scientism and positivism can overcome. Still, its ideological effort may be truly therapeutic—to show reality as that which it really is, and to show that which this reality prevents from being.

In the totalitarian era, the therapeutic task of philosophy would be a political task, since the established universe of ordinary language tends to coagulate into a totally manipulated and indoctrinated universe. Then politics would appear in philosophy, not as a special discipline or object of analysis, nor as a special political philosophy, but as the intent of its concepts to comprehend the unmutilated reality. If linguistic analysis does not contribute to such understanding; if, instead, it contributes to enclosing thought in the circle of the mutilated universe of ordinary discourse, it is at best entirely inconsequential. And, at worst, it is an escape into the non-controversial, the unreal, into that which is only academically controversial.

realization emerge other projects, and among them those which would change the established one in its totality. It is with reference to such a transcendent project that the criteria for objective historical truth can best be formulated as the criteria of its rationality:

(1) The transcendent project must be in accordance with the real possibilities open at the attained level of the material and intellectual culture.

(2) The transcendent project, in order to falsify the established totality, must demonstrate its own *higher* rationality in the threefold sense that

- (a) it offers the prospect of preserving and improving the productive achievements of civilization;
- (b) it defines the established totality in its very structure, basic tendencies, and relations;
- (c) its realization offers a greater chance for the pacification of existence, within the framework of institutions which offer a greater chance for the free development of human needs and faculties.

Obviously, this notion of rationality contains, especially in the last statement, a value judgment, and I reiterate what I stated before: I believe that the very concept of Reason originates in this value judgment, and that the concept of truth cannot be divorced from the value of Reason.

"Pacification," "free development of human needs and faculties"—these concepts can be empirically defined in terms of the available intellectual and material resources and capabilities and their systematic use for attenuating the struggle for existence. This is the objective ground of historical rationality.

If the historical continuum itself provides the objective ground for determining the truth of different historical

- (3) The subway during evening rush hour. What I see of the people are tired faces and limbs, hatred and anger. I feel someone might at any moment draw a knife—just so. They read, or rather they are soaked in their newspaper or magazine or paperback. And yet, a couple of hours later, the same people, deodorized, washed, dressed-up or down, may be happy and tender, really smile, and forget (or remember). But most of them will probably have some awful togetherness or aloneness at home.

These examples may illustrate the happy marriage of the positive and the negative—the objective ambiguity which adheres to the data of experience. It is objective ambiguity because the shift in my sensations and reflections responds to the manner in which the experienced facts are actually interrelated. But this interrelation, if comprehended, shatters the harmonizing consciousness and its false realism. Critical thought strives to define the irrational character of the established rationality (which becomes increasingly obvious) and to define the tendencies which cause this rationality to generate its own transformation. "Its own" because, as historical totality, it has developed forces and capabilities which themselves become projects beyond the established totality. They are possibilities of the advancing technological rationality and, as such, they involve the whole of society. The technological transformation is at the same time political transformation, but the political change would turn into qualitative social change only to the degree to which it would alter the direction of technical progress—that is, develop a new technology. For the established technology has become an instrument of destructive politics.

Such qualitative change would be transition to a higher stage of civilization if technics were designed and utilized for the pacification of the struggle for existence. In order to indicate the disturbing implications of this statement, I submit that such a new direction of technical progress would

be the catastrophe of the established direction, not merely the quantitative evolution of the prevailing (scientific and technological) rationality but rather its catastrophic transformation, the emergence of a new idea of Reason, theoretical and practical.

The new idea of Reason is expressed in Whitehead's proposition: "The function of Reason is to promote the art of life."¹ In view of this end, Reason is the "direction of the attack on the environment" which derives from the "threefold urge: (1) to live, (2) to live well, (3) to live better."²

Whitehead's propositions seem to describe the actual development of Reason as well as its failure. Or rather they seem to suggest that Reason is still to be discovered, recognized, and realized, for hitherto the historical function of Reason has also been to repress and even destroy the urge to live, to live well, and to live better—or to postpone and put an exorbitantly high price on the fulfillment of this urge.

