

tive function, without which there would be neither difference nor unity of the subject, for its part has arisen historically. It consists essentially in those formative constituents; to the extent that there is cognition, it must take place in accordance with them, even where it looks beyond them. They define the concept of cognition. Yet those formative constituents are not absolute but rather a historical development like the cognitive function itself. It is not beyond the pale of possibility that they could disappear. To predicate their absoluteness would posit the cognitive function, the subject, as absolute; to relativize them would dogmatically revoke the cognitive function. To counter this it is claimed that the argument involves a silly sociologism: that God created society and society created man and God in man's image. But the anteriority thesis is absurd only so long as the individual or its biological prototype is hypostatized. In view of evolutionary history it is more likely to assume the temporal *prius*, or at least the simultaneous copresence of the species. That "the" human being was there before the species is either a Biblical echo or sheer Platonism. Nature at its lower stages is full of nonindividuated organisms. If, as more recent biologists maintain, human beings in fact are born so much more ill-equipped than other creatures, then they probably could have survived only in association, through rudimentary social labor; the *principium individuationis* is secondary to that, hypothetically a kind of biological division of labor. It is improbable that some single human first emerged, archetypically. The belief in such an emergence mythically projects the *principium individuationis*, now historically fully developed, backward into the past or onto the celestial realm of eternal ideas. The species may have individuated itself through mutation, in order then, through individuation, to reproduce itself in individuals by relying on biological singularity. The human being is a result, not an *εἶδος*; the insights of Hegel and Marx penetrate all the way into the inmost aspects of the so-called questions of constitution. The ontology of "the" human being—the model for the construction of the transcendental subject—is centered on the developed individual, as is indicated linguistically by the ambiguity in the article "the," which names the species as well as the individual.²¹ To this extent nominalism, much more than its opponent, ontology, includes the primacy of the species, of society. To be sure, ontology makes common cause with nominalism by at once denying the species, perhaps because it suggests animals: ontology, by exalting the individual into the form of unity and into a being-in-itself as opposed to the many; nominalism, by unreflectedly proclaiming the individual, on the model of the human individual, to be the true entity. It denies society in its concepts by degrading it into an abbreviation for the individual.

Marginalia to Theory and Praxis

For Ulrich Sonnemann

1

A simple consideration of history demonstrates just how much the question of theory and praxis depends upon the question of subject and object. At the same time as the Cartesian doctrine of two substances ratified the dichotomy of subject and object, literature for the first time portrayed praxis as a dubious undertaking on account of its tension with reflection. Despite all its eager realism, pure practical reason is devoid of object to the same degree that the world for manufacturing and industry becomes material devoid of quality and ready for processing, which in turn finds its legitimation nowhere else but in the marketplace. Whereas praxis promises to lead people out of their self-isolation, praxis itself has always been isolated; for this reason practical people are unresponsive and the relation of praxis to its object is a priori undermined. Indeed, one could ask whether in its indifference toward its object all nature-dominating praxis up to the present day is not in fact praxis in name only. Its illusory character is inherited by all the actions unreflectedly adopting the old violent gesture of praxis. Since its beginnings American pragmatism has been criticized—with good reason—for consecrating the existing conditions by making the practical applicability of knowledge its criterion for knowledge; supposedly nowhere else could the practical effectiveness of knowledge be tested. If in the end theory, which bears upon

the totality if it does not want to be futile, is tied down to its effectiveness here and now, then the same thing befalls it despite its belief that it escapes the immanence of the system. Theory steals itself back from the system's immanence only where it shirks its pragmatic fetters, no matter how modified they may be. "All theory is gray," Goethe has Mephistopheles preach to the student he is leading around by the nose; the sentence was already ideology from the very beginning, fraud about the fact that the tree of life the practitioners planted and the devil in the same breath compares to gold is hardly green at all;¹ the grayness of theory is for its part a function of the life that has been de-qualified.² Nothing should exist that cannot be fastened upon by both hands; not thought. The subject, thrown back upon itself, divided from its Other by an abyss, is supposedly incapable of action. *Hamlet* is as much the proto-history of the individual in its subjective reflection as it is the drama of the individual paralyzed into inaction by that reflection. In his process of self-externalization toward what differs from him, the individual senses this discrepancy and is inhibited from completing the process. Only a little later the novel describes how the individual reacts to this situation incorrectly termed 'alienation'—as though the age before individualism enjoyed an intimacy, which nonetheless can hardly be experienced other than by individuated beings: according to Borchardt animals are "lonely communities"—with pseudo-activity.³ The follies of Don Quixote are the attempts at compensation for the lost Other, in the language of psychiatry, restitution phenomena.⁴ What since then has been called the problem of praxis and today culminates in the question of the relation between theory and praxis coincides with the loss of experience caused by the rationality of the eternally same. Where experience is blocked or altogether absent, praxis is damaged and therefore longed for, distorted, and desperately overvalued. Thus what is called the problem of praxis is interwoven with the problem of knowledge. Abstract subjectivity, in which the process of rationalization terminates, strictly speaking can do just as little as the transcendental subject can conceivably have precisely what it is attested to have: spontaneity.⁵ Ever since the Cartesian doctrine of the indubitable certainty of the subject—and the philosophy it described codified a historical culmination, a constellation of subject and object in which, following the ancient topos, only unlike can recognize unlike—praxis accrues a somewhat illusory character, as though it could not close the gap. Words like "industriousness" and "busyness" express the nuances quite succinctly.⁶ The illusory realities of many mass movements of the twentieth century, which became the bloodiest reality and yet are overshadowed by something not completely real, delusional, were born in the moment when action was first called for. Whereas

thinking restricts itself to subjective, practically applicable reason, the Other that escapes it is correlatively ascribed to an increasingly conceptless praxis that acknowledges no measure other than itself. As antinomian as the society undergirding it, the bourgeois spirit unifies autonomy and a pragmatic hostility toward theory. The world, which subjective reason increasingly tends to reproduce only retrospectively, should continually be changed in keeping with its economically expansive tendencies and nonetheless should still remain what it is. Whatever disturbs this is cropped from thinking: especially theory that intends more than reproduction. A consciousness of theory and praxis must be produced that neither divides the two such that theory becomes powerless and praxis becomes arbitrary, nor refracts theory through the archbourgeois primacy of practical reason proclaimed by Kant and Fichte. Thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis; already the ideology of the purity of thinking deceives about this. Thinking has a double character: it is immenently determined and rigorous, and yet an inalienably real mode of behavior in the midst of reality. To the extent that subject, the thinking substance of philosophers, is object, to the extent that it falls within object, subject is already also practical. The irrationality of praxis that continually resurfaces however—its aesthetic archetype are the sudden, random actions by which Hamlet carries out his plan and in carrying it out fails—unceasingly animates the illusion of the absolute division between subject and object. Where subject is inveigled into believing that object is something absolutely incommensurable, the communication between the two becomes the prey of blind fate.

