

they can never escape, that they suspect that the truth is propaganda, while swallowing the propaganda culture that is fetishized and distorted into the madness of an unending reflection of themselves.

This means, however, that the dehumanization is also its opposite. In reified human beings reification finds its outer limits. They catch up with the technical forces of production in which the relations of production lie hidden: in this way these relations lose the shock of their alien nature because the alienation is so complete. But they may soon also lose their power. Only when the victims completely assume the features of the ruling civilization will they be capable of wresting them from the dominant power. The only remaining differentiating factor is reduced to naked usurpation. Only in its blind anonymity could the economy appear as fate: its spell is broken by the horror of the seeing dictatorship. The mimicking of the classless society by class society has been so successful that, while the oppressed have all been co-opted, the futility of all oppression becomes manifest. The ancient myth proves to be quite feeble in its new omnipotence. Even if the dynamic at work was always the same, its end today is not the end.

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Translated by Rodney Livingstone



5

Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION
OF THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

I would like to say something about the alternatives: late capitalism or industrial society. Anyone unfamiliar with the present state of the controversy within the social sciences could be forgiven for suspecting that this was a dispute about nomenclature. Experts might be thought to be tormented by the vain anxiety that the present phase was one thing or the other and hence deserved to be called by one name rather than the other. In reality, however, there is a crucial matter of substance at issue. What is at stake is whether the capitalist system still predominates according to its model, however modified, or whether the development of industry has rendered the concept of capitalism obsolete, together with the distinction between capitalist and noncapitalist states and even the critique of capitalism.

In other words, the question is whether it is true that Marx is out of date. According to this claim, widespread among sociologists today, the world is so completely determined by the unprecedented growth in technology that the social relations that once characterized capitalism—namely, the transformation of living labor into a commodity, with the consequent conflict between classes—have now lost their relevance or can even be consigned to the realm of superstition. At the same time, we can note the unmistakable signs of convergence between the technically most advanced nations, the United States and the Soviet Union. In terms of living standards and consciousness, particularly in the most important Western nations, class differences are far less in evidence now than in the decades

during and following the Industrial Revolution. The predictions of class theory, such as pauperization and the collapse of capitalism, have been insufficiently realized for their meaning not to be distorted beyond recognition. To speak of "relative pauperization" is ludicrous. Even if Marx's by no means unambiguous law of the falling rate of profit had turned out to be true, we would have to concede that capitalism has discovered resources within itself that have postponed its collapse until the Greek Calends. These resources include, at the top of the list, the immense growth in technical potential and with it the vast increase in consumer goods available to all the members of the advanced industrialized nations. At the same time, faced with this technical development, the relations of production have proved to be more flexible than Marx had expected.

The criteria of class relations that empirical sociologists like to call criteria of social stratification, that is to say, distinctions of income, living standards, and education, are generalizations of findings about single individuals. In this sense we may call them subjective. In contrast, the old definition of class was meant to be objective, independent of indices derived directly from the lives of their subjects, however much such indices may express objective social realities. Marxist theory was based on the position of employers and workers in the process of production, and ultimately referred to the ownership of the means of production. In the dominant schools of sociology today, this premise is rejected as dogmatic. The dispute needs to be resolved theoretically, not simply through the presentation of facts, which may well contribute to the critique but may also, according to Critical Theory, obscure social structures. Even the opponents of dialectics are no longer willing to postpone indefinitely the development of a theory that takes account of the proper interests of sociology. The controversy is essentially one of *interpretation*—unless we are to banish the desire for a solution to the limbo of the nonscientific.