In Whitehead's definition of the function of Reason, the term "art" connotes the element of determinate negation. Reason, in its application to society, has thus far been opposed to art, while art was granted the privilege of being rather irrational—not subject to scientific, technological, and operational Reason. The rationality of domination has separated the Reason of science and the Reason of art, or, it has falsified the Reason of art by integrating art into the universe of domination. It was a separation because, from the beginning, science contained the aesthetic Reason, the free play and even the folly of imagination, the fantasy of transformation; science indulged in the rationalization of possibilities. However, this free play retained the commitment to the prevailing unfreedom in which it was born and from which it abstracted; the possibilities with which science played were also those of liberation—of a higher truth.

1. A. N. Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 5.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the cognitive value of such propositions. Like all propositions that claim truth, they must be verifiable; they must stay within the universe of possible experience. This universe is never co-extensive with the established one but extends to the limits of the world which can be created by transforming the established one, with the means which the latter has provided or withheld. The range of verifiability in this sense grows in the course of history. Thus, the speculations about the Good Life, the Good Society, Permanent Peace obtain an increasingly realistic content; on technological grounds, the metaphysical tends to become physical.

Moreover, if the truth of metaphysical propositions is determined by their historical content (i.e., by the degree to which they define historical possibilities), then the relation between metaphysics and science is strictly historical. In our own culture, at least, that part of Saint-Simon's Law of the Three Stages is still taken for granted which stipulates that the metaphysical *precedes* the scientific stage of civilization. But is this sequence a final one? Or does the scientific transformation of the world contain its own metaphysical transcendence?

At the advanced stage of industrial civilization, scientific rationality, translated into political power, appears to be the decisive factor in the development of historical alternatives. The question then arises: does this power tend toward its own negation—that is, toward the promotion of the “art of life”? Within the established societies, the continued application of scientific rationality would have reached a terminal point with the mechanization of all socially necessary but individually repressive labor (“socially necessary” here includes all performances which can be exercised more effectively by machines, even if these performances produce luxuries and waste rather than necessities). But this stage would also be the end and limit of the scientific rationality

in its established structure and direction. Further progress would mean the *break*, the turn of quantity into quality. It would open the possibility of an essentially new human reality—namely, existence in free time on the basis of fulfilled vital needs. Under such conditions, the scientific project itself would be free for trans-utilitarian ends, and free for the “art of living” beyond the necessities and luxuries of domination. In other words, the completion of the technological reality would be not only the prerequisite, but also the rationale for *transcending* the technological reality. X

This would mean reversal of the traditional relationship between science and metaphysics. The ideas defining reality in terms other than those of the exact or behavioral sciences would lose their metaphysical or emotive character as a result of the scientific transformation of the world; the scientific concepts could project and define the possible realities of a free and pacified existence. The elaboration of such concepts would mean more than the evolution of the prevailing sciences. It would involve the scientific rationality as a whole, which has thus far been committed to an unfree existence and would mean a new idea of science, of Reason. |||

If the completion of the technological project involves a break with the prevailing technological rationality, the break in turn depends on the continued existence of the technical base itself. For it is this base which has rendered possible the satisfaction of needs and the reduction of toil—it remains the very base of all forms of human freedom. The qualitative change rather lies in the reconstruction of this base—that is, in its development with a view of different ends. |

I have stressed that this does not mean the revival of “values,” spiritual or other, which are to supplement the scientific and technological transformation of man and nature.⁴ On the contrary, the historical achievement of

4. See chapter I, esp. p. 18.

science and technology has rendered possible the *translation of values into technical tasks*—the materialization of values. Consequently, what is at stake is the redefinition of values in *technical terms*, as elements in the technological process. The new ends, as technical ends, would then operate in the project and in the construction of the machinery, and not only in its utilization. Moreover, the new ends might assert themselves even in the construction of scientific hypotheses—in pure scientific theory. From the quantification of secondary qualities, science would proceed to the quantification of values.