2

It would be too coarse a generalization were one, for the sake of a historico-philosophical construction, to date the divergence between theory and praxis as late as the Renaissance. But the divergence was first reflected upon only after the collapse of that *ordo* that presumed to allocate the truth as well as good works their place in the hierarchy. The crisis of praxis was experienced as: not knowing what should be done. Together with the medieval hierarchy, which was connected to an elaborate casuistry, the practical guidelines disintegrated, which at that time, despite all their dubiousness, seemed at least to be suitable to the social structure. The much attacked formalism of Kantian ethical theory was the culmination of a movement that began irresistibly, and through legitimate critique, with the emancipation of autonomous reason. The inability to engage in praxis was first and foremost the consciousness of a

lack of regulative principles, a weakness from the very beginning; from this weakness comes the hesitation, akin to reason in the guise of contemplation, and the inhibition of praxis. The formal character of pure practical reason constituted its failure before praxis; to be sure it also occasioned the self-reflection that leads beyond the culpable concept of praxis. If autarkic praxis has always manifested manic and compulsive traits, then self-reflection on the other hand signifies the interruption of action blindly directed outward; non-naïveté as the transition to the humane. Whoever does not want to romanticize the Middle Ages must trace the divergence between theory and praxis back to the oldest division between physical and intellectual labor, probably as far back as prehistoric obscurity. Praxis arose from labor. It attained its concept when labor no longer wanted to merely reproduce life directly but to produce its conditions: and this clashed with the already existing conditions. Its descent from labor is a heavy burden for all praxis. To this day it carries the baggage of an element of unfreedom: the fact that once it was necessary to struggle against the pleasure principle for the sake of one's own self-preservation, although labor that has been reduced to a minimum no longer needs to be tied to self-denial. Contemporary actionism also represses the fact that the longing for freedom is closely related to the aversion to praxis. Praxis was the reaction to deprivation; this still disfigures praxis even when it wants to do away with deprivation. To this extent is the critique of praxis as unfreedom; this is where its truth begins. With a shock one can understand the abhorrence at the praxis so popular nowadays when one observes natural-historical phenomena such as beaver dams, the industriousness of ants and bees, or the grotesque struggles of the beetle as it carries a blade of grass. Modern and ancient intertwine in praxis; once again praxis becomes a sacred animal, just as in the time before recorded history it was thought a sacrilege not to devote oneself body and soul to the efforts of preserving the species. The physiognomy of praxis is brute earnestness. This earnestness dissolves where the genius of praxis emancipates itself: this is surely what Schiller meant with his theory of play.⁷ The majority of actionists are humorless in a way that is no less alarming than are those who laugh along with everyone. The lack of self-reflection derives not only from their psychology. It is the mark of a praxis that, having become its own fetish, becomes a baricade to its own goal. The dialectic is hopeless: that through praxis alone is it possible to escape the captivating spell praxis imposes on people, but that meanwhile as praxis it compulsively contributes to reinforcing the spell, obtuse, narrow-minded, at the farthest remove from spirit. The recent hostility toward theory, which animates this process, makes a program out of it. But the practical goal, which includes the liberation from

all narrow-mindedness, is not indifferent to the means intended to achieve it; otherwise this dialectic would degenerate into vulgar Jesuitism. The idiotic parliamentarian in Doré's caricature who boasts, "Gentlemen, I am above all practical," reveals himself as a scoundrel who cannot see beyond the immediate tasks and moreover is proud of it; his behavior denounces the very spirit of praxis as a demon.⁸ Theory speaks for what is not narrow-minded. Despite all of its unfreedom, theory is the guarantor of freedom in the midst of unfreedom.

3

Today once again the antithesis between theory and praxis is being misused to denounce theory. When a student's room was smashed because he preferred to work rather than join in actions, on the wall was scrawled: "Whoever occupies himself with theory, without acting practically, is a traitor^a to socialism." It is not only against him that praxis serves as an ideological pretext for exercising moral constraint. The thinking denigrated by actionists apparently demands of them too much undue effort: it requires too much work, is too practical. Whoever thinks, offers resistance; it is more comfortable to swim with the current, even when one declares oneself to be against the current. Moreover, by giving way to a regressive and distorted form of the pleasure principle, making things easier for oneself, letting oneself go, one can hope for a moral premium from those who are like-minded. In a crude reversal, the collective substitute superego demands what the old superego disapproved of: the very session of oneself qualifies the willing adept as a better person. Even in Kant emphatic praxis was goodwill; but this signified as much as autonomous reason.⁹ A concept of praxis that would not be narrow-minded can be applied only to politics, to the conditions of society that largely condemn the praxis of each individual to irrelevance. This is the locus of the difference between Kantian ethics and the views of Hegel who, as Kierkegaard also saw, no longer accepts the traditional under-

^a The concept of the traitor comes from the eternal reserves of collective repression, whatever its coloration may be. The law of conspiratorial communities is irrevocability; for this reason conspirators enjoy warming up the mythical concept of the oath. Whoever thinks differently is not only excluded but exposed to the most severe moral sanctions. The concept of morality demands autonomy, which is, however, not tolerated by those who always have morality on the tip of their tongue. In truth it is the one who sins against his own autonomy who deserves to be called a traitor.

standing of ethics. Kant's writings on moral philosophy, in their conformity to the state of enlightenment in the eighteenth century and despite their anti-psychologism and all their endeavors to attain an absolutely conclusive and comprehensive validity, were individualistic to the extent that they addressed themselves to the individual as the substrate of correct—that is, for Kant, radically reasonable—action. All of Kant's examples come from the private and the business spheres; and this conditions the concept of an ethics based on dispositions, whose subject must be the individuated singular person. What comes to expression for the first time in Hegel is the experience that the behavior of the individual—even if he has a pure will—does not come near to a reality that prescribes and limits the conditions of any individual's action. Hegel in effect dissolves the concept of the moral by extending it into the political. Since then no unpolemical reflection upon praxis can be valid anymore. However, there should be just as little self-deception about the fact that the political extension of the concept of praxis introduces the repression of the particular by the universal. Humaneness, which does not exist without individuation, is being virtually recanted by the latter's snotty-nosed, casual dismissal. But once the action of the individual, and therefore of all individuals, is made contemptible, then collective action is likewise paralyzed. Spontaneity appears to be trivial at the outset in the face of the factual supremacy of the objective conditions. Kant's moral philosophy and Hegel's philosophy of right represent two dialectical stages of the bourgeois self-consciousness of praxis. Polarized according to the dichotomy of the particular and the universal that tears apart this consciousness, both philosophies are false. Each justifies itself against the other so long as a possible higher form of praxis does not reveal itself in reality; its revelation requires theoretical reflection. It is beyond doubt and controversy that a reasoned analysis of the situation is the precondition for political praxis at least: even in the military sphere, where the crude primacy of action holds sway, the procedure is the same. An analysis of the situation is not tantamount to conformity to that situation. In reflecting upon the situation, analysis emphasizes the aspects that might be able to lead beyond the given constraints of the situation. This is of incalculable relevance for the relationship of theory to praxis. Through its difference from immediate, situation-specific action, i.e., through its autonomization, theory becomes a transformative and practical productive force.¹⁰ If thinking bears on anything of importance, then it initiates a practical impulse, no matter how hidden that impulse may remain to thinking. Those alone think who do not passively accept the already given: from the primitive who contemplates how he can protect his small fire from the rain or where he can find shelter from the storm to the Enlighten-