A dialectical theory of society is concerned with structural laws that govern the facts, manifest themselves in them, and are modified by them. By structural laws, it understands tendencies that follow, more or less strictly, from the historical constituents of the overall system. The Marxist models for this were the law of value, the law of accumulation, and the law of the collapse [of capitalism]. By structure, dialectical theory does not mean patterns in which, as far as possible, sociological findings can be entered completely, continuously, and free from contradiction. Thus it means not systematic knowledge but rather the system of society that exists prior

to the procedures and data of scientific knowledge. Such a theory is the last to resist the facts and may certainly not twist them in order to satisfy some preconceived thesis. For in that case it would undoubtedly lapse into dogmatism and would repeat in the mind what the powers-that-be in Eastern Europe enacted in reality through the instrument of dialectical materialism. That is to say, it would immobilize things that according to their own logic can only be conceived to be in motion. Thus a fetishism of objective laws is created corresponding to the fetishism of facts. A dialectical theory overborne by the painful dominance of these laws does not glorify them but criticizes them, just as it criticizes the illusion that individual and concrete facts determine the course of the world. Under its spell the individual and concrete probably do not yet exist. The word "pluralism" lends support to the utopian belief that utopia already exists; it serves to mollify us. This explains why a dialectical theory that reflects on itself critically may not make itself at home in the medium of the universal. To break out of that medium is indeed its intention.

Nor is it immune to the false distinction between explicit theorizing and empirical research. Recently, a Russian intellectual with considerable influence explained to me that sociology was a new science in the Soviet Union. What he meant was empirical sociology. The idea that this could have anything to do with the theory of society that possesses the status of state religion in his country was as little apparent to him as the fact that Marx conducted empirical research. Reified consciousness does not end where the concept of reification has been given a place of honor. Bluster about concepts such as "imperialism" or "monopoly," regardless of their scope and of the realities corresponding to these words, is false and irrational. It is on a par with the attitude that takes seriously its own blindly nominalist idea of "the facts" and so rejects the notion that such concepts as "exchange society" have an objective reality and a universal coercive force that goes beyond the facts and that cannot always be translated into operationally defined realities. Both tendencies must be resisted. In this sense our subject, late capitalism or industrial society, testifies to our intention to practice self-criticism in the spirit of freedom.

A simple answer to the question raised by our subject can be neither expected nor sought. Alternatives that force us to decide for one or the other, even if only at the level of theory, are themselves predicaments modeled on dilemmas taken from an unfree society and transferred to minds whose task is to break the yoke of unfreedom by obstinately insisting on

reflection. The dialectician, above all, should not let himself be forced into a clear-cut distinction between late capitalism and industrial society, any more than he should let himself be satisfied by a facile "on the one hand and on the other." *Pace* Brecht's advice, he must avoid simplification because the routine habit of thought will suggest to him a routine answer, just as it will suggest to his opponents the opposite answer. Anyone who does not blind himself to the priority that structure has over facts will not, unlike most of his opponents, be tempted to dismiss contradictions as errors in logic and attempt to eliminate them by ensuring the coherence of the scientific framework. Instead, he will pursue them back into the social structure, which has been antagonistic ever since society began, as has been all too crassly demonstrated by foreign-policy conflicts, the permanent threat of war, and, most recently, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. This consciousness of the contradictions inherent in the structure of society is ignored by the opposite mode of thinking, which constantly projects the logical idea of contradiction-free statements onto whatever intellectual problems present themselves. The task is not to choose between these two approaches, either for scientific reasons or on grounds of taste. Instead, the task is to realize that the relation between these approaches expresses the contradiction that characterizes the present situation. To articulate this at the level of theory is the task of sociology.

Many of the prognoses of dialectical theory contradict one another. Some simply fail to come true. Certain analytical categories lead to impressions that can be eliminated only by highly artificial arguments. Other predictions, originally closely intertwined with them, have been spectacularly vindicated. Given the claims made by dialectics, even people who do not believe that prognoses are the point of theory will not be satisfied with the assertion that prognoses are partly true and partly false. These divergences call in turn for theoretical explanation. The fact that we cannot speak of a proletarian class consciousness in the most influential capitalist countries does not of itself refute the claim that classes exist, even though this claim runs counter to the prevailing wisdom. Class was defined by the relation of its members to the means of production, not by their consciousness.

