



Theodor W.

ADORNO

PHILOSOPHICAL
ELEMENTS OF
A THEORY OF
SOCIETY

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OF SOCIETY

1964

Theodor W. Adorno

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EDITORS' FOREWORD

The lecture course *Philosophical Elements of a Theory of Society* is the eighth of fifteen transcribed courses by Adorno. Here, in the context of an introductory discussion of the philosophical traditions on which sociological theory formation rests, he develops a critique of both sociology and philosophy. Adorno emphasizes that theoretical work requires a specific mediation between philosophy and sociology. As well as criticizing the 'fetishism of method' in sociology, which seeks to impose rules on thought, and insisting that theoretical thought about society cannot be formulated simply through empirical findings, he also questions a characteristic of philosophy since the Enlightenment: the urge to create uniform systems that reflect bourgeois rule. Sociology *and* philosophy must face their own immanent critique – thus Adorno's postulation. Following on from Marx, he develops philosophical elements of a social theory that break through the compulsion to achieve identity and lack of ambiguity in sociological theory formation in order to make ideas fruitful for critical sociological analysis and theory through an emphatic consideration of unregulated experience. Nonetheless, philosophical reflection always needs sociology too, so that it does not fall for the old idealistic illusion that the totality of real conditions could be grasped through thought alone. The dialectical method of philosophical interpretation must prove itself in relation to the 'material', the results of sociological research that are placed in different experimental situations and unfamiliar 'constellations'.

The theory of society originated in philosophy whilst, at the same time, it attempts to reformulate the questions posed by the latter by defining society as the substratum which traditional philosophy called eternal essences or spirit. Just as philosophy mistrusted the deceit of appearances and sought after interpretation, so the more smoothly the façade of society presents itself, the more profoundly does theory mistrust it. Theory seeks to give a name to what secretly holds the machinery together. (Adorno, 'Sociology and Empirical Research', in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby [London: Heinemann], 1976, p. 68)

In working with the transcripts from the tapes of Adorno's unscripted lectures, we preserved their oral character. We corrected the transcripts – the tape recordings have not survived, sadly – only when clarity of content and syntactical structure required it in order for the text to be readable. Accordingly, punctuation marks such as colons and dashes are used more often than would be the case in a fully composed text. Obvious typographical errors that altered the grammar or meaning, as well as incomplete or interrupted sentences, were corrected or augmented without comment whenever there was no doubt as to the intended result. In a small number of cases, and only when they lacked any rhetorical significance, repetitions or uses of such particles as 'so', 'well' or 'and' were removed. Extensive portions of missing text are marked with [...].

On the whole, the quality of the surviving transcripts varied considerably. In Lecture 13 especially, we felt obliged to cut small text fragments because, owing to technical problems with the tape, they were missing a sufficient amount of content to be incomprehensible. In four cases, missing transcripts had to be replaced with notes taken by Hilmar Tillack, which are more summary in nature. As the reader can see from the gaps between the lecture dates – which always took place on Tuesdays and Thursdays – there are four lectures missing between the second (15 May) and third (2 June) lectures. Two were cancelled because of public holidays, on 19 May (Whitsun) and 28 May (Corpus Christi). It was impossible to establish whether the other two lectures were also cancelled or have simply not survived. Two others are missing between the fourth (4 June) and fifth (16 June) lectures. As Adorno remarks in the text, these were cancelled; the content of Lecture 5 also follows on directly from Lecture 4. Lectures 14 (16 July) and 15 (21 July), which were documented as notes, were swapped in the surviving manuscripts, as Adorno states at the end of Lecture 13 (14 July) that he will expand on the question of 'system' in the 'next session', which takes place in

the notes only in Lecture 15. The notes were therefore integrated into the full text in the correct order.

The explanations in the notes, the index and the overview are intended to serve the reader's understanding. The related passages and explanations from Adorno's writings clarify some of the oral elaborations, as well as showing the many connections between his lectures and his written work. We have also included explanations of certain theoretical and methodological concepts of authors who are now little known, perhaps even unknown. In order to clarify elements of argumentation that are important for the larger context of the lectures, especially when more expansive questions are only touched on here, these have been quoted at greater length. The overview offers the reader some assistance in finding passages on certain topics.

LECTURE 1

12 May 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

The title under which this course of lectures has been announced is somewhat amphibious: 'Philosophical Elements of a Theory of Society'.¹ Some of you will have racked your brains and asked, 'So is that philosophy or sociology?' And only those who have been exposed to my corrupting influence for some time will have recalled that I do not make the distinction between these disciplines as separate trades so strictly, in keeping with what Mr Horkheimer said yesterday in his introductory seminar course: philosophy is anything but a trade.² What led me to this formulation is not the twofold title of my professorship, however,³ but something far more serious, namely the fact that I am asked time and again, and now especially by students of sociology: 'So, you speak of a theory of society – what actually is that? Do you have such a theory? If you have it, why don't you just come out with it, and if you don't, why are you talking about it?' So these constantly recurring questions led me to put it that way.

I hope I will be able to answer these questions at least to the extent that I can elaborate to you some of what I imagine I know about a theory of society, but, at the same time, I must explain to you the flaw of such a thoroughgoing theory of society; for it is always better to admit to, and hopefully explain well, an existing lack than to conceal it through some ideology. But it goes without saying that such a matter as the nature of a theory of society, in so far as it includes a reflection on theory itself, is at once something substantially philosophical; for while the standard practices of scholarship can be

used to form theories, an examination of the possibility and nature of theory, and also a specific theory, is considered the domain of philosophy. In this context, let me remind all of you – but especially the sociology students among you – that the work of Max Weber, whose incredible wealth of material and empirical familiarity with the facts of society no one could deny, contains a special volume of so-called methodological writings;⁴ it is a matter of taste whether the reader wishes to call these texts philosophy or sociology.

The task I have set myself is twofold: on the one hand, I would like to give you a notion of what a theory of society actually is, what it can be and what it might look like. But, on the other hand – in keeping with both the brevity of such a lecture and my own way of approaching such things – I would also like to use a number of models to develop for you the elements, as announced, of such a theory of society itself. These two things, incidentally, are very difficult to keep apart; one of the dimensions of these lectures that will require a little relearning on your part is that I am not willing to make a rigid separation of method and content – indeed, that I will even do all I can to unsettle the thinking habits that insist on such a separation. In other words, I will develop the methodological questions from the factual ones and, conversely, reflect on the factual questions themselves with methodological considerations, for example the structure of dialectical thought. That is also one reason why I will not begin by presenting a definition of a theory of society and its elements, as some of you might expect, because I believe that an understanding of such a theory can be attained only by addressing the philosophically epistemological questions on the one hand and the factual structural questions of society itself on the other.