ment philosopher who construes how humanity can move beyond its self-incurred tutelage by means of its interest in self-preservation.¹¹ Such motives continue to have an effect, and perhaps all the more so in cases where no practical grounds are immediately articulated. There is no thought, insofar as it is more than the organization of facts and a bit of technique, that does not have its practical telos. Every meditation upon freedom extends into the conception of its possible realization, so long as the meditation is not taken in hand by praxis and tailored to fit the results it enjoins. Just as the division of subject and object cannot be revoked immediately by a decree of thought, so too an immediate unity of theory and praxis is hardly possible: it would imitate the false identity of subject and object and would perpetuate the principle of domination that posits identity and that a true praxis must oppose. The truth content of the discourse about the unity of theory and praxis was bound to historical conditions. On the nodal points and fractures of this historical development reflection and action may ignite; but even then the two are not one.

4

The primacy of the object must be respected by praxis; this was first noted by the idealist Hegel's critique of Kant's ethics of conscience. To the extent that subject is for its part something mediated, praxis rightly understood is what the object wants: praxis follows the object's neediness. But not by the subject adapting itself, which would merely reinforce the heteronomous objectivity. The neediness of the object is mediated via the total societal system; for that reason it can be determined critically only by theory. Praxis without theory, lagging behind the most advanced state of cognition, cannot but fail, and praxis, in keeping with its own concept, would like to succeed. False praxis is no praxis. Desperation that, because it finds the exits blocked, blindly leaps into praxis, with the purest of intentions joins forces with catastrophe. The hostility to theory in the spirit of the times, the by no means coincidental withering away of theory, its banishment by an impatience that wants to change the world without having to interpret it while so far it has been chapter and verse that philosophers have *merely* interpreted—such hostility becomes praxis's weakness.¹² The requirement that theory should kowtow to praxis dissolves theory's truth content and condemns praxis to delusion; in practical terms, it is high time to voice this. A modicum of madness furnishes collective movements—apparently for the time being regardless of their contents—with their sinister power of attraction. Individuals

cope with their own disintegration, with their private paranoia, by integrating themselves into the collective delusion, the collective paranoia, as Ernst Simmel realized.¹³ At the moment it expresses itself first as the incapacity to accept reflectively within consciousness objective contradictions the subject cannot resolve harmoniously; a unity that is convulsively defended against no aggressor is the screen-image of relentless self-diremption. This sanctioned delusion exempts one from reality-testing, which necessarily generates unbearable antagonisms within the weakened consciousness like that of subjective need and objective refusal. A fawning and malicious servant of the pleasure principle, the delusional element carries an infectious disease that mortally threatens the ego by giving it the illusion that it is protected. Fear of this disease would be the simplest—and therefore likewise repressed—means of self-preservation: the unflinching refusal to cross the rapidly evaporating Rubicon that separates reason and delusion. The transition to a praxis without theory is motivated by the objective impotence of theory and exponentially increases that impotence through the isolation and fetishization of the subjective element of historical movement, spontaneity. The deformation of spontaneity should be seen as a reaction to the administered world. But by frantically closing its eyes to the totality and by behaving as though it stems immediately from people, spontaneity falls into line with the objective tendency of progressive dehumanization: even in its practices. Spontaneity, which would be animated by the neediness of the object, should attach itself to the vulnerable places of rigidified reality, where the ruptures caused by the pressure of rigidification appear externally; it should not trash about indiscriminately, abstractly, without any consideration of the contents of what is often attacked merely for the sake of publicity.

5

If, to make an exception for once, one risks what is called a grand perspective, beyond the historical differences in which the concepts of theory and praxis have their life, one discovers the infinitely progressive aspect of the separation of theory and praxis, which was deplored by the Romantics and denounced in their wake by the Socialists—except for the mature Marx. Of course, the dispensation of spirit from material labor is mere semblance since spirit presupposes material labor for its own existence. But that dispensation is not only semblance and serves not only repression. The separation designates a stage in a process that leads out of the blind predominance of material praxis, potentially onward to free-

dom. The fact that some live without material labor and, like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, take pleasure in their spirit—that unjust privilege—also indicates that this possibility exists for everyone;¹⁴ all the more so when the technical forces of production are at a stage that makes it possible to foresee the global dispensation from material labor, its reduction to a limiting value. Revoking this separation by fiat is thought to be idealistic and is regressive. Spirit forcibly repatriated with praxis without surplus would be concretism. It would accord with the technocratic-positivistic tendency it believes to be opposing and with which it has more affinity—incidentally also in certain factions—than it dares imagine. Humanness awakes with the separation of theory and praxis; it knows nothing of that indifference that in truth bows before the primacy of praxis. Animals, similar to people with regressive brain injuries, are familiar only with objects directly related to action: perception, cunning, eating, all submit to the same constraint that weighs even heavier on the subjectless than on subjects. Cunning must have become autonomous in order for individual creatures to acquire that distance from eating whose telos would be the end of the domination in which natural history perpetuates itself. The palliative, benign, delicate, even the conciliatory element of praxis imitates spirit, a product of the separation whose revocation is pursued by an all too unreflected reflection. Desublimation, which in the present age hardly needs explicit recommendation, perpetuates the dark and backward conditions its advocates would like to clarify. The fact that Aristotle placed the dianoetic virtues highest certainly had its ideological must avoid influencing public issues and looks for ways to justify his withdrawal.¹⁵ But his theory of virtue also opens up the horizon of a blissful contemplation; blissful because it would have escaped the exercising and suffering of violence. Aristotle's *Politics* is more humane than Plato's *Republic*, just as a quasi-bourgeois consciousness is more humane than a restaurative one that, in order to impose itself upon a world already enlightened, prototypically becomes totalitarian. The goal of real praxis would be its own abolition.