Plausible explanations for the absence of class consciousness are scarcely lacking. We have, for example, the fact that the workers were not becoming pauperized but were increasingly being integrated into bourgeois society and its views, a development that was not to be foreseen dur-

ing and immediately after the Industrial Revolution, when the industrial proletariat was recruited from the ranks of the paupers and still found themselves halfway outside society. It is not the case that social existence directly creates class consciousness. Because of their integration into society, the masses have no more control of their social destiny today than they possessed 120 years ago. In consequence, they not only have lost any sense of class solidarity but also fail to grasp fully that they are the objects and not the subjects of the social process that as subjects they nevertheless sustain. Class consciousness, on which, according to Marxian theory, the qualitative leap was supposed to depend, was also in its view an epiphenomenon. However, in the countries that are prototypical for class relations, such as North America, class consciousness did not exist for long periods of time, if indeed it ever existed at all. But if that is the case, and if the question of the proletariat just becomes a puzzle, then quantity changes into quality, and the suspicion that conceptual myths are being created can be suppressed only by decree; it cannot remain hidden from thought.

History finds it hard to part company with the centerpiece of Marxian theory, the doctrine of surplus value. This was supposed to provide an objective economic explanation of class relations and the growth of class antagonism. But if, thanks to technological progress and industrialization, the share of living labor from which alone surplus value is supposed to arise shrinks and even becomes marginal, at least in tendency, this cannot but affect that core doctrine, the theory of surplus value. The current absence of an objective theory of value is determined, not just by the school of economic thinking that almost alone enjoys academic respectability today, but also by the prohibitive difficulties in explaining the formation of classes objectively in the absence of a theory of surplus value.

Non-economists have observed that even so-called neo-Marxists use elements of subjective economics to plug the gaps in their treatment of crucial problems. It is not just the weakening of the theoretical impulse that we have to blame for this. It is conceivable that contemporary society is evading the difficulties of formulating a coherent theory. Marx had it easier in this respect, since the developed system of liberal economics was available to him. He needed only to inquire whether capitalism fit into this system in order to produce a quasi-systematic theory of his own, in deliberate negation of the system he found before him.

In the meantime, the market economy has become so full of holes as to rule out any such confrontation. The irrational nature of contemporary society inhibits a rational account of it in the realm of theory. The possibility that the steering of economic processes might be transferred to the political powers does indeed follow from the dynamics of the deductive system, but also tends toward an objective irrationality. It is this, and not the sterile dogmatism of its supporters, that can help explain why we have had no convincing objective theory of society for so long. On this interpretation, this failure is the expression, not of the critical progress of the scientific spirit, but of an enforced resignation. The failure to produce a theory of society runs parallel to the regression of society itself.

Such a theory would find many weighty facts in its path. *Without* making use of capitalism as a key concept, they could only be interpreted at the cost of violent and arbitrary distortions. Human beings continue to be subject to domination by the economic process. Its objects have long since ceased to be just the masses; they now include those in charge and their agents. The latter, in accordance with the older theory, have largely been reduced to functions of their own apparatus of production. The much-discussed question of the managerial revolution, following the alleged transfer of power from the legal owners to a managerial bureaucracy, is of secondary importance. The former process continues to produce and reproduce itself as it always did. Even if the classes no longer resemble those depicted in Zola's *Germinale*, a structure is created that the anti-socialist Nietzsche anticipated with the formula "a flock, but no shepherd." However, the formula conceals something he did not want to see, namely, the ancient social oppression. Only now that oppression has become anonymous. If the old pauperization theory has turned out not to be literally true, it has done so in the no less alarming sense that unfreedom, dependency upon an apparatus that has escaped the control of those who use it, has spread out universally over mankind.