To begin with, then, I am referring to the concept of a theory of society – and I am merely saying this so that you can get your bearings before being offered an elaborated concept of a theory of society – roughly as is familiar to you without having to engage in great philosophical deliberations, namely as an explanation or interpretation of phenomena, as opposed to their mere collection and subsequent more or less systematic presentation. So, if I say first of all that a theory is understood here as a body of more or less coherent contexts of ideas about society, that will be enough for now. I must add at once, however, that this deliberately very general definition of what such a theory is will form the framework for something that, at least epistemologically, is a central intention of what I have begun here: the distinction between a genuine theory of society and mere containers or collections of data. To the extent that we will deal with methodological considerations and questions about the concept of

a theory of society, that will certainly be one of the most important tasks that is revealed to us by the current situation of scientific theory.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I had told you that some speak time and again, especially in the context of the shortcomings of positivism,⁵ of both the necessity and the deficiency of a theory of society, but without being truly able to offer such a theory with a clear conscience. And, indeed, no one does what people used to do in the days when the great so-called fathers of sociology – Saint-Simon, Comte, Spencer, Marx too, and finally perhaps even Durkheim, though one could question that – presented their conceptions of society. I would argue, however, that the reason for this can be found not only in the advance of a positivist scientific mindset (though this scientific mindset essentially views all theory with suspicion and considers it a necessary evil). The earlier positivists such as Comte and Saint-Simon, who can be considered positivists in a broader sense, referred to what we call theory in a substantive sense with other, somewhat derogatory, terms – ‘metaphysics’, for example, was a frequent choice. I think that the crisis of theoretical thought in sociology, and it is certainly no exaggeration to speak of such a crisis – those of you who were at the Heidelberg congress⁶ and heard the reactions of the panel members to the lecture by my friend Marcuse⁷ will have seen very clearly from the start how widespread the hatred towards emphatic theory is in academically established, official sociology, how widespread a genuine hatred of any theory that is more than the abbreviation of the facts it encompasses – this crisis depends not only on the scientific mindset but ultimately also on the matter itself. That is to say: the increasing difficulty of truly grasping contemporary society with theoretical concepts, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, certain changes in the consciousness of thinkers and researchers that make it increasingly difficult for them to adopt any theoretical stance at all. In relation to these changes in the object and in the subject’s level of awareness, however, the slogans of positivism very often strike me as mere rationalizations to conceal something that lies beneath and bears much greater weight. In the history of positivist thought in sociology and positivist research in sociology, moreover, almost every sociologist who does more than simply conduct some narrow investigations is immediately suspected by his successors of being a crazed theorist – or, to use the term from the *Index Verborum Prohibitorum* of the positivists,⁸ a metaphysician. If you read Durkheim’s *Rules*,⁹ for example, you will find that even Comte, who God knows offered no shortage of invective towards metaphysics and metaphysical thought, is denounced there as a metaphysician, for the telling reason that he worked with

categories related to the totality of historical movement in society, such as progress or an internally cohesive humanity, both of which are unacceptable for a nominalism as extreme as Durkheim's.¹⁰ Or, to give you a different example of the same general phenomenon, it is no exaggeration to count Max Weber among the positivists, at least in a substantial intention of his work – not only because he argued that a rational actor should heroically take the disenchantment of the world upon themselves, but also in the method of his work, which from the outset describes the concepts it uses as mere auxiliary tools that have no independence from whatever facts, but whose purpose is simply to measure the facts in order to structure them; and these can then, as he says quite openly, be discarded if necessary, as prefigured in Weber's famous theory of 'ideal types'.¹¹

As an aside, as this year happens to be the centenary of Max Weber's birth, I would like to connect, as far as I can – without giving an outright lecture on Max Weber – these problems to Weber's work and repeatedly open up perspectives on his *œuvre*, not only because of its wealth of material, but also because the problems we are dealing with are addressed in many of his texts at a very high level and with very great clarity and rigour. It is therefore not a coincidence that I keep returning to Weber, but a specific intention. Although I told you that, in certain basic tendencies, Weber can be considered an exponent of positivism, and thus of an actually anti-theoretical stance, and although I will add to this by noting that there is nothing by Weber that truly resembles a theory of society – that he did try out sociologies dealing with specific topics such as the great sociology of religion,¹² or finally individual sociologies such as the outline 'On the Sociology of Music',¹³ or that he examined certain interconnections between categories but never produced anything like a theory of society as a whole – it is still unmistakable that Weber's output, going by the work that is generally viewed as sociology, as science today, by no means seems so atheoretical.

Let me say this at once: the reason I am placing such value on this problem that recurs insistently throughout the history of sociology, namely that one school of thought considers another too theoretical or metaphysical, is that this eternal recurrence seems to suggest that, in this science especially, which adopted the call to 'focus on the facts' as its mission statement with an almost hysterical fearfulness, that this science is constantly urged by its own object to go beyond mere facticity; and that this, in the eyes of every critic, is then easily attached like a stain to the sociologist thus criticized, which, if I am not mistaken, shows precisely that a science of society cannot actually be envisioned except through theoretical thought. Let me at least tell

you how profound Max Weber's relationship to theory is despite this, shall we say, anti-theoretical or anti-systematic mindset. Here I am not thinking of his methodology, which is a comparatively superficial aspect – for arch-positivists such as Lundberg¹⁴ or Stouffer¹⁵ have authored extensive methodological writings, or Lazarsfeld¹⁶ – but would rather say that the matter itself contains a theoretical aspect. I will remind you of just one of his central concepts, namely that of 'understanding',¹⁷ which is his attempt to understand social behaviour from within rather than applying concepts of identity to it from the outside, as it were, on the basis of particular similarities or consistencies, and through this 'understanding from within' to find a way of identifying something substantive about the interrelatedness of social actions among all individuals, instead of overlooking from the start the ways they come together and merely providing the data. It is precisely this concept of understanding, which he incidentally adopted from the southwest German school, especially from Heinrich Rickert's¹⁸ concept of the idiographic,¹⁹ namely the method in the humanities that focuses on the description and understanding of the individual – this concept of understanding as an attempt to grasp from within is actually profoundly opposed to the positivist impulse. And it is no coincidence that a passage by Kant that can be considered one of the foundational texts of the positivist scientific mindset, namely the 'amphiboly chapter' from the *Critique of Pure Reason*,²⁰ includes a fierce invective against a theory of his immediate predecessor Leibniz that criticizes understanding the matter itself from within, as is inherent in the concept of rationalism, in the harshest terms.

As an aside, to draw your attention directly to what makes this structure special in Weber's work, what we find is that – in agreement with Durkheim – he now does not want to view this 'understanding' as a psychological understanding of separate individuals but, rather, sets himself the task of understanding social behaviour from within as social behaviour, not in terms of the subjective motivations of the individuals. He does this for a very profound and legitimate reason: he knows that, in so far as we act socially, in so far as we move within the context of society, we generally act not as psychological beings but actually as functionaries – to use a term that is fashionable today, one might say as 'role-bearers' within the social context – and the key role carried by the concept of the rational, of 'rationality' in Weber's sociology, can be understood precisely from this perspective. Rationality plays such a decisive part in Weber's work because rationality, as the organ of adjustment to reality – or, as contemporary psychoanalysis calls it, testing reality – is removed

from psychology, from the unconscious of the respective individuals, but can simultaneously be understood on the basis of its objective mechanism, namely the mechanism of calculation. That means one can grasp from within, if you will, what makes a person act socially. To accept or turn down a position, for example, to make some decisions as a businessman or a politician – this can essentially be understood using the same rationale that also governs the respective person's own behaviour. And this fact, which is initially indisputable, was what led Weber to make rationality the key category of sociology – not that he thought everything happens rationally in society; on the contrary, completely irrational categories such as that of social prestige, to name only one example, play an extremely important part in Weber's sociology – but one can say that he saw this as the point of access where social behaviour can be understood from within, where something like a coincidence, if you will, can be brought about between the observing scientific subject and the object, namely the socially acting person or persons.