6

In his celebrated letter to Kugelmann, Marx warned of the threat of a relapse into barbarism, which already must have been foreseeable at that time.¹⁶ Nothing could have better expressed the elective affinity between conservatism and revolution. Marx already saw this as the ultima ratio to deflect the collapse he had prognosticated. But the fear, which certainly

was not the least thing motivating Marx, has been eclipsed. The relapse has already occurred. To still expect it in the future, even after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, is to take pitiable consolation in the thought that the worst is possibly yet to come. Humanity, which commits and endures wrong, in so doing already ratifies the worst: it is enough merely to listen to the nonsense being peddled about the dangers of détente. The sole adequate praxis would be to put all energies toward working our way out of barbarism. With the supersonic acceleration of history, barbarism has reached the point where it infects everything that conflicts with it. There are many who find the excuse plausible that only barbaric means are still effective against the barbaric totality. Yet in the meantime a threshold value of acceptance has been reached. What fifty years ago for a short period of time in the eyes of those who nourished the all too abstract and illusory hope for a total transformation might have appeared justified—that is, violence—after the experience of the National Socialist and Stalinist atrocities and in the face of the longevity of totalitarian repression is inextricably imbricated in what needs to be transformed. If society's nexus of complicity and with it the prospect for catastrophe has become truly total—and there is nothing that permits any doubt about this—then there is nothing to oppose it other than what denounces that nexus of blindness, rather than each in his own fashion participating in it. Either humanity renounces the eye for an eye of violence, or the allegedly radical political praxis renews the old terror. The petit bourgeois truism that fascism and communism are the same, or in its most recent version, that the ApO helps the NPD,¹⁷ is shamefully confirmed: the bourgeois world has completely become what the bourgeoisie imagines it to be. Whoever does not make the transition to irrational and brutal violence sees himself forced into the vicinity of the reformism that for its part shares the guilt for perpetuating the deplorable totality. But no shortcut helps, and what does help is deeply obscured. Dialectic is perverted into sophistry as soon as it focuses pragmatically on the next step, beyond which the knowledge of the totality has long since moved.

7

The error of the primacy of praxis as it is exercised today appears clearly in the privilege accorded to tactics over everything else. The means have become autonomous to the extreme. Serving the ends without reflection, they have alienated themselves from them. Thus everywhere discussion is called for, certainly initially out of an anti-authoritarian impulse. But discussion, which by the way, like the public sphere, is an entirely bour-

geois category, has been completely ruined by tactics.¹⁸ What discussions could possibly produce, namely, decisions reached from a greater objectivity to the extent that intentions and arguments interpenetrate, does not interest those who automatically, and in completely inappropriate situations, call for discussions. Each of the hegemonic cliques has prepared in advance the results it desires. Discussion serves manipulation. Every argument, untroubled by the question of whether it is sound, is geared to a purpose. Whatever the opponent says is hardly perceived and then only so that formulaic clichés can be served up in retort. No one wants to learn, experience, insofar as experience is still possible at all. The opponent in a discussion becomes a functional component of the current plan: reified by the reified consciousness *malgré lui-même*. Either these cliques want to make him into something usable by means of engineered discussion and coerced solidarity, or to discredit him before their followers, or they simply speechify out the window for the sake of publicity, to which they are captive: pseudo-activity can stay alive only through incessant self-advertisement. If the opponent does not concede, then he will be disqualified and accused of lacking the qualities presupposed by the discussion. The concept of discussion is cleverly twisted so that the opponent is supposed to let himself be convinced; this degrades the discussion into farce. Behind this ploy lies an authoritarian principle: the dissenter must adopt the group's opinion. The unresponsive ones project their own unresponsiveness upon whomever will not let himself be terrorized. With all this, actionism acquiesces to the trend it intends or pretends to struggle against: the bourgeois instrumentalism that fetishizes means because its form of praxis cannot suffer reflection upon its ends.

8

Pseudo-activity, praxis that takes itself more seriously and insulates itself more diligently from theory and knowledge the more it loses contact with its object and a sense of proportion, is a product of objective societal conditions. It truly is conformist: to the situation of *huis clos*. The pseudo-revolutionary posture is complementary to that military-technical impossibility of spontaneous revolution Jürgen von Kempster identified years ago.¹⁹ Barricades are ridiculous against those who administer the bomb; that is why the barricades are a game, and the lords of the manor let the gamblers go on playing for the time being. Things might be different with the guerrilla tactics of the Third World; nothing in the administered world functions wholly without disruption. This is why actionists in advanced industrial countries choose the underdeveloped

Ever since the market economy was ruined and is now patched together from one provisional measure to the next, its laws alone no longer provide a sufficient explanation. Without psychology, in which the objective constraints are continually internalized anew, it would be impossible to understand how people passively accept a state of unchanging destructive irrationality and, moreover, how they integrate themselves into movements that stand in rather obvious contradiction to their own interests. The function of psychological determinants in the students is closely related to this situation. In relation to real power, which hardly feels a tickle, actionism is irrational. The more clever people realize the pointlessness of their activity, while others strenuously conceal it. Since the more important groups have hardly resolved themselves to martyrdom, psychological motivations must be taken into account; by the way, economic motivations are more directly in play than the blather about the affluent society would have us believe: there are still numerous students who eke out an existence on the threshold of starvation. Probably the construction of an illusory reality is ultimately necessitated by objective obstacles; it is mediated psychologically, the adjournment of thought is conditioned by the dynamic of the instinctual drives. In this a contradiction is flagrantly obvious. Whereas the actionists are exceedingly interested in themselves libidinally, in their spiritual needs, in the secondary pleasure gained through that concern with themselves, the subjective element—to the extent that it manifests itself in their opponents—arouses their spiteful fury. At once one recognizes here an extended application of Freud's thesis from *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, that the imagines of authority have the subjective character of coldness, a lack of love and human relationships.²⁰ Just as those who are anti-authoritarian continue to embody authority, so they also rig out their negatively cathected imagines with the traditional leader qualities and grow uneasy as soon as authority figures are different, no longer correspond to what the anti-authoritarians nonetheless secretly desire from them. Those who protest most vehemently are similar to authoritarian personalities in their aversion to introspection; when they do consider themselves, it happens without criticism, and unreflectedly, aggressively is directed outward. They overestimate their own relevance narcissistically, without a sufficient sense of proportion. They impose their needs immediately, for instance, with the slogan of "learning processes," as the criterion of praxis; so far there has been little room left for the dialectical category of externalization. They reify their own psychology and expect reified consciousness from those who face them. Actually they taboo experience and become allergic as soon as anything refers to it. Experience for them comes down to what they call "privilege of information" without noticing that the concepts of information and

ones for their models. But they are as impotent as the personality cult of leaders who are helplessly and shamefully murdered. Models that do not prove themselves even in the Bolivian bush cannot be exported.