The widely lamented immaturity of the masses simply reflects the fact that they are now no more the autonomous masters of their lives than they ever were. As in myth, their lives befall them, like fate. Empirical studies indicate, moreover, that even subjectively, in terms of their consciousness of reality, class distinctions have by no means been abolished to the degree that has sometimes been supposed. Even the theories of imperialism have not been rendered obsolete by the great powers' withdrawal from their colonies. The process they described survives today in the con-

licts between the two monstrous power blocs. The allegedly obsolete doctrine of social antagonisms that were supposed to lead to ultimate collapse has been superseded by manifest political conflicts in our own day. Whether and to what extent class relations were displaced onto the relations between the leading industrial states, on the one hand, and the vigorously courted underdeveloped nations, on the other, is not a question I can go into here.

In terms of critical, dialectical theory, I would like to propose as an initial, necessarily abstract answer that contemporary society undoubtedly is an industrial society according to the state of its *forces of production*. Industrial labor has everywhere become the model of society as such, regardless of the frontiers separating differing political systems. It has developed into a totality because methods modeled on those of industry are necessarily extended by the laws of economics to other realms of material production, administration, the sphere of distribution, and those that call themselves culture. In contrast, however, society is capitalist in its *relations of production*. People are still what they were in Marx's analysis in the middle of the nineteenth century: appendages of the machine, not just literally workers who have to adapt themselves to the nature of the machines they use, but far beyond that, figuratively, workers who are compelled right down to their most intimate impulses to subordinate themselves to the mechanisms of society and to adopt specific social roles without reservation. Production takes place today, as then, for the sake of profit. And far exceeding what was foreseeable in Marx's day, human needs that were potentially functions of the production apparatus have now become such functions in fact, rather than the production apparatus becoming a function of human needs. People are now totally controlled. Admittedly, even though they are fixed and adapted to the interests of the apparatus, human needs are still present, dragged along, as it were, and the apparatus can, therefore, make an effective appeal to them. But the use-value side of commodities has now lost all its remaining spontaneous "naturalness." Not only are needs satisfied indirectly, via their exchange value, but in the economically relevant sectors they are generated by the profit motive, even at the expense of the objective needs of consumers, such as adequate homes, to say nothing of education and information about the most important matters affecting their lives. In the realm of goods that go beyond the bare necessities of life, the tendency is for exchange values to become detached, consumed—a phenomenon that appears in empirical sociology couched in

such terms as "prestige" and "status symbols," although these do not capture their objective essence.

In the advanced industrial societies, as long as no natural economic catastrophes occur in defiance of Keynes, people have learned to prevent an all-too-visible poverty, if not to the degree imagined in the thesis of the affluent society. However, the spell cast over mankind by the system has been strengthened by the process of integration, insofar as such comparisons have meaning. It is undeniable that with the increasing satisfaction of material needs, despite their deformation by the apparatus, a life without deprivation has become incomparably more attainable. Even in the poorest countries no one need go hungry any longer. At the same time, the fact that the veil concealing the consciousness of what is possible has become more transparent is demonstrated by the panic created everywhere by forms of social enlightenment that are not catered to in official systems of communication. What Marx and Engels, who desired a human organization of society, denounced as utopia, claiming that it merely sabotaged such an organization, became a tangible possibility. Today, criticism of utopias has degenerated into the stock inventory of ideology, while the triumph of technical productivity deludes us into believing that utopia, which is irreconcilable with the relations of production, has nevertheless been made real. But the contradictions in their new, international form—I am thinking of the arms race in East and West—make the possible impossible.

To see through all this requires, of course, that even though criticism always invites us to do so, we should not blame technology, that is to say, the forces of production, or succumb to a kind of theoretical Luddism on an expanded scale. It is not technology that is the catastrophe but its imbrication with the social relations that embrace it. We should merely remind ourselves that it is the concern for profit and domination that has canalized technological development: on occasion it coincides in a disastrous way with the need to exercise control. Not for nothing has the invention of weapons of destruction become the new prototype of technology. And, by contrast, those technologies that turn their backs on domination, centralism, and violence against nature, and that would doubtless help to heal much of what is damaged literally and figuratively by the technology we have, are allowed to wither away.

