

theory by mediating mental operations. The endless collegial hunt, careering between the 'hypotheses' and 'proofs' of social science, is a wild-goose chase since each of the supposed hypotheses, if inhabited by theoretical meaning at all, breaks through precisely the shaky facade of mere facticity, which in the demand for proofs prolongs itself as research. That music cannot be really experienced over the radio is, to be sure, a modest theoretical idea; but as translated into research, for instance by the proof that the enthusiastic listeners to certain serious music programmes cannot even recall the titles of the pieces they have consumed, yields the mere husk of the theory it claims to verify. Even if a group meeting all the statistical criteria knew all the titles, that would no more be evidence of the experience of music than, conversely, ignorance of the names in itself confirms its absence. The regression of hearing can only be deduced from the social tendency towards the consumption process as such, and identified in specific traits. It cannot be inferred from arbitrarily isolated and then quantified acts of consumption. To make them the measure of knowledge would be oneself to assume the extinction of experience, and to operate in an 'experience-free' way while trying to analyse the change of experience: a primitive vicious circle. As gauche miming of the exact sciences, beside whose results the social sciences seem paltry, research clings fearfully to the reified plaster cast of vital processes as a guarantee of correctness, whereas its only proper task—one thereby improper to the methods of research—would be to demonstrate the reification of the living through those methods' immanent contradiction.

## X

*Imaginative excesses.*—Those schooled in dialectical theory are reluctant to indulge in positive images of the proper society, of its members, even of those who would accomplish it. Past traces deter them; in retrospect, all social utopias since Plato's merge in a dismal resemblance to what they were devised against. The leap into the future, clean over the conditions of the present, lands in the past. In other words: ends and means cannot be formulated in isolation from each other. Dialectics will have no truck with the maxim that the former justify the latter, no matter how close it seems to come to the doctrine of the ruse of reason or, for that matter, the subordination of individual spontaneity to party discipline. The belief that the blind play of means could be summarily displaced by the sovereignty of rational ends was bourgeois utopianism. It is the antithesis of means and ends itself that should be criticized. Both are reified in bourgeois thinking, the ends as 'ideas' the sterility of which lies in their powerlessness to be externalized, such unrealizability being craftily passed off as implicit in absoluteness; means as 'data' of mere, meaningless existence, to be sorted out, according to their effectiveness or lack of it, into anything whatever, but devoid of reason in themselves. This petrified antithesis holds good for the world that produced it, but not for the effort to change it. Solidarity can call on us to subordinate not only individual interests but even our better insight. Conversely, violence, manipulation and devious tactics compromise the end they claim to serve, and thereby dwindle to no more than means. Hence the

precariousness of any statement about those on whom the transformation depends. Because means and ends are actually divided, the subjects of the breakthrough cannot be thought of as an unmediated unity of the two. No more, however, can the division be perpetuated in theory by the expectation that they might be either simply bearers of the end or else unmitigated means. The dissident wholly governed by the end is today in any case so thoroughly despised by friend and foe as an 'idealist' and daydreamer, that one is more inclined to impute redemptive powers to his eccentricity than to reaffirm his impotence as impotent. Certainly, however, no more faith can be placed in those equated with the means; the subjectless beings whom historical wrong has robbed of the strength to right it, adapted to technology and unemployment, conforming and squalid, hard to distinguish from the wind-jackets of fascism: their actual state disclaims the idea that puts its trust in them. Both types are theatre masks of class society projected on to the night-sky of the future, and the bourgeois themselves have always delighted at their errors, no less than their irreconcilability: on one hand the abstract rigorist, helplessly striving to realize chimeras, and on the other the subhuman creature who as dishonour's progeny shall never be allowed to avert it.

What the rescuers would be like cannot be prophesied without obscuring their image with falsehood. What can be perceived, however, is what they will not be like: neither personalities nor bundles of reflexes, but least of all a synthesis of the two, hardboiled realists with a sense of higher things. When the constitution of human beings has grown adapted to social antagonisms heightened to the extreme, the humane constitution sufficient to hold antagonism in check will be mediated by the extremes, not an average mingling of the two. The bearers of technical progress, now still mechanized mechanics, will, in evolving their special abilities, reach the point already indicated by technology where specialization grows superfluous. Once their consciousness has been converted into pure means without any qualification, it may cease to be a means and breach, with its attachment to particular objects, the last heteronomous barrier; its last entrapment in the existing state, the last fetishism of the status quo, including that of its own self, which is dissolved in its radical implementation as an instrument. Drawing breath at last, it may grow aware of the incongruence between its rational development and the irrationality of its ends, and act accordingly.

At the same time, however, the producers are more than ever thrown back on theory, to which the idea of a just condition evolves in their own medium, self-consistent thought, by virtue of insistent self-criticism. The class division of society is also maintained by those who oppose class society: following the schematic division of physical and mental labour, they split themselves up into workers and intellectuals. This division cripples the practice which is called for. It cannot be arbitrarily set aside. But while those professionally concerned with things of the mind are themselves turned more and more into technicians, the growing opacity of capitalist mass society makes an association between intellectuals who still are such, with workers who still know themselves to be such, more timely than thirty years ago. At that

time such unity was compromised by free-wheeling bourgeois of the liberal professions, who were shut out by industry and tried to gain influence by left-wing bustlings. The community of workers of head and hand had a soothing sound, and the proletariat rightly sniffed out, in the spiritual leadership commended to them by figures such as Kurt Hiller, a subterfuge to bring the class struggle under control by just such spiritualization. Today, when the concept of the proletariat, unshaken in its economic essence, is so occluded by technology that in the greatest industrial country there can be no question of proletarian class-consciousness, the role of intellectuals would no longer be to alert the torpid to their most obvious interests, but to strip the veil from the eyes of the wise-guys, the illusion that capitalism, which makes them its temporary beneficiaries, is based on anything other than their exploitation and oppression. The deluded workers are directly dependent on those who can still just see and tell of their delusion. Their hatred of intellectuals has changed accordingly. It has aligned itself to the prevailing commonsense views. The masses no longer mistrust intellectuals because they betray the revolution, but because they might want it, and thereby reveal how great is their own need of intellectuals. Only if the extremes come together will humanity survive.

**Editorial Afterword to T.W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*,  
BAND 4, Anhang**

Adorno's *Minima Moralia* was first published in 1951 by Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin and Frankfurt. Suhrkamp brought out a second, revised edition in Frankfurt in 1962. The 7th-9th thousand of this edition, published in 1964, represent the last version of the text that appeared during the author's lifetime; the present reprint follows that edition. Adorno removed a small number of texts from the manuscripts at various times. His reasons for doing so varied: sometimes he was guided by considerations concerning the overall structure of the book, and sometimes he was trying to avoid overlapping of subject matter. As Adorno in no case wanted to distance himself from what he had written, the editor of the *Gesammelte Schriften* believes himself justified in including these hitherto unpublished pieces in an appendix.

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*Translated by Edmund Jephcott*