Pseudo-activity is provoked and at the same time condemned to being illusory by the current state of the technical forces of production. Just as personalization offers false consolation for the fact that within the anonymous apparatus the individual does not count anymore, so pseudo-activity deceives about the debilitation of a praxis presupposing a free and autonomous agent that no longer exists. It is also relevant for political activity to know whether the circumnavigation of the moon had really required the astronauts at all, who not only had to subordinate themselves to their buttons and mechanisms but moreover received detailed orders from the control center on earth. The physiognomy and social character of a Columbus and a Borman are worlds apart. As a reflex reaction to the administered world pseudo-activity reproduces that world in itself. The prominent personalities of protest are virtuosos in rules of order and formal procedures. The sworn enemies of the institutions particularly like to demand the institutionalization of one thing or another, which usually are desires voiced by committees thrown together by happenstance; whatever is being discussed must at all costs be "binding." Subjectively, all this is promoted by the anthropological phenomenon of *gadgeteering**, the affective investment in technology that exceeds every form of reason and inhabits every facet of life. Ironically—civilization in its deepest degradation—McLuhan is right: *the medium is the message**. The substitution of means for ends replaces the qualities in people themselves. Interiorization would be the wrong word for it, because this mechanism does not even permit the constitution of a stable subjectivity: instrumentalization usurps its place. From pseudo-activity all the way to pseudo-revolution, the objective tendency of society coincides seamlessly with subjective regression. World history once again produces in parody the kind of people whom it in fact needs.

The objective theory of society, in as much as society is an autonomous totality confronting living individuals, has priority over psychology, which cannot address the decisive factors. Indeed, from this point of view, ever since Hegel resentment has often swung against the individual and his freedom, no matter how particularistic the latter may be, and especially against instinctual drives. This resentment accompanied bourgeois subjectivism like its shadow, and in the end was its bad conscience. Ascension toward psychology, however, cannot be maintained even objectively.

preserves its socialized subjects according to their unfettered potentialities. On the other hand, it would be delusional and irrational—and the example is more than just an example—that the adequacy of the means of destruction to the goal of destruction should be rational while, however, the ends of peace and the elimination of the antagonisms preventing it *ad kalendas Graecas* should be irrational. Weber, as loyal spokesman of his class, inverted the relationship between rationality and irrationality. Almost in vengeance and against his intentions, the ends-means rationality undergoes dialectical reversal in his thought. The development of bureaucracy, the purest form of rational domination, into the society of the “iron cage” and which Weber prophesied with obvious horror is irrational. Words such as “casing,” “solidification,” “autonomization of the apparatus,” and their synonyms indicate that the means so designated become ends in themselves instead of fulfilling their ends-means rationality.²³ This is not a symptom of degeneration, however, as the bourgeoisie’s self-image happily assumes. Weber recognized, with an intensity of scrutiny matched only by his refusal to let it influence his conception, that the irrationality he both described and passed over in silence follows from the determination of *ratio* as means, its blindness to ends and to the critical consciousness of them. Weber’s resigned rationality becomes irrational precisely in that, as Weber postulated in angry identification with the aggressor, the ends remain irrational to rationality’s ascent. Without a hold on the determinateness of its objects, *ratio* runs away from itself; its principle becomes one of bad infinity. Weber’s apparent de-ideologization of science was itself devised as an ideology against Marxist analysis. But it unmasks itself, unsound and self-contradictory, in its indifference toward the obvious madness. *Ratio* should not be anything less than self-preservation, namely that of the species, upon which the survival of each individual literally depends. Through self-preservation the species indeed gains the potential for that self-reflection that could finally transcend the self-preservation to which it was reduced by being restricted simply to a means.

11

Actionism is regressive. Under the spell of the positivity that long ago became part of the armature of ego-weakness, it refuses to reflect upon its own impotence. Those who incessantly cry “too abstract!” strenuously cultivate concretism, an immediacy that is inferior to the available theoretical means. The pseudo-praxis profits from this. Those who are especially shrewd say—just as summarily as they judge art—that theory is repressive; and which activity in the midst of the status quo is not so, in

communication they exploit are imported from the monopolistic culture industry and the science calibrated to it. Objectively they contribute to the regressive transformation of what still remains intact of the subject into contact points for *conditioned reflexes**.

10

The separation of theory and praxis in recent history and especially as it appears in sociology, which should have treated it thematically, finds its unreflected and most extreme scientific expression in Max Weber’s theory of value neutrality. Almost seventy years old, this doctrine continues to be influential, even in the latest positivistic sociology.²¹ Everything that has been brought forward against the theory has had little effect on established science. The more or less explicit, unmediated contrary position, that of a material ethic of values that would be immediately self-evident and would guide praxis, is discredited by its reactionary, arbitrary nature.²² Weber’s value neutrality was anchored to his notion of rationality. It remains an open question which of the two categories underpins the other in Weber’s version. As is well known, rationality, the center of Weber’s entire work, for him by and large means as much as instrumental reason. It is defined as a relation between appropriate means and ends. According to him, such ends are in principle external to rationality; they are left to a kind of decision whose dark implications, which Weber did not want, revealed themselves shortly after his death. Such an exemption of ends from *ratio*, which Weber in fact surrounded with qualifications and which yet unmistakably constituted the tenor of his theory of science and completely determined his scholarly strategy, is however no less arbitrary than the decree of values. Rationality cannot, any more than the subjective authority serving it, the ego, be simply split off from self-preservation; moreover, the anti-psychological but subject-oriented sociologist Weber did not try to do that. *Ratio* came into being in the first place as an instrument of self-preservation, that of reality-testing. Its universality, which suited Weber because it permitted him to delimit it from psychology, extended *ratio* beyond its immediate representative, the individual person. This emancipated *ratio*, probably for as long as it has existed, from the contingency of individually posed ends. In its immanent, intellectual universality, the subject of *ratio* pursuing its self-preservation is itself an actual universal, society—in its full logic, humanity. The preservation of humanity is inexorably inscribed within the meaning of rationality: it has its end in a reasonable organization of society, otherwise it would bring its own movement to an authoritarian standstill. Humanity is organized rationally solely to the extent that it

its way? But immediate action, which always evokes taking a swing, is incomparably closer to oppression than the thought that catches its breath. The Archimedean point—how might a nonrepressive praxis be possible, how might one steer between the alternatives of spontaneity and organization—this point, if it exists at all, cannot be found other than through theory. If the concept is tossed aside, then traits, such as a unilateral solidarity degenerating into terror, will become manifest. What imposes itself straight away is the bourgeois supremacy of means over ends, that spirit actionists are, at least programmatically, opposed to. The university's technocratic reforms they, perhaps even *bona fide*, want to avert, are not even the retaliation to the protest. The protest promotes the reforms all on its own. Academic freedom is degraded into customer service and must submit to inspections.