For all its protestations to the contrary, for all its dynamism and its growth in production, contemporary society displays certain static ten-

dencies. These belong to the relations of production. Those have ceased to be just property relations; they now also include relations ranging from those of the administration on up to those of the state, which functions now as an all-inclusive capitalist organization. In that their rationalization resembles technical rationality, the rationality of the forces of production, they have undoubtedly become more flexible. This creates the impression that the universal interest is to preserve the status quo and that the only ideal is full employment, not liberation from heteronomous labor. But this situation, which in foreign-policy terms is in any case highly unstable, is only temporarily in equilibrium, the product of forces whose tension threatens to tear it apart. Within the dominant relations of production, mankind is virtually its own reserve army and is supported as such. Marx's expectation that historically the primacy of the forces of production was assured, and that this would necessarily burst asunder the relations of production, proved all too optimistic. In this respect Marx, the sworn enemy of German idealism, remained true to its affirmative view of history. Trust in the world spirit helped to buttress later versions of the world order that was supposed to be overthrown, according to the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach.¹ The sheer instinct for survival enabled the relations of production to remain in control of the liberated forces of production through a series of ad hoc devices and stratagems. The signature of the age is the predominance of the relations of production over the forces of production, even though in the eyes of the latter the relations of production were no more than a laughingstock. The fact that the extended arm of mankind can reach distant, empty planets but is incapable of establishing a permanent peace on earth makes visible the absurd goal toward which the social dialectic is moving.

This persistent predominance of the relations of production was not what Marx had hoped for. It was caused not least by the fact that society was able to absorb into itself what Veblen termed the "underlying population." Only a man who puts the happiness of the whole abstractly before that of living individuals might regret such absorption. For its part, this development depended on that of the forces of production. It was not identical, however, with their priority over the relations of production. The absorption of the underlying population should never be thought of in mechanistic terms. To achieve the predominance of the forces of production would have called for the spontaneous action of those people who

were interested in changing social relations, and by now their numbers have surpassed many times those of the industrial proletariat. However, objective interest and subjective spontaneity go in completely different directions. Spontaneity dried up under the disproportionate weight of the given. Marx's dictum that theory becomes a real force when it grips the masses was flagrantly overturned by the course of events. If the organization of society, whether by accident or design, uses the culture industry, the consciousness industry, and the monopolistic control of opinion to bar the way to the most basic knowledge and experience of the most dangerous processes and the most essential critical ideas, and if, going far beyond that, society paralyzes people's ability to imagine the world in concrete terms as being anything other than it appears to be, then the fixed and manipulated state of mind becomes a real force, too. But it becomes the force of repression, which is just as potent in its own way as had been, once upon a time, its opposite, namely, free spirit, which wished to do away with repression once and for all.

Conversely, in a certain sense the term "industrial society" seems to suggest that the technocratic element in Marx, whom some people would like to argue out of existence, had an immediate validity, as if the nature of society followed directly from the state of the forces of production, independently of the social conditions governing them. It is astonishing how little is said about these conditions in established sociological circles, and how little they are analyzed. The best aspect of this argument—which by no means needs to be the best—is simply forgotten. This is the emphasis on totality, to use Hegel's term, the ether that permeates the whole of society. However, this ether is anything but ethereal; it is, rather, the *ens realissimum*. If it seems abstract, that is the fault not of fantastic, willful thinking, hostile to the facts, but of the exchange relation, the objective abstraction to which the social process of life is subject. The power of this abstraction over human beings is more palpable than the power of any other single institution that has been tacitly constructed on the basis of this principle, which is thus drummed into people. The impotence of the individual in the face of the totality is the drastic expression of the power of the exchange relation. In sociology, of course, with its traditional tendency to classify phenomena, the sustaining social relations, the social conditions of production, appear far less powerful than that concrete universal. They are neutralized into concepts like power or social control. The use of such cat-

egories helps to conceal the sting and with it, one would like to say, what is truly social about society, namely, its structure.