If one wanted to develop a little further this thought, and which is naturally not formulated explicitly by Max Weber, one could say that the incredible emphasis he places on the concept of rationality suggests something almost like the concept of 'objective spirit', which, of the many things that positivist science finds offensive about Hegel's philosophy, is probably one of the most offensive. Because Weber makes this concept of rationality so central, however, he arrives at something that stands in extreme contrast precisely to the notion of a non-theoretical sociology which assesses individual phenomena only by their ideal type. And I can only repeat here, in the context of the problems we are seeking to investigate, what I once had occasion to say in Heidelberg, namely that, with Weber, as with most theorists of any significance, those parts which do not appear in Baedeker,²¹ by which I mean the things that they did not say programmatically about their own intentions, are more important than what they did say. And if I can give you some reading advice in this context, because I do think that many or some of you will read texts such as *Economy and Society* or the *Sociology of Religion* in connection with these lectures, it is to concentrate far more on what Weber does, on the investigations he carries out and their own structures, than on what he says about it in methodological reflections. He is a thinker – and I would call this a strong argument in his favour – whose analyses possess far greater theoretical force than his purported epistemology. So if you look at Weber, this atheoretical and neutral thinker who was sworn to presenting what is the case, who wanted to deal only with what is the case and not let in any

thoughts about what should be the case, you will find that a major tendency running through society throughout history is constructed in his work, namely the one he posits with his own central category of rationality. Because he retains rationality as the ultimate authority for the sake of the objective validity of mathematics, because of its irresistibility – it is strange how mathematics creeps into the unmathematical Weber's thinking at every turn, something that would merit examination – he views the overall tendency of society as a tendency of progressive rationalization, an ever-advancing development in the calculation of all socially relevant actions in the sense of a probability calculation – not only as a heightening of rational and mathematical procedures that are available to society. For Weber, this point, namely the development of the procedures in themselves, was only of secondary interest; what was most important was that, in his view, according to his theory, which he supports with extremely historical material, calculation according to the model of such a probability affects more and more sectors of society, that society itself is increasingly becoming rationally controllable and controlled. The famous thesis of the 'disenchantment of the world' from the lecture 'Science as a Profession and a Vocation'²² is quite simply an expression of this tendency, a tendency that, according to Weber, is inherent, is immanent, in the principle of rationality itself; this rationality must spread to ever greater sectors of life. This, he argues, goes hand in hand with a change in the mechanisms of power, without which he cannot imagine society, to rational mechanisms of power – that is, mechanisms of power that are dealt with by a social group which, as he envisages it, is ultimately no more than an executive body of this rationality itself, namely bureaucracy. And the thesis of the inexorable *bureaucratization du monde*, which really constitutes the true historico-philosophical aspect of Weber's sociology, and in which it sometimes almost approaches certain Spenglerian perspectives of becoming frozen in late Caesarist periods,²³ is derived from this equation of bureaucracy and rationality.

So you see how Weber's sociology, simply because of certain observations it makes on the basis of the weight that certain categories bear in it, without any deliberate allocation of systematic precedence by the author, is ultimately forced into a theoretical construction of society. And I think that, if there is an argument for the science of society actually to view theory not as a deficiency but as something that lies in its own nature, this can perhaps be shown most convincingly *e contrario*, namely in the fact that a way of thinking such as Weber's – which viewed itself very much as a specialized science, and thus stood in the starkest contrast to the notion of a comprehensive,

overarching historico-philosophical construction – became a form of theory in spite of itself, both out of its own momentum and because of the oppositions affected by it. But this goes further. It goes without saying that a way of thinking like Weber's was highly ill-disposed towards a concept such as dialectic, something that is deeply rooted in philosophical speculation and cannot be separated from philosophical, specifically critical-philosophical, reflection. And this hostility was expressed in Weber's scientific mindset, after all, in his polemical stance towards materialist dialectic, a position that, as most of you probably know, is the real motive for Weber spending such a massive amount of time and work on his sociology of religion, and why he plunged even into the most obscure exotic materials: in order to attack one of the centrepieces of Marxist dialectic, namely the principle that the so-called spiritual superstructure is dependent on the economic substructure. Now, it is a most notable fact that, although one does not encounter a positive use of the word 'dialectic' anywhere in Weber's *œuvre*, its own dialectical elements are extremely evident. Various things were said about this at the Heidelberg sociology congress, for example in Ms Jaerisch's presentation.²⁴ I will name only two such dialectical elements: firstly, the tendency of 'charismatic authority'²⁵ – that is, forms of rule that rest on the genuinely or supposedly supernatural, exceptional vocation of a leader, such as the political rule of Muhammad in Arabia – to change over time into traditional rule, to be inherited and thus also to produce firm, fixed, objectified, concrete forms of rule, and ultimately even a bureaucracy. To understand this properly, you must know that Weber's method consists in setting such ideal types – charismatic authority, traditional authority and rational authority, for example – apart from one another through very exact, somewhat legalistic definitions, and then his plan is simply to observe whether some social phenomena he is investigating correspond to the one or the other type – how near or how far from it, how much they deviate from it – without assigning these types any meaning, let alone movement of their own. But, by examining not only such phenomena as the charismatic type of authority I just used to illustrate this but also their development, he is ultimately forced not only to see them to a certain extent as something autonomous that exhibits tendencies of movement in itself – insight into such immanent tendencies of movement in a phenomenon, even such an insight is already an element of theory, for such a tendency of movement is not a fact one can objectively determine – but, in addition, he is even forced to concede that such phenomena change substantially and in a very particular way, and with them their ideal type. So one could say that

a historical structure is produced between the type of charismatic authority and the type of traditional authority, and thus that he teaches something like an overarching structure of social movement, and beyond this such a structure in the form of a movement in oppositions; thus he concedes, working from within the material itself, something like a recognition of dialectical necessities or tendencies that is actually irreconcilable with Weber's sociological approach. Or a similar dialectical phenomenon in his work is that rational bureaucracy, which is meant to be part of the rational, transparent and fundamentally democratic form of rule, which I already touched on earlier as Weber's central thesis, becomes firmly established and inevitably turns into anti-democratic and irrational rule. As an aside, this is a theoretical insight with which the supposedly so atheoretical Weber very accurately predicted developments in large sectors of society directly after his time. One of the strangest things today is that, if one reads something like Weber's invectives against Leninist Bolshevism from the last years of his life,²⁶ one sees that he prophesied with incredible precision, based purely on the concept of rationally bureaucratic rule, that hardening of democracy towards the people on whose behalf it claims to act which came to terrible fruition in the later history of Bolshevik Russia, as we all know today. Here we find something like Weber's final legacy, an unconscious legacy of old cyclical theories of society, something of this bourgeois conviction that, where democracy fulfils its own concept most perfectly, it will inevitably regress, with a sort of demonic necessity, to rule – blind rule. Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us end with this as a first anticipatory illustration of how theoretical elements compulsively assert themselves within an anti-theoretical way of thinking. I will speak to you about the next conclusions to be drawn from this in the lecture on Thursday.

LECTURE 2

14 May 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the previous session I showed you that a thinker, a sociologist, who can be considered a positivist in the sense that he rejects any autonomy of the concept from the facts encompassed by the concept, is nonetheless forced in spite of himself – and precisely because of the material, the facts, the data in which he immerses himself – to incorporate theoretical elements into his work far beyond what his own epistemology would lead one to expect. In this context I reminded you both that he constructs a large, continuous social tendency and that there are dialectical elements in his work, and the example I cited to illustrate this was the reversal of charismatic authority into traditionalist authority and the transformation of rational and democratic administration, bureaucracy, into a blind, opaque, irrational rule. My reason for addressing these things was not that I intend to give you a lecture on Max Weber. My concern is for you to see things in their correct proportions from the start, by which I mean that you should understand such evidence – though it is always relevant to the content too – as contributions to the general theoretical problems, or the problem of the theory of society we are dealing with here; I simply wish, at least to a certain extent, to elaborate on these problems for you with a constant eye on Max Weber's work.