12

Among the arguments available to actionism, there is one that indeed is quite removed from the political strategy it boasts of but that possesses a much greater suggestive power: it argues that one must opt for the protest movement precisely because one recognizes that it is objectively hopeless, following the model of Marx during the Paris Commune, or when the communist party stepped into the breach during the collapse of the anarcho-socialist councilor government in 1919 in Munich. Just as those responses had been triggered by desperation, so too those who despair of any possibility should support pointless action. The ineluctable defeat offers solidarity in the form of moral authority even to those who could have foreseen the catastrophe and would not have bowed before the dictate of a unilateral solidarity. But in truth the appeal to heroism prolongs that dictate; whoever has retained the sensibility for such types of appeal will not mistake its hollow tone. In the security of America an emigrant could endure the news of Auschwitz; it would be difficult to believe that Vietnam is robbing anyone of sleep, especially since every opponent of colonial wars must know that the Vietcong for their part use Chinese methods of torture. Whoever imagines that as a product of this society he is free of the bourgeois coldness harbors illusions about himself as much as about the world; without such coldness one could not live. The ability of anyone, without exception, to identify with another's suffering is slight. The fact that one simply could not look on any longer, and that no one of goodwill should have to look on any longer, rationalizes the pang of conscience. The attitude at the edge of uttermost horror, such as was felt by the conspirators of 20 July who preferred to risk perishing under torture to doing nothing, was possible and admirable.²⁴ To claim

from a distance that one feels the same as they do confuses the power of imagination with the violence of the immediate present. Pure self-protection prevents someone who was not there from imagining the worst, and even more, from taking actions that would expose him to the worst. Whoever is trying to understand the situation must acknowledge the objectively necessary limits to an identification that collides with his demand for self-preservation and happiness and should not behave as though he were already the type of person who perhaps can develop only in the condition of freedom, that is, without fear. One cannot be too afraid of the world, such as it is. If someone sacrifices not only his intellect but himself as well, then no one should prevent him, although objectively false martyrdom does exist. To make a commandment out of the sacrifice belongs to the fascist repertoire. Solidarity with a cause whose ineluctable failure is discernible may yield up some exquisite narcissistic gain; in itself the solidarity is as delusional as the praxis of which one comfortably awaits approbation, which most likely will be recanted in the next moment because no sacrifice of intellect is ever enough for the insatiable claims of inanity. Brecht, who as the situation at that time warranted was still involved with politics and not with its surrogate, once said, in effect, that when he was honest with himself he was *au fond* more interested in the theater than in changing the world.^b Such a consciousness would be the best corrective for a theater that today confuses itself with reality, such as the *happenings** now and then staged by the actionists that muddle aesthetic semblance and reality. Whoever does not wish to fall short of Brecht's voluntary and audacious avowal will suspect most praxis today of lacking talent.

13

Contemporary practicality is based on an element that was baptized in the abominable language of sociology as the 'suspicion of ideology', as though the driving force in the critique of ideologies was not the experi-

^b Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), 118. [Translator's note: English: *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: NLB, 1973). A reference to entry for 6 July in "Conversations with Brecht": "6 July. Brecht, in the course of yesterday's conversation: 'I often imagine being interrogated by a tribunal. "Now tell us, Mr Brecht, are you really in earnest?" I would have to admit that no, I'm not completely in earnest. I think too much about artistic problems, you know, about what is good for the theatre, to be completely in earnest. But having said "no" to that important question, I would add something still more important: namely, that my attitude is, *permissible*.'" (106–107).]

ence of their untruth but rather the petit bourgeois disdain for all spirit because it is allegedly conditioned by interests, a view in fact motivated by an interest in skepticism and projected onto spirit. However, if praxis obscures its own present impossibility with the opiate of collectivity, it becomes in its turn ideology. There is a sure sign of this: the question "what is to be done?" as an automatic reflex to every critical thought before it is fully expressed, let alone comprehended. Nowhere is the obscurantism of the latest hostility to theory so flagrant. It recalls the gesture of someone demanding your papers. More implicit and therefore all the more powerful is the commandment: you must sign. The individual must cede himself to the collective; as recompense for his jumping into the *melting pot**, he is promised the grace of being chosen, of belonging. Weak and fearful people feel strong when they hold hands while running. This is the real turning point of dialectical reversal into irrationalism. Defended with a hundred sophisms, inculcated into adepts with a hundred techniques for exerting moral pressure, is the idea that by abandoning one's own reason and judgment one is blessed with a higher, that is, collective reason; whereas in order to know the truth one needs that irreducibly individual reason that, it is nowadays incessantly belabored, is supposedly obsolete and whose message has long since been refuted and laid to rest by the comrades' superior wisdom. One falls back upon that disciplinarian attitude the communists once practiced. What once was deadly serious and bore terrible consequences when the situation still seemed undecided is now repeated as comedy in the pseudo-revolutions, according to a maxim of Marx.²⁵ Instead of arguments one meets standardized slogans, which apparently are distributed by leaders and their acolytes.

14

If theory and praxis are neither immediately one nor absolutely different, then their relation is one of discontinuity. No continuous path leads from praxis to theory—what has to be added is what is called the spontaneous moment. But theory is part of the nexus of society and at the same time is autonomous. Nevertheless praxis does not proceed independently of theory, nor theory independently of praxis. Were praxis the criterion of theory, then for the sake of the *thema probandum* it would become the swindle denounced by Marx and therefore would not be able to attain what it wants; were praxis simply to follow the instructions of theory, then it would become rigidly doctrinaire and furthermore would falsify theory. What Robespierre and St. Just did with the Rousseaunist *volonté*

générale, which certainly did not lack a repressive streak itself, is the most famous but by no means the only example. The dogma of the unity of theory and praxis, contrary to the doctrine on which it is based, is undialectical: it underhandedly appropriates simple identity where contradiction alone has the chance of becoming productive. Whereas theory cannot be extracted from the entire societal process, it also maintains an independence within this process; it is not only a means of the totality but also a moment of it; otherwise it could not resist to any degree the captivating spell of that totality. The relationship between theory and practice, after both have once distanced themselves from each other, is that of qualitative reversal, not transition, and surely not subordination. They stand in a polar relationship. The theory that is not conceived as an instruction for its realization should have the most hope for realization, analogous to what occurred in the natural sciences between atomic theory and nuclear fission; what they had in common, the backtracking to a possible praxis, lay in the technologically oriented reason in-itself, not in any thoughts about application. The Marxist doctrine of the unity of theory and praxis was no doubt credible because of the presentiment that it could be too late, that it was now or never. To that extent it was certainly practical, but the theory as it is actually explicated, the *Critique of Political Economy*, lacks all concrete transitions to that praxis that, according to the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, should constitute its *raison d'être*.²⁶ Marx's reticence concerning theoretical recipes for praxis was hardly less than that concerning a positive description of a classless society. *Capital* contains numerous invectives, most often against economists and philosophers, but no program for action; every speaker of the ApO who has learned his vocabulary would have to chide that book for being abstract. The theory of surplus value does not tell how one should start a revolution. In regard to praxis generally—not in specific political questions—the anti-philosophical Marx hardly moves beyond the philosopheme that only the proletariat itself can be the cause of its emancipation; and at that time the proletariat was still visible. In recent decades the *Studies on Authority and Family*, the *Authoritarian Personality*, even the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with its in many respects herodox theory of domination were written without practical intentions and nonetheless exercised some practical influence. That influence came from the fact that in a world where even thoughts have become commodities and provoke *sales resistance** no one could suppose when reading these volumes that he was being sold or talked into something. Wherever I have directly intervened in a narrow sense and with a visible practical influence, it happened only through theory: in the polemic against the musical Youth Movement and its followers, in the critique of