However, simply to regard the forces of production and the relations of production as polar opposites would be unworthy of a dialectical theory. They are interlocking phenomena: the one contains the other within it. It is this that seduces us into focusing simply on the forces of production, even though it is the relations of production that have the upper hand. The forces of production are mediated more than ever by the relations of production, so completely, perhaps, that the latter appear to be the essence; they have become second nature. They are responsible for the fact that, in crazy contradiction to what is possible, human beings in large parts of the planet live in penury. Even where goods abound, they seem to be under a curse. Needs, which tend to have the quality of illusion about them, infect goods with this illusion. It would be possible to distinguish real needs and false ones, without conceding the right of some bureaucracy somewhere in the world to regulate them. For good or ill, the whole of society is to be found in these needs; they may well be the first port of call for market surveys, but they are not the top priority in the administered world. What would be required to distinguish between true needs and false ones is an insight into the structure of society as a whole, together with all its mediations. The fictitious element that deforms the gratification of all needs today is perceived unconsciously, but not questioned; it doubtless contributes to the present discontents of culture.

Even more important, however, than the almost impenetrable process of exchange between needs, gratification, and the interest in profit or power is the constant threat to the single need upon which all others depend, namely, sheer survival. Enclosed within a horizon in which a bomb can fall at any moment, even the most sumptuous provision of consumer goods seems like a mockery. But the international conflicts that are being intensified to the point of a truly total war have a clear connection with the relations of production in the most literal sense. The threat of one catastrophe is deferred by that of others. The relations of production would find it hard to maintain their position so persistently without the apocalyptic cataclysms of renewed economic crises. For in this way a disproportionate amount of the social product, which otherwise would be unable to find a market, is diverted for the production of weapons of destruction. The same process can be seen in the Soviet Union, notwithstanding the elimination of the market economy. The economic reasons for this are clear: the

desire for rapid growth in production in a backward economy produced a rigid dictatorial administration. The unleashing of the forces of production led to a renewal of restrictive relations of production: production for its own sake became the goal and prevented the attainment of the true goal of an unconfined freedom. Under both systems there is a truly diabolical parody of the bourgeois concept of socially useful labor, which proved itself in the marketplace by its ability to produce a profit, never by its transparent usefulness for human beings or for their happiness. However, for the relations of production to dominate mankind in this way assumes that the forces of production have achieved a certain level.

While the two things need to be distinguished, anyone who wishes to comprehend the jinxed nature of the situation must always understand the one in order to grasp the other. Overproduction, which ensnares and releases seemingly subjective needs, gushes from a technical apparatus that has made itself so autonomous that below a certain level of production, it becomes irrational, in other words, unprofitable. Overproduction is, therefore, necessarily precipitated by relations of production. In only one respect have the relations of production failed to shackle the forces of production: that of total annihilation. But the dirigiste methods for controlling the masses presuppose a concentration and centralization that have a technological dimension as well as an economic one, something that would have to be shown from a study of the mass media. For this would demonstrate how, from a few points, the consciousness of countless people can be brought into line simply by the selection and presentation of news and commentary.

The relations of production have not been revolutionized, and their power is greater than ever. However, at the same time, since they are objectively anachronistic, they are debilitated, damaged, and undermined. They no longer function autonomously. Economic intervention is not, as the older liberal school believed, an alien element grafted on from outside, but an intrinsic part of the system, the epitome of self-defense. Nothing could provide a more telling illustration of the concept of dialectic. One finds an analogy here with Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, in which bourgeois ideology and the dialectic of bourgeois society are so deeply intertwined. Hegel summoned the state to assist the intrinsic dialectic of society, which he believed would otherwise collapse. He issued this summons even though the state was supposed to stand outside the conflicts of society and

mitigate these social antagonisms with the aid of the police. Invasion by forces extrinsic to the system is likewise an instance of immanent dialectics for Hegel. Similarly, at the opposite pole, Marx conceived of the overthrow of the relations of production both as imposed by the course of history and at the same time as caused only by an action qualitatively different from the coherent system of society.