The conclusion to be drawn from what we covered in the previous session is that even such essentially anti-theoretical or atheoretical thought and research as that of Weber, at least in terms of his intentions – I will remind you of just one principle, that of the 'ideal

type' – necessarily either turns into theorizing or cannot dispense with theory. And the very simple conclusion I would draw from this is that one should not accept this shift into theory as a form of necessary evil that cannot be avoided but, rather, that one becomes aware of and theoretically formulates this connection between even extremely material-based work and theory. I just told you in this context that, with Weber, this move towards a theory formation resulted precisely from the pressure, the weight of the facts he had to deal with, and this provides an indication I would like to make use of immediately for the things we must fundamentally consider in these lectures, namely an indication that the form of theory whose concept I wish to elaborate for you here is not a concept of free-floating, a priori theory. Rather, the kind of theorizing I mean really depends on the facts in question, so – to exaggerate somewhat – one does not come closer to theory in general by moving away from the facts, by isolating some particular characteristics of the facts, forming theories from them and neglecting the rest; with the notion of theory I have in mind, it is precisely the immersion in the concretions that allows us to move beyond the merely factual. One must devote oneself to the individual materials so thoroughly as to reveal more than simply the blind, conceptless material.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think you will not expect me already to carry out this programme, which is really an epistemological programme, in the elements of a theory of society that I hope to present to you; but I do at least wish to indicate the direction of these considerations and to draw your attention to a difference that should be noted at this point compared to the usual and widespread concept of theory. For as long as prevailing scientific thought, including the field of sociology, engages in forming theories, it is simply obeying the logic of classification – that is, theory consists merely in the ordering of materials, the establishment of logical classes and the possible conclusions to be drawn therefrom. In other words, then, to the extent that theory is in evidence, it lies at a distance from the factual material, which leads to that somewhat unfruitful dualism between a blind material on the one hand and relatively empty concepts on the other, which means that theory, instead of leaping out of the material itself, really becomes – and I will show you this in detail – a shell for the facts encompassed by it. So the opposition to the prevailing formation of theories in the social sciences in which I find myself is not – as some of you will perhaps think – that of a boundless speculation which overrides the actual materials. For, if there is a concept of theory to be found that lies beyond that unfruitful dualism, it can only be one that disregards the usual rigid antithesis of fact and

concept.¹ I will mention only in passing that this marks the very nerve centre of dialectic; those of you whose interests are primarily philosophical will have noticed that anyway, and for the others I would not offer any more than that in this present context. The fact that even so-called positivist research, if carried out seriously, cannot avoid forming theories has naturally been observed by the positivists; it is not my discovery, ladies and gentlemen, and one can even say, generally speaking, that the willingness to concede this in social science research becomes all the greater the more those people truly surrender to their research, the more they saturate themselves with facts. I would almost say that those who are generally most hostile to theory are the epistemologists, the people who are, in a sense, the most theoretical and abstract, and who do not allow the experience of their objects to lead them towards theory. An example of such an extreme, to name only one, is the American sociologist Lundberg, who probably exhibits the most severe anti-theoretical stance; you should familiarize yourself with his philosophy to get a true idea of this extreme, for naturally one can only assess these matters if one has first-hand knowledge of them, as opposed to simply listening to the pre-chewed opinion of an academic teacher, which obviously has a tendency to harden into a form of authoritarian judgement, whereas I mean the opposite. So I will not only be grateful to you but actually ask you to examine closely and study the very works whose positions stand in extreme opposition to the position I am developing – all the more because in these lectures, if I am to fulfil my own theoretical programme, I cannot do much more than point you towards such works. But if we take those positivist sociologists who are not as radical as Lundberg, and who are well disposed towards theory, one will generally find that they are paying lip service rather than truly recognizing the weight of theory. They do say that one cannot dispense with theory: they observe that, for example, an empirical study that is not based on some undetermined, theoretically articulated expectation, on a certain anticipation of facts yet to be confirmed, generally has few prospects of finding anything fruitful or productive; thus, like it or not, they feel forced to speak of theory and grant it some validity in its own right, for example by imposing certain – how to put it? – certain conditions on it, the way one might impose them on a disreputable social or professional group, namely that such a theory must regularly report to the fact-finding police, as it were, and point out at every conceivable opportunity that it is only a theory, for heaven's sake, not something already confirmed or even confirmable by the facts. In the language of positivism, this is known as scientific cleanliness. I do not entirely understand this

demand, because I think that the difference between something that is genuinely an idea and a blind fact should really be obvious even without such assertions. What we are dealing with is actually the aspect I have already touched on in the name of the autonomy of theoretical elements. At this point, the social-scientific argumentation of positivism is, I feel, at best highly inconsistent. For, on the one hand, the necessity of forming theories as opposed to pure fact-finding is conceded, but, on the other hand, the development of theoretical reflections is really only tolerated as a formulation of hypotheses that can then be fulfilled by finding the facts. To put it dialectically, then – and even the positivists sometimes find themselves in a dialectic – something is supposedly necessary, because one cannot do without it, but simultaneously superfluous, because, according to this view, once the hypothesis is fulfilled, once it proves true or is refuted, it can be discarded; so, in such a view of things, the autonomy of theory as an expression of something in society that is not limited to the ascertainment of individual facts is reversed again.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not a natural scientist, nor do I presume to act as if I were. It does seem to me, however, as if the actual *terminus ad quem* in the natural sciences, that is, the ultimate goal of scientific work, is precisely the formation of theories, the summarizing explanation of the individual observable facts, and that, in general, scientific experiments are only carried out from the perspective of forming theories; no experiment, no ascertainment of any pure, existent fact takes place for its own sake. In positivist, statistically oriented social science, which prides itself so greatly on operating *more mathematico*, on following mathematical, scientific rules, the exact opposite is the case: here it is really mere fact-finding that takes precedence, and, from this perspective, the construction of theories itself seems to be a mere useless ingredient that is essentially superfluous, or at least a somewhat disreputable matter. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the fact that things happen in this way is obviously no coincidence but, rather, points to the heterogeneous character of the subject areas in so-called nature and so-called society. That is to say, it expresses the fact that natural science generally works as far as possible with elements that have no properties of their own, that are not already preformed, not already objectively qualified, and that, the more it can reduce phenomena to such propertyless smallest units or elements, which can in turn be integrated into a seamless theoretical summary, the greater is its sense of triumph. In the social domain, of course, which is defined qualitatively to an incredible degree, where qualitative differences are virtually the decisive aspect, this is possible only to a very limited extent – to the extent, for example, that strictly

statistical surveys whose elements are fundamentally equated with one another at random can even be carried out. And it has transpired that this is indeed possible in this specific domain, simply due to how reliable the predictions of opinion polls are, for reasons that we can perhaps discuss a little more later on. But naturally it cannot be said that in the domain of hierarchically structured society, where the behaviour of these elements is not a last object of observation but, rather, something eminently predetermined by the overall context, there can be a reduction like the one that is possible in the natural sciences; consequently, it is equally unfeasible to bring together the elements thus subsumed and classified similarly with a uniform classificatory theory, which would ultimately mean functional equations, the way one can in natural science. That is why it so readily occurs – precisely where the social sciences follow the model of natural science – that they really produce only something like a parody of the natural-scientific method, namely ascertaining and presenting facts, which in natural science leads to theoretical conclusions, to formulas, to some more or less final conceptual definitions, whereas the statement and arrangement (if at all) of ascertained facts so often remains the same. If you pick up the *Journal of Sociology*,² for example, and take a general look at the short abstracts that tend to follow each report on whatever empirical investigation, you will find that there are really only classifications of facts, perhaps only in the form of charts, without any of the theoretical conclusions being drawn that are characteristic and central for the genuinely scientific method.