For example, what is calculable is the minimum of labor with which, and the extent to which, the vital needs of all members of a society could be satisfied—provided the available resources were used for this end, without being restricted by other interests, and without impeding the accumulation of capital necessary for the development of the respective society. In other words; quantifiable is the available range of freedom from want. Or, calculable is the degree to which, under the same conditions, care could be provided for the ill, the infirm, and the aged—that is, quantifiable is the possible reduction of anxiety, the possible freedom from fear.

The obstacles that stand in the way of materialization are definable political obstacles. Industrial civilization has reached the point where, with respect to the aspirations of man for a human existence, the scientific abstraction from final causes becomes obsolete in science's own terms. Science itself has rendered it possible to make final causes the proper domain of science. Society,

“par une élévation et un élargissement du domaine technique, doit remettre à leur place, *comme techniques*, les problèmes de finalité, considérés à tort comme éthiques et parfois comme religieux. *L'inachèvement* des techniques sacralise les problèmes de

finalité et asservit l'homme au respect de fins qu'il se représente comme des absolus."⁵

Under this aspect, "neutral" scientific method and technology become the science and technology of a historical phase which is being surpassed by its own achievements—which has reached its determinate negation. Instead of being separated from science and scientific method, and left to subjective preference and irrational, transcendental sanction, formerly metaphysical ideas of liberation may become the proper object of science. But this development confronts science with the unpleasant task of becoming political—of recognizing scientific consciousness as political consciousness, and the scientific enterprise as political enterprise. For the transformation of values into needs, of final causes into technical possibilities is a new stage in the conquest of oppressive, unmastered forces in society as well as in nature. It is an act of *liberation*:

"L'homme se libère de sa situation d'être asservi par la finalité du tout en apprenant à faire de la finalité, à organiser un tout finalisé qu'il juge et apprécie, pour n'avoir pas à subir passivement une intégration de fait." . . . "L'homme dépasse l'asservissement en organisant consciemment la finalité . . ."⁶

However, in constituting themselves *methodically* as political enterprise, science and technology would *pass beyond* the stage at which they were, because of their neutrality, *subjected* to politics and against their intent func-

5. "through a raising and enlarging of the technical sphere, must treat as *technical* problems, questions of finality considered wrongly as ethical and sometimes religious. The *incompleteness* of technics makes a fetish of problems of finality and enslaves man to ends which he thinks of as absolutes." Gilbert Simondon, *loc. cit.* p. 151; my italics.

6. "Man liberates himself from his situation of being subjected to the finality of everything by learning to create finality, to organise a "finalised" whole, which he judges and evaluates. Man overcomes enslavement by organising consciously finality." *Ibid.*, p. 103.

tioning as political instrumentalities. For the technological redefinition and the technical mastery of final causes *is* the construction, development, and utilization of resources (material and intellectual) *freed* from all *particular* interests which impede the satisfaction of human needs and the evolution of human faculties. In other words, it is the rational enterprise of man as man, of mankind. Technology thus may provide the historical correction of the premature identification of Reason and Freedom, according to which man can become and remain free in the progress of self-perpetuating productivity on the basis of oppression. To the extent to which technology has developed on this basis, the correction can never be the result of technical progress per se. It involves a political reversal.

Industrial society possesses the instrumentalities for transforming the metaphysical into the physical, the inner into the outer, the adventures of the mind into adventures of technology. The terrible phrases (and realities of) "engineers of the soul," "head shrinkers," "scientific management," "science of consumption," epitomize (in a miserable form) the progressing rationalization of the irrational, of the "spiritual"—the denial of the idealistic culture. But the consummation of technological rationality, while translating ideology into reality, would also transcend the materialistic antithesis to this culture. For the translation of values into needs is the twofold process of (1) material satisfaction (materialization of freedom) and (2) the free development of needs on the basis of satisfaction (non-repressive sublimation). In this process, the relation between the material and intellectual faculties and needs undergoes a fundamental change. The free play of thought and imagination assumes a rational and directing function in the realization of a pacified existence of man and nature. And the ideas of justice, freedom, and humanity then obtain their truth and good

material base of society with a view to pacification may involve a qualitative as well as quantitative *reduction* of power, in order to create the space and time for the development of productivity under self-determined incentives. The notion of such a reversal of power is a strong motive in dialectical theory.