the newfangled German jargon of authenticity; a critique that spoiled the pleasure of a very virulent ideology by charting its derivation and restoring it to its proper concept. If these ideologies are in fact false consciousness, then their dissolution, which diffuses widely in the medium of thought, inaugurates a certain movement toward political maturity, and that, in any case, is practical. The stale Marxist pun about "critical critique," the witlessly pleonastic, hackneyed witticism that believes theory is annihilated because it is theory, merely conceals the insecurity involved in the direct translation of theory into praxis.²⁷ And even later, despite the Internationale, with whom he had a falling-out, Marx by no means surrendered himself to praxis. Praxis is a source of power for theory but cannot be prescribed by it. It appears in theory merely, and indeed necessarily, as a blind spot, as an obsession with what is being criticized; no critical theory can be practiced in particular detail without overestimating the particular, but without the particularity it would be nothing. This admixture of delusion, however, warns of the excesses in which it incessantly grows.

Critical Models 3

15. "Free action" [*freie Thathandlung*], a phrase from Fichte's metaphysical theory as presented in his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), which holds that the fundamental principle underlying all reality derives from the self-positing and self-affirming of the Ego, i.e., subjective idealism. Such positing precedes and itself conditions the resultant dualism between Ego (subject) and non-Ego (object); since the positing itself is unconditioned, Fichte calls it a "free action."

16. Thinly veiled allusion to Heidegger.

17. Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A20–21.

18. Adorno's pun: "*die Verdinglichung des Undinglichen*," literally, "the reification of what is not thingly" but also playing on the colloquial *Unding*, "absurdity."
 19. According to David Hume (1711–1776), the mind's primary data is comprised solely of sensory impressions, feelings, or ideas, the latter being nothing but memories of previous impressions. Therefore Hume concluded that the mind is nothing other than a bundle of subjective perceptions related through resemblance, succession, and causation and lacks any substantive identity of the self (what Kant inherited as the problem of the unity of consciousness). Cf. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), bk. 1, pt. 4; Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), section 12.

20. Adorno here echoes one of his critiques of Durkheim's concept of *faits sociaux* as expounded in his *Les règles de la méthode sociologique* (1901) and *Sociologie et philosophie* (1924). For Adorno's appraisal of Durkheim's sociology, cf. his "Einleitung zu Emile Durkheim, 'Soziologie und Philosophie,'" GS 8:245–279 and "Zum gegenwärtigen Stand der deutschen Soziologie" in GS 8:500–531, esp. 503.

21. In German, like French, the article is used to indicate species as well as individual, thus, *der Mensch* [or *l'homme*] means both "man" as well as "mankind."

Marginalia to Theory and Praxis

1. "Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie / Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum." *Faust, Erster Teil*, ll. 2038–2039. In Walter Kaufman's translation: "Gray, my dear friend, is every theory. / And green alone life's golden tree," in *Goethe's Faust*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 206.

2. Adorno's neologistic *entqualifizieren* suggests not only the English "disqualify" but here primarily "removing the qualities, distinctions from," "de-differentiating."

3. Alluding to line 16 of Rudolf Borchardt's poem "Auf eine angeschossene Schwalbe, die der Dichter fand," here given in a literal translation:

TO A SWALLOW SHOT AND WOUNDED, FOUND BY THE POET

Now there you lie, a small broken arrow;
 Your tendon cut clean through
 And no more wing is healthy
 For one alone cannot carry you.

You meet my monstrous closeness
 With a mien of deathly fear

My hesitation to you means claw and tooth
 My leaning forward hunger for you,

And no more flight; for you are not swift;
 You and your nest-mate
 Could win life only
 By outstripping, by escaping:

With enmity through the desert of your world
 Shooting, always before the enemy,
 In the shrill, shrill cry alone
 You stay together, lonely community!

How, in my hand, which renders warmth,
 The life-black eye is surprised!
 I am not god, who disowns you,
 Like hundreds upon hundreds every day,—

You had flight, and what can sustain you,
 From him, the serene sustainer of your foe,
 Past the spot, where your impotence lay,
 Went your god, flew your sibling,

And those you never honored with your thievery,
 When you rounded the curve in the blueness,
 Already a birth of dust crept upon you,
 To it you are carrion, soon as it sees you wounded!—

Tiny tongue, that boldly feasts upon my finger
 You are full of tidings without speaking;
 So that you once trust stronger ones,
 Must god break the ring of his own providence,—

To rectify, where even he pities
 The mockery and wrong of his own work,
 he has need of his great son,
 whom the common kingdom does not completely compass.

Here he thanks me, what he gave me:
 That he granted me his soul,
 Drew taught the bridge between you and him,
 The bridge he himself could not build.

He who sets each body before death
 Does not let his own be gambled away:
 He, who banished his creature, created
 Also the creature, to save the banished.

Rudolf Borchardt, *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, selected and introduced by Theodor W. Adorno (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968), 76–77. Adorno's introduction to his selection of Borchardt's poems is reprinted in *Noten zur Literatur*, now GS 11:536–555. English: "Charmed Language: On the Poetry of Rudolf Borchardt," in Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, trans. Sherry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 2:193–210.

4. "Restitution phenomena" in psychology originally referred to the (partial) recovery of cognitive function after traumatic brain injury and was metaphorically adopted to indicate analogous psychiatric processes, for instance, a schizophrenic's (partial) regaining of a sense of reality.

5. Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 92 (A51/B75).

6. Adorno plays on the commercial undertones of the terms: *Betriebsamkeit*, "bustle, industriousness," from *Betrieb* meaning both "enterprise, business" and "hustle, bustle"; *Geschäftigkeit*, "busyness, zealousness," from *Geschäft* meaning "business, undertaking" and "business, shop, office."

7. Cf. Schiller's concept of the "play-drive" [*Spieltrieb*] in his *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1794/95). English: Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967).

8. "Messieurs, avant tout je suis pratique"; from *Versailles et Paris en 1871: D'après les dessins originaux de Gustave Doré* (Paris: Librairie Plon, Plon-Nourrit, 1907); reprinted in Gustave Doré, *Das graphische Werk* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1975), 2:1377. In his condemnation, Adorno deploys one of his favorite puns, that of *Geist* (spirit) and *Ungest* (boor, demon).

9. Cf. the opening of Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785): "There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a good will." Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 7 [A. A. 4:393].

10. *Produktivkraft*, "productive force, productive power" (and the plural, usually rendered "forces of production" in contrast to "modes of production") is a technical term in Marx, referring to the result of practical human energy, specifically in labor. To the extent that productive power is appropriated in the form of objectified labor by capital as surplus value, it constitutes the productive force of capital (surplus value creating wealth); to the extent that it is not so appropriated, it represents a potential point of conflict with existing modes of production.

11. "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding!" (Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" trans. H. B. Nisbet in Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, 2d ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 54 [A.A. 8:35]).