Even so, empirical sociology is naturally far too cunning and self-reflecting to avoid an awareness of this element that can be termed atheoretical in a deeper sense. The answer it usually provides is that sociology is such a young science, and, because of its youth, it is not yet able to construct larger theories in the manner possible in the exact natural sciences. I must say that, to me, this explanation, which one encounters time and again – at congresses too, one constantly hears people talking about the youthfulness of sociology – such explanations are simple nonsense, somewhat reminiscent of a lady of advanced age (I am thinking of an example from Frank Wedekind)³ who declares that she was extremely attractive in her youth. And this supposed youth is a spurious claim; if one starts with Comte,⁴ sociology is a good 150 years old, and I would actually say, if one traces it back to Saint-Simon,⁵ it is roughly 200 years old. Now, I think it is a somewhat crude analogy, but an acceptable one, if one imagines what happened in the roughly 200 years between the discoveries of Copernicus and the development of Newtonian physics

– that would be around 200 years, perhaps a little more, I don't recall the exact dates – what happened in the natural sciences, then whatever has ensued in the way of social theory in the meantime, at least in the framework of the established, institutionalized social sciences, can really be considered quite meagre. And, despite its advanced age, sociology does not show the slightest inclination to approach the ideal of a genuine theory of society, one that would illuminate its workings. On the contrary: if one looks at the history of sociology, it is more fitting to speak of it moving away from the formation of theories than towards it. If I can remind you of what I said last time, for example the fact that, for Durkheim, Comte's statements about the development of society as a whole already seemed like metaphysics, then I am sure you will understand that; and Lundberg would undoubtedly consider the principle of the collective spirit's objectivity, which Durkheim espoused, no less of a metaphysical prejudice than Comte's idea was in Durkheim's eyes. Hence the direction of development within this established science is not at all towards the theory that people promise, but rather the opposite. So the reason for this problem, as I have already hinted, is not the mere temporal factor that the time is not yet right, but rather something categorical. The anti-theoretical trait lies in the restriction of sociology to pure empiricism, and sociological empiricism – as I learned in my disputes with Mr Silbermann⁶ – is at its most sensitive when one reminds it that the purpose of sociology is not fact-finding, not the mere collection of opaque data, but rather a concept of theory that reveals something substantive – I am deliberately putting it so vaguely – about society.

I remember – and I am telling you this because I would like especially to try and explain the relationship between theory and empirical research as closely as possible, with reference to the approach of empirical sociology – the dispute with a young and, as it happens, very talented assistant on a project at the Institute for Social Research whom I had given certain – well, they were definitely hypotheses for a particular study – and already at that point – in this respect he was highly characteristic of the mindset that is really displayed by sociological empiricism as such – he considered this formulation of hypotheses something questionable and said, 'Well, if one approaches the facts with something like a hypothesis, then this hypothesis is really always on the verge of becoming a form of prejudice, and then one can no longer devote oneself purely to the facts at all.' Now, I do not actually mean to dispute the claim of this young sociologist, who is probably not so young any more, that this is possible. Those of you who have read the piece 'Opinion Delusion

Society' from my *Interventions*⁷ will find a fairly detailed elaboration of the argument that, because of its inherent weight, the anticipatory, unfulfilled, not factually posited opinion – for metapsychological, objective reasons, I would say – has a tendency to establish itself, to harden, to become objectified and resist correction, and certainly this much is true about that attitude: it is a necessary part of social knowledge, especially theoretical social knowledge, to remain open, to examine itself and improve itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am well aware that this is easier to formulate in a general way, to set up as a norm, than actually to execute; I have no illusions about this, but I would at least say that a decent scholar, by which I mean a scholar – or a researcher, one should almost say – who takes the truth seriously will consciously and emphatically incorporate the possibility of such self-reflection as one of the most important aspects of their work. But I do think that, for there to be anything resembling examination or reflection, there must first be something to examine or which can be subjected to such reflection. So, if one begins simply with examining theoretical views before there are actually any to examine, it is quite certain that no theory will be formulated at all. Let me give you an example of this too from practical social science work. When I had to take over as head of the 'Community Study'⁸ in Darmstadt – that would have been twelve years ago, or maybe more – I asked one of the American directors what he and his group actually intended to find out with this study, what they actually wanted to know, what the point of the study actually was, and I asked him [in English, trans.], 'What do you want to know or what do you want to find out?' And the respective American colleague, a very friendly and affable man, replied, 'We want to know just everything', to which I responded, 'If you want to know everything there is to know about this city, Darmstadt, then you won't know anything, you'll suffocate in such a conceptless material that nothing will be visible at all.' When I later began to look at the material, I actually encountered things such as a thorough statistical report on the weather in Darmstadt for every day over the duration of the study. I will not even deny the possibility of finding some form of correlation between some socially relevant trends, for example the number of children produced, and the weather; but, for that, one first needs to have the idea of doing that in the first place, which a strict empiricist would probably forbid as an impermissible pre-emption of the future, so that would not be possible either. In other words, then, and I would already like to draw a conclusion from this today – I have to proceed fairly quickly in these lectures, as we will miss such an inordinate number of sessions this semester,⁹ so we might travel

across country a little at times, which I ask you to forgive, ladies and gentlemen – namely that, in sociology, theory is not simply something that results from the facts automatically as long as one follows the rules, but that there is a sort of leap between theory formation, between an insight into socially relevant factors and the gathering of facts, that there is not a straightforward and reliable continuum between the fact and the theory, but that, to a certain extent, these two areas, as closely as they are obviously and necessarily connected, cannot be imagined in such a way that the path leads from the one to the other without the addition of a further element. And I would say that, if one is to develop a genuine authority for sociology and social contexts, one must, on the one hand, always be aware that one cannot simply move from the concept of society to the facts – as George put it, simply make butter out of the Milky Way¹⁰ – but also that, on the other hand, it is equally impossible to arrive at a theory by proceeding from a mere arrangement and gathering of facts and merely placing these in a vaguely logically stringent context. So I think that the crux of the question of fruitful sociological work lies in how clearly one is aware of this necessary and inevitable qualitative leap and, to continue this metaphor, whether one succeeds in leaping or makes this leap unconsciously, and thus incorrectly, in such a way that it fails. In part, the reason for this is simply a matter of scientific history, namely that what we group together under the name of sociology or social science today, and to a considerable extent also political science, is not an internally consistent area of knowledge with a consistent categorial structure of the same kind as in most of the traditional, the so-called classical sciences, but simply a more or less unconnected and unconsidered agglomeration of very different things – such as philosophical reflection on society and its purpose, institutional and historical analysis of social facts, and finally what are more strictly considered ‘research techniques’ on the model of so-called market research. And I do not think that the future of sociology and sociological theory formation lies in attempting to knock this agglomerate into shape by adapting it to some consistent categories and making a unity of it, a unity that corresponds neither to its category nor to the matter itself; rather, to the extent that there is any unity, it can be determined only by determining precisely these qualitative differences and by first marking the different areas off from one another and then thinking through the extremely complex and mediated relationships that exist between these sub-disciplines and sub-complexes, which are in themselves entirely dissimilar things.

I would like to say especially to those of you who are in the first semester or the first few semesters of the sociology course, and who

naturally begin by thinking, 'So, we'd like to gain an overview of the scientific field as a whole' in the same way a student of jurisprudence can expect (I am deliberately using this example), as jurisprudence, aside from the natural sciences, is the epitome of such a completely consistently structured, dogmatic theory – I would like to tell you from the start that you will not find any such thing in sociology. Rather, to the extent that there is a formation of theories, it assumes precisely a reflection on these discontinuities, and you should not believe that you can presuppose any implicit unity that would show you the way, as it were, through a field that is not only immense but also full of cracks. In telling you this, I am pointing out once again that the interpretation of social facts is closely connected to the facts themselves and their divergence, and necessarily changes with them. But I think it is necessary at this point to move on with our subject and to ask why the facts within society do not simply lend themselves to theory, and to theory formation, of the same type as one finds in the natural sciences. So, in other words, I think that reflection on the relationship of theory and fact in sociology, in the social sciences, requires a reflection on the role played by the so-called facts within society itself; and this role of the facts, the status of the facts within the complexion of a total society, is really the crux of the entire problem of sociological theory formation – simply because, for a number of reasons, these facts are not merely identical to society itself, because society is by no means limited to its own facts in the same way that jurisprudence rests on the findings which can be subsumed under the law, let alone the way in which facts correspond to the laws of natural science. In the first session after the Whitsun holiday, then, we will have to start by considering the status in society of the facts themselves, of the factual, and the consequent implications for our knowledge, which will simultaneously bring us closer in content to an idea of a theory of society.