To the degree to which the goal of pacification determines the Logos of technics, it alters the relation between technology and its primary object, Nature. Pacification presupposes mastery of Nature, which is and remains the object opposed to the developing subject. But there are two kinds of mastery: a repressive and a liberating one. The latter involves the reduction of misery, violence, and cruelty. In Nature as well as in History, the struggle for existence is the token of scarcity, suffering, and want. They are the qualities of blind matter, of the realm of immediacy in which life passively suffers its existence. This realm is gradually mediated in the course of the historical transformation of Nature; it becomes part of the human world, and to this extent, the qualities of Nature are historical qualities. In the process of civilization, Nature ceases to be mere Nature to the degree to which the struggle of blind forces is comprehended and mastered in the light of freedom.⁷

History is the negation of Nature. What is only natural is overcome and recreated by the power of Reason. The metaphysical notion that Nature comes to itself in history points to the unconquered limits of Reason. It claims them as historical limits—as a task yet to be accomplished, or rather yet to be undertaken. If Nature is in itself a rational, legiti-

7. Hegel's concept of freedom presupposes consciousness throughout (in Hegel's terminology: self-consciousness). Consequently, the "realization" of Nature is not, and never can be Nature's own work. But inasmuch as Nature is in itself negative (i.e., wanting in its own existence), the historical transformation of Nature by Man is, as the overcoming of this negativity, the liberation of Nature. Or, in Hegel's words, Nature is in its essence non-natural—"Geist."

mate object of science, then it is the legitimate object not only of Reason as power but also of Reason as freedom; not only of domination but also of liberation. With the emergence of man as the *animal rationale*—capable of transforming Nature in accordance with the faculties of the mind and the capacities of matter—the merely natural, as the sub-rational, assumes negative status. It becomes a realm to be comprehended and organized by Reason.

And to the degree to which Reason succeeds in subjecting matter to rational standards and aims, all sub-rational existence appears to be want and privation, and their reduction becomes the historical task. Suffering, violence, and destruction are categories of the natural as well as human reality, of a helpless and heartless universe. The terrible notion that the sub-rational life of nature is destined to remain forever such a universe, is neither a philosophic nor a scientific one; it was pronounced by a different authority:

“When the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asked the Pope for his support, he refused it, on the ground that human beings owe no duty to lower animals, and that ill-treating animals is not sinful. This is because animals have no souls.”⁸

Materialism, which is not tainted by such ideological abuse of the soul, has a more universal and realistic concept of salvation. It admits the reality of Hell only at one definite place, here on earth, and asserts that this Hell was created by Man (and by Nature). Part of this Hell is the ill-treatment of animals—the work of a human society whose rationality is still the irrational.

All joy and all happiness derive from the ability to transcend Nature—a transcendence in which the mastery of Nature is itself subordinated to liberation and pacification of existence. All tranquillity, all delight is the result

8. Quoted in: Bertrand Russell, *Unpopular Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950) p. 76.

of conscious *mediation*, of autonomy and contradiction. Glorification of the natural is part of the ideology which protects an unnatural society in its struggle against liberation. The defamation of birth control is a striking example. In some backward areas of the world, it is also "natural" that black races are inferior to white, and that the dogs get the hindmost, and that business must be. It is also natural that big fish eat little fish—though it may not seem natural to the little fish. Civilization produces the means for freeing Nature from its own brutality, its own insufficiency, its own blindness, by virtue of the cognitive and transforming power of Reason. And Reason can fulfill this function only as post-technological rationality, in which technics is itself the instrumentality of pacification, organon of the "art of life." The function of Reason then converges with the function of Art.

The Greek notion of the affinity between art and technics may serve as a preliminary illustration. The artist possesses the ideas which, as final causes, guide the construction of certain things—just as the engineer possesses the ideas which guide, as final causes, the construction of a machine. For example, the idea of an abode for human beings determines the architect's construction of a house; the idea of wholesale nuclear explosion determines the construction of the apparatus which is to serve this purpose. Emphasis on the essential relation between art and technics points up the specific *rationality* of art.