But if it is argued that late capitalism has been rescued from the anarchy of commodity production by intervention and, beyond that, by large-scale planning, and has therefore ceased to be true capitalism, we may reply that the social fate that befalls the individual is as arbitrary as it ever was. The fact is that the model according to which capitalism operated was never as pure as liberal apologias supposed. As early as Marx, the model took the form of ideological critique; that is to say, it was supposed to show how little the conception that bourgeois society had of itself corresponded to the reality. Ironically, this critical dimension—the fact that even in its heyday liberalism was no such thing—can today be translated into the assertion that capitalism is no such thing any more. This, too, points to a transformation. Those aspects of bourgeois society that had always been irrational, that is, unfree and unfair—by contrast to the rationality of free and fair exchange—have now been intensified to the point where the entire system is breaking down. But this very fact is now viewed as positive from the standpoint of a system whose integrated nature is really a cover for inner disintegration. What is alien to the system stands revealed as one of its constituents and is to be found at the very heart of its politics. With the trend toward intervention, the system's resilience has been confirmed, but so, indirectly, has the theory of its collapse. The transition to a form of domination independent of the mechanisms of the market is the system's goal. The slogan "unified [*formiert*] society" incautiously blurted this out.² Such a regression on the part of liberal capitalism had its correlative in the regression of consciousness, of human beings, to a more backward form of society than is on offer today. People lose the qualities that they can no longer use and that only hamper them; the core of their individuality has begun to decay.

Only in more recent times have traces of a countervailing trend become visible among various sections of the younger generation: resistance to blind conformism, the freedom to choose rational goals, revulsion from the world's deceptions and illusions, the recollection of the possibility of

change. Whether, by contrast, the socially increasing impulse to destroy will triumph after all remains to be seen. Subjective regression favors the regression of the system. Because it has become dysfunctional (to apply a concept that Merton used rather differently), the consciousness of the masses has become identical with the system as it has grown increasingly alienated from the rationality of the fixed, identical self, which had still been implicit in the concept of the functional society.

The idea that the forces and relations of production are one and the same today, and that the notion of society can be easily constructed solely by reference to the forces of production, is the current shape of socially necessary illusion. It is socially necessary because elements of the social process that were formerly separate—and this includes living human beings—have been brought down to a kind of common denominator. Material production, distribution, and consumption are administered jointly. Their boundaries flow into one another, even though earlier within the overall social process they were at once different from one another and related, and for that reason they respected what was qualitatively different. Everything is now one. The totality of the processes of mediation, which amounts in reality to the principle of exchange, has produced a second, deceptive immediacy. This enables people to ignore the evidence of their own eyes and forget difference and conflict or repress it from consciousness. But this consciousness of society is illusion, because while it does justice to the process of technological and organizational standardization, it overlooks the fact that this standardization is not fully rational but remains subject to blind, irrational laws. No overall social subject exists. We could formulate this illusion by saying that all social phenomena today are so completely mediated that even the element of mediation is distorted by its totalizing nature. It is no longer possible to adopt a vantage point outside the hurly-burly that would enable us to give the horror a name; we are forced to adopt its inconsistencies as our starting point.

This is what Horkheimer and I meant when we spoke, some decades ago, of the technological veil. The false identity between the organization of the world and its inhabitants, an identity created by the expansion of technology, amounts to the affirmation of the relations of production, for whose beneficiaries we seek today almost as vainly as for the proletarians, who have become all but invisible. The system has become independent, even of those who are in control, but this process has now reached its lim-

its. It has now become fate and finds its expression in what Freud called ubiquitous, free-flowing anxiety; free-flowing because it is no longer able to attach itself to living beings, whether to individuals or classes. But ultimately, what has been liberated are the relations between human beings that had been buried beneath the relations of production. Hence the overpowering order of things remains its own ideology and is thus virtually impotent. Impenetrable though its spell is, it is only a spell. If sociology is going to do anything more than provide agents and interests with the information they want, if it is going to achieve anything of what was envisaged at its birth, it must face up to the task of employing methods that have not succumbed to universal fetishism, and thus make its contribution, however modest, to breaking this spell.