NOTES OF LECTURE 3¹

2 June 1964

In Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*² there are two intellectuals who are rivals in their affections for Hedda. The one, Dr Jørgen Tesman, her husband, holder of a government scholarship, is a practitioner of cultural history – today one would call it ‘cultural anthropology’ [Eng.] – and the other, who loves Hedda but does not marry her, Ejlert Lövborg, is talented but somewhat dissolute. The husband is a specialist – he writes about medieval arts and crafts in Brabant – while the other occupies himself with the future of culture and society. It is the difference between a research aficionado and a man of spirit; the one keeps purely to registering the facts, while the other is meant to have a view of the future. That does sound a little primitive, admittedly, as there is also the view of the past, the ‘view of redemption’ (Benjamin). Conversely, one can be just as sterile about what lies in the future as with the registering of facts, for example in a mere extrapolation of the here and now, pedantically fearful in contrast to a productive imagination. But the imagination itself can also be afflicted by the spirit of facticity, as in science fiction. A recent parody, ‘The Truth about Hansel and Gretel’,³ shows how the imagination of today can be hampered if it acts as a mere reproduction of facts.

Yet Ibsen's somewhat crude distinction does offer something for everyday use. It is central to social theory that it goes beyond what is merely existent, merely given. But it must not be simply *chorismos* against the facts, no blind extrapolation of possibilities and perspectives, otherwise it descends into grotesque, as with the early socialists, with Charles Fourier.⁴ The attempt to go beyond

what is the case while still incorporating the weight of that which is – this is exactly what the concept of tendency is. Tendency, that means theorems about the direction in which society is developing based on its central laws, which already apply here and now. Marx speaks of the tendency of a falling profit rate.⁵ Whether this is an adequate term for the inner laws of society is a question for another time. But the mathematization of such laws is adequate, in so far as the exchange rate is itself a calculation: the mathematical form of the equation of exchanged goods in a socially prevailing exchange. The mathematization follows deductively from the exchange of equivalents; it is not statistics. This is about the progressive concentration of capital, and hence of the power to control the work of others – at times this is concealed by epiphenomena to a varying degree – and the change in political forms and in the nature of politics resulting from the shift of power into the economy. The progressive concentration leads to anthropological changes. Because there is no smooth congruence, this results in disproportions. Dispositions and behaviours survive in a state in which they are no longer actually demanded by anyone.

This is part of the capitalist calculus, whose goal is for capitalism to retain more after the completion of a production cycle than before, and which leads to concentration, to monopoly. With unregulated experience, this can be observed drastically in the large number of seemingly independent people who live only by the grace of the companies to which they are attached.

We are still operating at the methodological level, where the concern is the categorial constitution of a society and the rules that exist as long as the tendency continues – for example, as long as the concentration is confirmed. Society cannot be imagined without the concept of tendency, because it contains the decisive mediations between what is socially given and the concept thereof, the concept of a nature of society, of what society aims for and what it has stepped up to do. The concept of free and fair exchange, for example: what must it lead to, and what does it actually lead to?

To return to Ibsen's slightly crude construction in *Hedda Gabler*, we will not speak of tendency as long as we simply mean business as usual; as long as some *faits sociaux*⁶ simply continue and increase, it would be atheoretical, a mere extrapolation and generalization of findings, and would remain in the domain of the factual and mere prophecy. A genuine theory of society does not prophesy; that would be a relapse into that realm of expectable individual facts which theory is meant to rise above. An analysis of this kind appeared in a periodical⁷ that predicted the economic crisis in 1926/27, and I pointed it out in vain to my father at the time.⁸ Formulations of

tendencies become theoretical only when they indicate something fundamentally new, something that cannot be predicted yet, as opposed to that which is, which is merely existent. Statements about society are the key aspect of theory, provided they are not already in Baedeker. Concentration, for example, is inherent in liberalism, the play of free forces. But one can really speak of a tendency only when one does not extrapolate indefinitely, along the lines of the rabid dog that first draws its tail slightly in, then draws it in more when things get worse, and finally draws it in completely. The tendency towards concentration that is endogenous to liberalism will cause it difficulties in the foreseeable future; people speak today of social market economy, for example, which really means an infinite restriction of liberalism.

Regarding the convergence of the conceptual frameworks of philosophy and sociology: the concept of theory is not tautological but, rather, concerns the new, the non-identical. Theory is only ever attained when, starting from an analysis of the concepts that actually apply to society, it arrives at the definitions which these concepts demand, yet which also differ from them. This marks the boundary between the sterility in Ibsen's figure of Jørgen Tesman and a productive imagination. Tendency is the ability of theoretical thought to grasp the non-identical quality of a concept within the concept itself. One really expects theory to be not a cupboard with many compartments in which one can store whatever comes along but, rather, a hope of truth, of something qualitatively different. To the extent that truth is something qualitatively different, we are compelled towards dialectic – and this compulsion comes no longer from the concept of absolute spirit but, rather, from the phenomena of today.

The concept of tendency only applies to a constitutively dynamic society, one whose only invariance is its own variability. The state of Plato and Aristotle or the social doctrines of Thomas Aquinas were dealing with civil and, in a certain sense, fully developed urban market societies. The basic principles of civil society – exchange, division of labour, mutual satisfaction of goods, forms of rule in their organization – are discussed by Plato with superb candour.⁹ When it comes to his uncompromising doctrine of the transcendence of forms, no one could accuse him of betraying the question of truth to the question of its genetic conditions. Theory in an emphatic sense exists only when society is dynamic. Max Weber's 'traditionalist societies'¹⁰ have no theory. The Norn's question in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, 'Do you know what will happen?',¹¹ would make no sense in a traditionalist society. Nor is there such a thing as theoretical apologetics

in feudal society; rather, there is a rejection of theory as such. Keyserling¹² says on one occasion, 'If I thought about how that is, I would not be a count and neither would you.' We should leave this well alone. Conceiving great apologetic theories for feudalism, as de Maistre does,¹³ means sinking to the lowest level of rationality and is a lost cause from the start.

Tendency exists only in so far as society is already the totality, the system that is presupposed as soon as one speaks of tendency. Tendency makes no sense in more or less unconnected groups or with markets that are only loosely connected. The underlying laws of society exist only to the extent that there is at least unity in the sector where such laws are alleged to apply.

Conversely, however, we can speak of the whole only in the sense of a tendency. The whole exists only in the sense of a vanishing point. Spencer's concept of integration¹⁴ directly equates the progression towards a whole with the concept of tendency. The fact that concepts such as tendency, totality or theory apply only to a unified society means not only that theory is determined by its object, namely society; it also means that the possibility of theory is not only a matter of subjective reason, of scientific discipline, but also depends on whether the social reality is adequate for a theory in the first place.

LECTURE 4

4 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

Regarding what I said to you about the concept of tendency, I should perhaps add that it would be highly worthwhile, and a very promising piece of methodological work, to compare the concept of trend, which is common in empirical sociology, with that of tendency as I attempted to elucidate to you in the last session. There are two reasons for this: on the one hand, it will show you something that I already wish to emphasize now and which we will discuss at length in the future, namely that there is no absolute rupture, no absolute *chorismos*, between a theory of society (whatever that might be) and the empirical investigation of society. And I think it is important for you to be aware of this from the start, so that you avoid reifying and hardening the concept of social theory in the same way that is disastrously evident with empirical insight into society. Let me say in advance, in this context, that a number of findings developed in theory also belong to empirical research and that, if this were not the case, there would have to be well-grounded objections, well-grounded suspicions about theory; the relationship is therefore an extremely difficult one and should, for heaven's sake, not be understood as a simple dichotomy. So, if you were to go home after this lecture and say to yourselves, 'Alright, so on the one hand there's empirical research in sociology, whereas Adorno advocates a theory of society', that would be entirely wrong, for the theory I am advocating, as you will see when we go into detail, is precisely a theory that does not stand in abstract opposition to the facts with which it is concerned.