Like technology, art creates another universe of thought and practice against and within the existing one. But in contrast to the technical universe, the artistic universe is one of illusion, semblance, *Schein*. However, this semblance is resemblance to a reality which exists as the threat and promise of the established one.⁹ In various forms of mask and silence, the artistic universe is organized by the images of a

9. See chapter III.

life without fear—in mask and silence because art is without power to bring about this life, and even without power to represent it adequately. Still, the powerless, illusory truth of art (which has never been more powerless and more illusory than today, when it has become an omnipresent ingredient of the administered society) testifies to the validity of its images. The more blatantly irrational the society becomes, the greater the rationality of the artistic universe. || ✓

Technological civilization establishes a specific relation between art and technics. I mentioned above the notion of a reversal of the Law of the Three Stages and of a “revalidation” of metaphysics *on the basis* of the scientific and technological transformation of the world. The same notion may now be extended to the relation between science-technology and art. The rationality of art, its ability to “project” existence, to define yet unrealized possibilities could then be envisaged as *validated by and functioning in the scientific-technological transformation of the world*. Rather than being the handmaiden of the established apparatus, beautifying its business and its misery, art would become a technique for destroying this business and this misery.

The technological rationality of art seems to be characterized by an aesthetic “reduction”:

“Art is able to reduce the apparatus which the external appearance requires in order to preserve itself—reduction to the limits in which the external may become the manifestation of spirit and freedom.¹⁰”

According to Hegel, art reduces the immediate contingency in which an object (or a totality of objects) exists, to a state in which the object takes on the form and quality of freedom.

10. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner (Stuttgart, Frommann, 1929), vol. XII, p. 217 f. See also Osmaston's translation, in Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art* (London, Bell and Sons, 1920), vol. I, p. 214.

political-manipulative know-how, between profitable productivity and domination, lends to the conquest of scarcity the weapons for containing liberation. To a great extent, it is the sheer *quantity* of goods, services, work, and recreation in the overdeveloped countries which effectuates this containment. Consequently, qualitative change seems to presuppose a *quantitative* change in the advanced standard of living, namely, *reduction of overdevelopment*.

The standard of living attained in the most advanced industrial areas is not a suitable model of development if the aim is pacification. In view of what this standard has made of Man and Nature, the question must again be asked whether it is worth the sacrifices and the victims made in its defense. The question has ceased to be irresponsible since the "affluent society" has become a society of permanent mobilization against the risk of annihilation, and since the sale of its goods has been accompanied by moronization, the perpetuation of toil, and the promotion of frustration.

Under these circumstances, liberation from the affluent society does not mean return to healthy and robust poverty, moral cleanliness, and simplicity. On the contrary, the elimination of profitable waste would increase the social wealth available for distribution, and the end of permanent mobilization would reduce the social need for the denial of satisfactions that are the individual's own—denials which now find their compensation in the cult of fitness, strength, and regularity.

Today, in the prosperous warfare and welfare state, the human qualities of a pacified existence seem asocial and unpatriotic—qualities such as the refusal of all toughness, togetherness, and brutality; disobedience to the tyranny of the majority; profession of fear and weakness (the most rational reaction to this society!); a sensitive intelligence sickened by that which is being perpetrated; the commitment to the feeble

planned annihilation of life in the National Interest, and to the unplanned deprivation of life on behalf of private interests. These moral scruples are understandable and reasonable because such a society needs an ever-increasing number of customers and supporters; the constantly regenerated excess capacity must be managed.

However, the requirements of profitable mass production are not necessarily identical with those of mankind. The problem is not only (and perhaps not even primarily) that of adequately feeding and caring for the growing population—it is first a problem of number, of mere quantity. There is more than poetic license in the indictment which Stefan George pronounced half a century ago: "Schon eure Zahl ist Frevell"

The crime is that of a society in which the growing population aggravates the struggle for existence in the face of its possible alleviation. The drive for more "living space" operates not only in international aggressiveness but also *within* the nation. Here, expansion has, in all forms of teamwork, community life, and fun, invaded the inner space of privacy and practically eliminated the possibility of that isolation in which the individual, thrown back on himself alone, can think and question and find. This sort of privacy—the sole condition that, on the basis of satisfied vital needs, can give meaning to freedom and independence of thought—has long since become the most expensive commodity, available only to the very rich (who don't use it). In this respect, too, "culture" reveals its feudal origins and limitations. It can become democratic only through the abolition of mass democracy, i.e., if society has succeeded in restoring the prerogatives of privacy by granting them to all and protecting them for each.