(1969; Gs 8: 354-70)

Translated by Rodney Livingstone

The bad comrade

TITLE: *Der böse Kamerad*: allusion to the song "Der gute Kamerad" ("The Good Comrade"), popularized by the Nazis. [The song is by the romantic poet Ludwig Uhland.—R.L.]

Juvenal's error

TITLE: Allusion to Juvenal's remark "Difficile est satiram non scribere" ("It is difficult not to write satire"). [Satire I, 30.—R.L.]

Consecutio temporum

TITLE: "Sequence of tenses."

1. Hedwig Courths-Maler (1867–1950), best-selling novelist of popular sentimental romances.
2. Allusion to *Die Gartenlaube*, an illustrated family magazine of patriotic-conservative tendency in the late nineteenth century.

Toy shop

1. See Karl Marx, *Capital* (Moscow: International Publishers, 1961), I: 55ff.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Novissimum organum

TITLE: Superlative rendering of the title of Bacon's treatise *Novum Organum*.

1. Marx, *Capital*, I: 622.
2. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin, 1971), p. 100.

Knackery

1. Charles Péguy, *Men and Saints*, trans. Anne Green and Julian Green (New York: Pantheon, 1944), p. 98.

Don't exaggerate

1. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), p. 88.

4. REFLECTIONS ON CLASS THEORY

NOTE: All numbered notes in this chapter are by the translator.

1. Throughout this essay, Adorno uses the term "theory" as a code word for "Marxism" or "dialectical materialism."
2. This refers to a meeting between Franz von Papen and Hitler at the home of the Cologne banker Kurt von Schroeder on 4 January 1933. The negotiations

that gave Hitler the support of sections of German industry and finance were initiated at this meeting; they would culminate in his appointment as chancellor at the end of the month. The mention of bribery refers to properties that were given to President Hindenburg in the summer of 1933 and to his son, some years before, in 1927. These gifts were then linked to a scandal in which government subsidies for agriculture in the East were said to have been diverted into the pockets of the Junkers and perhaps also the Hindenburg family. In his play *Arturo Ui*, Brecht uses the idea of Hindenburg's fear of exposure to explain why he acquiesced in Hitler's appointment, to which he had earlier been bitterly opposed.

3. This reference to "the author of *Psychology of Socialism*" is not entirely clear. It is conceivable that Adorno was thinking of Gustave Le Bon, whose *Psychologie du socialisme* appeared in Paris in 1899. Many of Le Bon's attitudes—his anti-Semitism and racism, for example—fitted in easily with fascism. His major work, *Psychologie des foules* (*The Crowd*) had a direct influence on both Hitler, who copied passages from it directly into *Mein Kampf*, and Mussolini, with whom he corresponded. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that in his old age (he died in 1931) he adopted fascist views. A stronger case can be made that Adorno's reference is to Hendryk (Henry) de Man, whose book, also entitled *Psychologie du socialisme*, appeared in English translation in 1928. When the Germans invaded Belgium in 1940, de Man, who was president of the Socialist Party, made an official declaration praising Hitler and claiming that the arrival of the Nazi troops meant the "liberation of the working class."

The "sociologist of political parties," to whom Adorno also refers here, was Robert Michels (1876–1936). His chief work, *Political Parties*, appeared in English in 1915, translated from the Italian edition of *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie*.

5. LATE CAPITALISM OR INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY?

NOTE: This talk was given as the keynote lecture to the Sixteenth Congress of German Sociologists on 8 April 1968 in Frankfurt am Main.

1. According to Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."—Trans.
2. The slogan *formierte Gesellschaft*, the "unified" or "formed" society, comes from Ludwig Erhard, the conservative West German federal chancellor (1963–66). The term expressed his desire for a harmonious society from which egotistical behavior and factionalism would be eliminated. Although rather vague, the concept mobilized the opposition of the Left, which thought it constituted a call for a return to a rigidly organized, hierarchical society with fascist overtones.—Trans.