On the other hand, the concept of trend differs in one decisive point from what I have explained to you as tendency. Perhaps you recall that, in those explanations, I placed the greatest emphasis on the fact that recognizing a tendency means recognizing, within the theoretical analysis of a given state, that element which qualitatively differs from this state itself, from the direction of its development, which means that it is not simply an extension of how the current state presents itself. This is precisely what is absent from the concept of trend. A trend is identified according to the schema I tried to explain to you via the silly caricature of the rabid dog; that is, it will state that something which is already becoming apparent in subjective reactions – with reference to the attitudes of voters towards those whom they are to vote for, for example – without any numerical dominance on one side that would be considered statistically significant, as they say, nonetheless has sufficient weight that, if things continue as they are now, this can be expected to increase to such an extent that it will in fact become statistically significant. This is more or less the exact empirical definition of what is meant by a trend. Naturally, this is extremely remote from the concept of tendency as I tried to intimate to you. This is just an aside to show you that empirical observation does actually involve, in a certain sense, the same types of subjective phenomena and behaviour that theory examines, but with a different emphasis; and we will consider the nature of this different emphasis in our further deliberations.

But the most important, the essential thing we encountered in the last session was not actually this, but something entirely different, namely that the question of the possibility of theory itself is not simply a matter of intellectually organizing the material, or simply a matter of the so-called productive imagination of those who investigate society – recall Ejlert Lövborg – but, and this was where we ended, is itself to a considerable and, I would say, a decisive extent dependent on the object itself in a historico-philosophical sense, namely that theories of society are not equally possible at all times. I already pointed this out last time, when I developed such concepts as totality and tendency – which are closely connected, for one could almost define tendency as the dynamic laws of a totality – as central aspects of a theory of society, and when I told you that something like the question of a theory is by no means an urgent one for a primitive horde society, or even for feudalism. It is no coincidence, in other words, that a theory of society in an emphatic sense came about only with the Industrial Revolution and emergent economic liberalism, which was already anticipated in extremely radical fashion by the classical national-economic model in liberal theory, namely that

of Adam Smith,¹ before being developed in its full ramifications. If, on the other hand, one no longer encounters theoretical conceptions in this emphatic sense, if Max Weber, for example, who God knows did not lack intellectual power or theoretical imagination – if anyone recognized a trend in modern society, it was truly Max Weber – if this Max Weber nonetheless refrained from formulating a real theory of society, this is due not merely to a subjective inability or the so-called decline of bourgeois thought, as theorists such as Lukács² claim with the usual glib slogans; it is due to the matter itself, namely the fact that the current society is so complex and so difficult in its construction that it resists theory, at least in the initially naïve sense of an unambiguous, unqualified, direct explanation based on a few concepts. And if you can observe such a widespread distrust towards the formation of any theories today, then this distrust towards theory formation is not only what I would call a harmful and pathetic symptom of the employee mentality, which it certainly is, but it also has its basis in the matter itself – and especially in the entirely legitimate disappointment that countless so-called theoretical conceptions have failed. After all, even the race theory of the National Socialists was something like an attempt at a theory of society, but one that had completely degenerated into a delusional system and thus no longer had any basis in reason. If the disappointment over this failure of theory in the face of social reality leads to such a scepticism towards theory itself, there is historical validity in this; and this aspect must itself be taken up into a theory – which has, incidentally, always been the case in the great manifestations of sociological theory, and has been conceptually neglected only in more or less superficial and apologetic harmonizing descriptions of society.

So I am telling you that theory is generally imagined first of all as a unity, as a system of society, and this concept came about at the time when society, without offering any great resistance, seemed to apply such a concept, such a construction from its pure, realized concept, to itself; and that happened to be liberalism, in the sense of a purely implemented exchange society in which all socially relevant acts are essentially determined by a calculable unit, namely the society's average working time used to produce commodities. Theory has really always been something like that. One can say that the objective character of the social theories of Smith, of Ricardo³ and, as a counterpoint, of their student and deadly critic Marx, but also the social theory of Auguste Comte, was uniform in that they started from systematic umbrella terms which they could use to explain the whole. Yet as soon as the formation of theories, for example the analysis of market society, no longer had the objectivity of the concept of value, specifically the concept of labour

value, but, rather, based the explanation of society on the subjective reactions of individuals, on the needs of people in their manifold psychological impairments, it could no longer achieve such a unanimity of theory, which was expressed in the complexities and constant self-corrections of subjectively oriented social theories. I would say that, in this sense, the positive liberal theories and the negative ones such as those of Marx and Engels, the critical theories, were in agreement; that is, Marx's theory is entirely traditional in viewing society as a system, a self-enclosed deductive system, only – and this 'only' is meant with great irony – with the twist that it asks, 'Now look at this system, what happens to it because of its absolute consistency?' But the notion of the objectivity of an internally congruent context is shared by the classical economists – and the classical economists were always additionally theorists of society as a whole – and their great critics. It is fair to say that all these theorems are attempts, in a sense, to capture terminologically the rupturing dynamic of society as formulated especially in the purely sociological and not properly economic theories of the time, namely those of Saint-Simon and Comte, namely that element which resists being tied to particular invariants. They are dynamic systems in a very similar way to the systems of so-called classical German Idealism, especially those of Fichte and Hegel – that is, systems which believed they could reconcile the concept of dynamics, which comes from society itself, after all, with the invariance of the concepts of its self-identical nature by claiming, especially in Hegel's case, that the essence of social dynamics is itself its invariant element, its ontology. That is, if you like, the point – or, put less respectfully, the trick – of Hegel's entire construction. With Marx, the situation is that he – how shall I put it? – demands identification papers from this attempt to deduce society objectively from its constitutive concepts, he questions the basis of its validity, and naturally this is already an admission that he has difficulties with that pure, seamless deduction of the system from its concept. For if the system could truly be deduced purely from its concept, this would essentially mean that, in the final reckoning, despite all contradictions in the details, there was something like unity. Now Marx discovered – as was already implicit in the classical economic texts, especially Ricardo's – that this unity was not quite so convincing, and the challenge 'Take a look at how your society really functions as a system, take a look at what results if one imagines the liberal principle of free and fair exchange unfolding on all sides', simultaneously means that this system, in realizing itself, becomes its own negative, that it is not the internally harmonious, congruent and thus life-guaranteeing being for society as a whole that the theory of liberalism presents.

One might now say – here it is the same as with all cases of dialectic – that essentially the systematic model was already askew back then. I told you last time that the concept of tendency is constitutive of this systematic model – that is, that one can only ever speak of a system of society as a tendency, and not as something fully realized, and this, strictly speaking, already means that society *tel quel*, society as it is, is not the system that, according to its own concept, it should be. But this difference exposes itself, in keeping with a theory of tendency, not as a mere epistemological deviation of the accidental from its law but as a law of its own. I told you that, the way things are, one can say that the deviations and contradictions which seemed only particular and quite deep in the past have, on the one hand, developed so far that they can no longer be deduced in the same form from the uniform concept of society, as is attempted in Marx's theory, but that, on the other hand, they have expanded to such a degree in empirical terms that the very idea of a theory of society, in the sense of a systematic unity, has become extremely problematic. And I think that, if I am to introduce you here to the elements of a philosophical theory of society, I should at least give you a cursory description of some of those aspects that no longer define this theoretical unity of society and follow this with the question of whether this rules out the possibility of formulating a theory at all, as well as the question – which is admittedly a philosophical question and can only be answered philosophically – of what a theory of society should then look like, or to ask about the nature of a non-systematic theory, which we will consider later.