To the denial of freedom, even of the possibility of freedom, corresponds the granting of liberties where they

strengthen the repression. The degree to which the population is allowed to break the peace wherever there still is peace and silence, to be ugly and to uglify things, to ooze familiarity, to offend against good form is frightening. It is frightening because it expresses the lawful and even organized effort to reject the Other in his own right, to prevent autonomy even in a small, reserved sphere of existence. In the overdeveloped countries, an ever-larger part of the population becomes one huge captive audience—captured not by a totalitarian regime but by the liberties of the citizens whose media of amusement and elevation compel the Other to partake of their sounds, sights, and smells.

Can a society which is incapable of protecting individual privacy even within one's four walls rightfully claim that it respects the individual and that it is a free society? To be sure, a free society is defined by more, and by more fundamental achievements, than private autonomy. And yet, the absence of the latter vitiates even the most conspicuous institutions of economic and political freedom—by denying freedom at its hidden roots. Massive socialization begins at home and arrests the development of consciousness and conscience. The attainment of autonomy demands conditions in which the repressed dimensions of experience can come to life again; their liberation demands repression of the heteronomous needs and satisfactions which organize life in this society. The more they have become the individual's own needs and satisfactions, the more would their repression appear to be an all but fatal deprivation. But precisely by virtue of this fatal character, it may create the primary subjective prerequisite for qualitative change—namely, the *redefinition of needs*.

To take an (unfortunately fantastic) example: the mere absence of all advertising and of all indoctrinating media of information and entertainment would plunge the individual into a traumatic void where he would have the chance to

has become an instrument of progress. And it is one which, like others in the established societies, is methodically abused. Setting the pace and style of politics, the power of imagination far exceeds Alice in Wonderland in the manipulation of words, turning sense into nonsense and nonsense into sense.

The formerly antagonistic realms merge on technical and political grounds—magic and science, life and death, joy and misery. Beauty reveals its terror as highly classified nuclear plants and laboratories become “Industrial Parks” in pleasing surroundings; Civil Defense Headquarters display a “deluxe fallout-shelter” with wall-to-wall carpeting (“soft”), lounge chairs, television, and Scrabble, “designed as a combination family room during peacetime (sic!) and family fallout shelter should war break out.”¹ If the horror of such realizations does not penetrate into consciousness, if it is readily taken for granted, it is because these achievements are (a) perfectly rational in terms of the existing order, (b) tokens of human ingenuity and power beyond the traditional limits of imagination.

The obscene merger of aesthetics and reality refutes the philosophies which oppose “poetic” imagination to scientific and empirical Reason. Technological progress is accompanied by a progressive rationalization and even realization of the imaginary. The archetypes of horror as well as of joy, of war as well as of peace lose their catastrophic character. Their appearance in the daily life of the individuals is no longer that of irrational forces—their modern avatars are elements of technological domination, and subject to it.

In reducing and even canceling the romantic space of imagination, society has forced the imagination to prove

1. According to *The New York Times*, November 11, 1960, displayed at the New York City Civil Defense Headquarters, Lexington Ave. and Fifty-fifth Street.

itself on new grounds, on which the images are translated into historical capabilities and projects. The translation will be as bad and distorted as the society which undertakes it. Separated from the realm of material production and material needs, imagination was mere play, invalid in the realm of necessity, and committed only to a fantastic logic and a fantastic truth. When technical progress cancels this separation, it invests the images with its own logic and its own truth; it reduces the free faculty of the mind. But it also reduces the gap between imagination and Reason. The two antagonistic faculties become interdependent on common ground. In the light of the capabilities of advanced industrial civilization, is not all play of the imagination playing with technical possibilities, which can be tested as to their chances of realization? The romantic idea of a "science of the Imagination" seems to assume an ever-more-empirical aspect.