12. Allusion to Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have merely interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

13. Cf. Ernst Simmel, "Anti-Semitism and Mass Psychopathology," in *Anti-*

Semitism: A Social Disease, ed. Ernst Simmel (New York: International Universities Press, 1946):

Summarizing the parallelisms between a collective psychosis and an individual psychosis, we can say: The mass and the psychotic think and act irrationally, because of regressively disintegrated ego systems. In the individual psychotic mind, the process of regression is of a primary nature and is constant. In the collective psychotic mind regression is secondary and occurs only temporarily. The reason for this is that in the individual psychotic, the ego breaks with reality because of its pathological weakness, whereas in the mass member, reality breaks first with the ego. This ego, by submerging itself into a pathological mass, saves itself from individual regression by regressing collectively. Flight into mass psychosis is therefore an escape not only from reality, but also from individual insanity.

This insight gives us our answer to the enigmatic question why apparently normal individuals can react like psychotics under the spell of mass formation. Their ego is immature as a result of superego weakness. The immature individual who, under the stress of environmental circumstances, is on the verge of losing contact with reality, can find his way back to it when his ego, carried by the spirit of the group, finds opportunity for the discharge of pent-up aggressive instinct energies into the object world. (49–50)

14. Cf. for example, the first words of "Zarathustra's Preface": "When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains. Here he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not tire of it" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann [New York: Viking Press, 1966], 9).

15. Aristotle divides the 'virtues', or 'excellences' (*ἀρεταί*) into dianoetic, or those of intellect (*διανοητική*) and moral, or those of character (*ἠθικῆ*). The intellectual excellences involve reason and belong to the rational part of the soul, the moral excellences involve inclinations and habit, belong to the irrational part of the soul, and are obedient to reason, which is considered the divine part of man. Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a3ff.; *Eudemian Ethics*, 1120b5ff.; *Politics*, 1333a16ff.

16. The reference has not been found. Perhaps Adorno is referring to comments by Rosa Luxemburg in her so-called Junius pamphlet entitled "The Crisis of Social Democracy" (1916) where she writes: "Friedrich Engels once said, bourgeois society confronts a dilemma: either the transition to socialism or relapse into barbarism. What does a 'relapse into barbarism' mean at our height of European civilization? ... This world war—this is a relapse into barbarism" (*Politische Schriften*, vol. 2, ed. Ossip Flechtheim [Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966], 31). However, the Engels source has not been found.

17. ApO = *Außenparlamentarische Opposition* (Extra-parliamentary Opposition), a loosely organized activist movement that formed in reaction to the lack of effective parliamentary opposition as a consequence of the grand coalition of the SPD and CDU/CSU parties in 1966 and constituted an important part of the German New Left in 1968. It reached its culmination in the protest actions following the murder of

Rudi Dutschke and against the conservative publishing conglomerate Springer Verlag in 1968.

NPD = *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party of Germany), the collective party of the extreme right, including ex-Nazi and neofascist groups. It developed a strong following, gaining representation in seven *Länder* of the Federal Republic from 1966 to 1968.

18. Allusion to the recent publication by his colleague at the Institute for Social Research, Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zur einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962). English: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988).

19. Cf. "Betrachtungen zum 20. Juli," in Jürgen von Kempfski, *Recht und Politik: Studien zur Einheit der Sozialwissenschaft, Schriften 2*, ed. Achim Eschbach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992), 321–333. Originally published in *Merkur* (1949). Von Kempfski argues that the attempted coup d'état of 20 July 1944 by Wehrmacht officers was foiled because Hitler had created diverse command structures, i.e., a bureaucracy. The final section of the article speculates about possible lessons for democratic states:

It is worth considering whether splintering up the command structures as a technique for safeguarding a totalitarian regime from coups d'état can also mutatis mutandis be translated onto democracies. As far as the safeguarding of a democratic state from overthrow is concerned, the constitutional thinkers still operate under the idea that the threat of overthrow comes from below, from the "masses." However, under modern technological conditions, "revolutions" can scarcely still be carried out successfully: the superiority of the state in weapons technology is too great. Moreover, for the industrial states the classical age of the revolutionary situation is long past. What threatens is the transition to totalitarian forms of government by completely or half 'legal' paths, the cold revolution from above. This threat demands different means than those used against revolutions from below. (332)

20. Freud, *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* (1921); English: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, vol. 18 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1975).

21. Max Weber advocated "value-free" judgments in sociology on the model of scientific objectivity, polemizing, on the one hand, against utilitarians who identified value with use and, on the other hand, against the unscientific particularism of the older generation of sociologists belonging to the so-called "Historical School" (e.g. Gustav Schmoller, Adolph Wagner, Georg Friedrich Knapp). Weber presents his arguments in two articles: "Die 'Objektivität' sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis," in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 19 (1904): 22–87; "Der Sinn der 'Wertfreiheit' der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften," in *Logos* 7 (1917–18): 40–88 (both reprinted in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* [Tübingen: 1968], 146–214 and 489–590). In English cf. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. and ed. Edward Shils and H. A. Finch (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949). Adorno's comments here echo his argu-

ments in the dispute concerning positivism in sociology. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno et al., *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie* (Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1969). Adorno's contributions are reprinted in GS 8; English: Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (London: Heinemann, 1976).

22. A salvo in Adorno's ongoing critique of Max Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* (1916), reprinted in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2 (Bern/Munich: Francke Verlag, 1966). English: *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

23. The terms "casing" [*Gehäuse*], "solidification, hardening" [*Verfestigung*] and "autonomization of the apparatus" [*Verselbständigung der Apparatur*] derive from Weber-inspired sociological theory of bureaucratization. "Stahlhartes Gehäuse," an expression made famous by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, is translated in English as the "iron cage" [sic] of modernity.

24. Reference to the attempted coup d'état of 20 July 1944 by Wehrmacht officers, most notably Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. The attempt on Hitler's life failed, and the conspirators were executed.

25. Allusion to the famous opening of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852): "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He has forgotten to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

26. See note 12 above.

27. Cf. the first joint publication by Marx and Engels, a satirical polemic against Bruno Bauer and the Young Hegelians: *Die Heilige Familie; oder, Kritik der kritischen Kritik* (1845). English: *The Holy Family: A Critique of Critical Criticism*, in *The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, ed. Y. Dakhina and T. Chikileva, vol. 4 (New York: International Publishers, 1975).

Critique

1. Adorno here draws on the definition of "political maturity" [*Mündigkeit*] from Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) and draws implications from the formulation itself: *mündig*, literally "come of age" means no longer requiring a guardian [*Vormund*], who makes one's decisions for one [*bevormunden*]. All these expressions in turn stem from mouth [*Mund*]; hence political maturity also means speaking for oneself, not parroting another.

2. "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding!" (Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" trans. H. B. Nisbet in Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, 2d ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 54 [A.A. 8:35]).