The scientific, rational character of Imagination has long since been recognized in mathematics, in the hypotheses and experiments of the physical sciences. It is likewise recognized in psychoanalysis, which is in theory based on the acceptance of the specific rationality of the irrational; the comprehended imagination becomes, redirected, a therapeutic force. But this therapeutic force may go much further than in the cure of neuroses. It was not a poet but a scientist who has outlined this prospect:

Toute une psychanalyse matérielle peut . . . nous aider à guérir de nos images, ou du moins nous aider à limiter l'emprise de nos images. On peut alors espérer . . . *pouvoir rendre l'imagination heureuse*, autrement dit, pouvoir donner bonne conscience à l'imagination, en lui accordant pleinement tous ses moyens d'expression, toutes les images matérielles qui se produisent dans les *rêves naturels*, dans l'activité onirique normale. Rendre heureuse l'imagination, lui accorder toute son exubérance, c'est pré-

reproduce it on an enlarged scale—liberate themselves from themselves as well as from their masters? How is it even thinkable that the vicious circle be broken?

Paradoxically, it seems that it is not the notion of the new societal *institutions* which presents the greatest difficulty in the attempt to answer this question. The established societies themselves are changing, or have already changed the basic institutions in the direction of increased planning. Since the development and utilization of all available resources for the universal satisfaction of vital needs is the prerequisite of pacification, it is incompatible with the prevalence of particular interests which stand in the way of attaining this goal. Qualitative change is conditional upon planning for the whole against these interests, and a free and rational society can emerge only on this basis.

The institutions within which pacification can be envisaged thus defy the traditional classification into authoritarian and democratic, centralized and liberal administration. Today, the opposition to central planning in the name of a liberal democracy which is denied in reality serves as an ideological prop for repressive interests. The goal of authentic self-determination by the individuals depends on effective social control over the production and distribution of the necessities (in terms of the achieved level of culture, material and intellectual).

Here, technological rationality, stripped of its exploitative features, is the sole standard and guide in planning and developing the available resources for all. Self-determination in the production and distribution of vital goods and services would be wasteful. The job is a technical one, and as a truly technical job, it makes for the reduction of physical and mental toil. In this realm, centralized control is rational if it establishes the preconditions for meaningful self-determination. The latter can then become effective in its

and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game and, in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death. Their force is behind every political demonstration for the victims of law and order. The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period.

Nothing indicates that it will be a good end. The economic and technical capabilities of the established societies are sufficiently vast to allow for adjustments and concessions to the underdog, and their armed forces sufficiently trained and equipped to take care of emergency situations. However, the spectre is there again, inside and outside the frontiers of the advanced societies. The facile historical parallel with the barbarians threatening the empire of civilization prejudices the issue; the second period of barbarism may well be the continued empire of civilization itself. But the chance is that, in this period, the historical extremes may meet again: the most advanced consciousness of humanity, and its most exploited force. It is nothing but a chance. The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and its future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal.

At the beginning of the fascist era, Walter Benjamin wrote:

Nur um der Hoffnungslosen willen ist uns die Hoffnung gegeben.

It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us.

"In *One-Dimensional Man* Herbert Marcuse has moved on to what is the central problem of our civilization — how to reconcile originality and spontaneity and all the creative aspects of our human nature with a prevailing drive to rationality that tends to reduce all varieties of temperament and desire to one universal system of thought and behavior. He does not claim to solve this problem, but by presenting the alternatives in clear and critical terms, he makes the choice inevitable to every socially responsible individual. That is to say, he makes us realize that the choice is now between the life and the death of our civilization." — Herbert Read

Herbert Marcuse has recently been appointed a professor of philosophy at the University of California at San Diego. Born in Berlin, he was educated at the Universities of Berlin and Freiburg, and he has been a lecturer at Columbia and Harvard Universities and a professor of politics and philosophy at Brandeis University. He is the author of *Eros and Civilization*, published by Beacon Press, *Reason and Revolution*, available as a Beacon paperback, and *Soviet Marxism*.