So I will begin, and truly keep it suitably short, with the first point: that something like the unity implicit in an unconsidered concept of a theory cannot simply be stipulated for our current society. Consider that one usually speaks of our society as a market society, which means, and sanctions the fact, that the classical exchange principle of liberalism continues to apply. For the market is the literal and metaphorical place of all exchange relationships between people and initially, in its appearance, embodies this purely implemented liberal principle. Because market society has been modified so greatly, however, one must ask – and this is a very serious question that I wish by no means to anticipate dogmatically – whether, after this modification, one can really still speak of an exchange society. My own position, to make this absolutely clear, is that it still is one; but I think that the objections to this are so numerous and so serious that it takes a certain theoretical pig-headedness to hold on to this idea. So I will name several of these modifications, and, so that you do not take the matter too lightly and think that these are only apparent phenomena

– some restrictions of the pure market laws, for example due to mere quantitative expansion – let me say in advance that the modifications of exchange society to which I shall draw your attention stem from a very serious cause, namely that, because of the class system, the class tensions and the class struggles that have taken place, as well as the class consciousness that is at least potentially evident at times, society in its existing forms, namely with private ownership of the means of production and with the universal exchange principle, could probably not have survived if these modifications had not been made. That does not mean there was a conscious reflection on this – Hegel’s statement that, subjectively speaking, humanity has never learned from its mistakes is probably as valid now as it was in Hegel’s day. But it does mean that the necessity of dealing with a number of phenomena, especially those of crisis and unemployment, which took on a scale roughly thirty-five years ago that brought bourgeois society to the threshold of collapse,⁴ simply forced these modifications step by step, without there being any great theoretical reflections on the decisive causes. So, in other words, the tendency – if I may return to this concept – the tendency of exchange society itself, in order for it to survive, led to those changes where one must ask whether they constitute something qualitatively different or not.

So let me name a few of the most important such modifications. I will leave aside the entire phenomenon of concentration and centralization and standardization, even though it is the true reason for these modifications. I will pass over it because this phenomenon – to which I already drew your attention in the last session as a decisive one – is itself very much in keeping with the strictly maintained liberal model. And today’s conflict is such that the so-called economic royalists, namely the truly orthodox liberals, are precisely the advocates of monopolism, in a sense, because the classical Smithian *laissez faire laissez aller* principle leads simply to the creation of monopoly, and because measures against corporate consolidation, as found in the American trust law as well as our anti-trust legislation, are not meant to be reconcilable with this principle; thus anyone who is still a strict and whole-hearted liberal today by definition sanctions the most unchecked formation of monopolies. Perhaps I might add that the intra-social and intra-economic power of this movement towards monopolies is evidently so overwhelmingly strong that, despite this law, nothing can seriously be done about this tendency either in America or here, despite this legislation, in the context of overall technical and economic development. I think one could show this very clearly and drastically by looking at the development of certain branches of industry both here in Germany and in America, where

there are oligopolies – a few extremely powerful giant companies that have sucked up everything in sight; this is so evident that there is really something rather innocent about the idea of such anti-monopoly or anti-trust legislation. So, having noted this, I will name a number of modifications that can mostly be understood as unconscious reactions to the distinction between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, which is heightened to a fantastic degree by the tendency towards monopolization. The first are state interventionism, unemployment benefits and public employment programmes, whose absence would be inconceivable in any developed nation today, although they no longer have the character simply of unemployment benefit, which has a very problematic and explosive aspect; rather their character is that of public work or similar measures to create outlets, from the start, in case of a crisis and mass unemployment. All these institutions – and that is the entire sphere to which a term such as ‘social market economy’ refers in this country – are naturally breaches of the pure competition principle inherent in the liberal model and no longer permit any explanation of the totality of social life, and the reproduction of the life of society, with the traditional terms of a liberal exchange society. This means that, if society did not convey to its members, openly or covertly, an awareness that, should they no longer be able to support themselves with their own means, they will be supported with public means – without this awareness, which defines the entire climate of the major capitalist countries like an ether, the continuation of society in its existing forms would probably become inconceivable. And the interventionist economy first conceived by Keynes,⁵ which has meanwhile become highly developed, is the theoretical expression of this and, simultaneously, an expression of the renunciation of a contradiction-free, rigorously implemented liberal model.

A second aspect, to which I would like to devote a special lecture if at all possible – that is, if our time allows it – concerns the position of the proletariat, in a sense that no longer corresponds either to the classical liberal model or, on the other hand, to the Marxian model. And this is the question of the organization, and concomitantly the integration, of the proletariat. Because the workers have joined to form gigantic professional organizations – just think of the huge organizations of the complete workforce that have existed in America since the merger of the AFL and the CIO⁶ – which have their own bargaining power [Eng.], as one calls it in America, the power to negotiate the most favourable possible terms with the great economic monopolies, the share of the national product received by each worker can no longer simply be expressed according to the law

of supply and demand, or in the categories of the 'iron wage laws' of Lassalle,⁷ or classical Marxian theory, or indeed classical liberal theory, which simply assumes – in Robinsonian fashion – that every worker goes to the market all alone and sells their labour power, then receives whatever can be paid according to demand. But today, with these gigantic organizations in the background, the worker is no longer in this position of relative powerlessness in relation to the employer but rather, to an extent, in a situation that has been termed the monopoly of work – certainly a caricature, but not without an element of truth. I told you that this development – whose significance cannot yet be assessed, and which has been described in its perspectives for the whole complex of the social sciences, but by no means fully developed – is also irreconcilable with Marx's theory. But this is not only because it modifies the pure theory of labour value in a certain way, one might say, but also for a much deeper reason that is decisive for a theory of society: Marx's theory rests essentially on the assumption of, shall we say, the social extraterritoriality of the proletariat; that is, the fact that, on the one hand, the proletariat not only reproduces the life of society as a whole through the sale of the commodity of labour power but also gains a share in this society by receiving a minimum. At the same time, it is defined as something essentially located outside of society, as its more or less defenceless object or victim. This should certainly be understood in terms of the specific historical situation during the fifty years of the first Industrial Revolution, when groups that had not previously belonged to the industrial proletariat – the craftsmen who were made obsolete by machines, as well as large numbers of expropriated small farmers – were forced to sell their labour power under the most miserable terms; and, perhaps precisely because they did not have a share in all manner of things, they were within society, to the extent that they helped it to live, but outside it in a similar way to slaves in ancient society, who were subject to an extraterritoriality that prevented them from sharing in the concept of the human being,⁸ as you know, or permitted it only with severe restrictions. The phenomenon we observe today is first and foremost simply that the proletariat is integrated, which means that the proletariat reproduces its life beyond the minimum level within the framework of bourgeois society, that what used to be the most visible and drastic differences between a proletarian and a bourgeois – a so-called white-collar proletarian, meaning a clerk – are become ever smaller, and that the proletariat has above all lost its role as an explosive power unreconciled with society, which it still had as long as it was being dragged into the force field of capitalist development as something pre-capitalist, and

is now experiencing first-hand what it meant to be socially uprooted and, in this sense, affected by society; and it therefore acquired the very revolutionary – or rather rebellious – impulses which both the early socialists and the classical theories of socialism and anarchism believed they were taking up. So, in a certain sense, to connect this to our larger theme, you could say that society thus became more similar to a system than it had been at the time of the classical socialist conception, because this obvious contradiction no longer exists; but you can already see here that this move towards the systematic, this stricter adherence to its own concept, does have a somewhat uneasy character – if one can speak of such a thing – that this construction of an integrated and independent proletariat is no longer strictly compatible either with the model of free wage labour or with the Marxian model of increasing immiseration, and thus the necessary movement of society towards a disaster that has been delayed far too long for us simply to ignore it, unless one actually wants to turn socialism into pure apocalypticism. So this integration of the proletariat, the fact that, in a sense which is very difficult to pin down, the workers have themselves become bourgeois, is irreconcilable with the model of a purely bourgeois society, because one could say that the difference between bourgeois society and the proletariat, the under-class, is immanent in the very concept of a purely bourgeois society. I will explain the resulting changes in the consciousness also of proletarians, with all the implications of this phenomenon as one of the most important for a theory of society, in a special session; but first I will speak to you a little more next Tuesday about the modifying aspects that make something like the traditional concept of a unified theory so extraordinarily problematic.

LECTURE 5

16 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I have the pleasure of drawing your attention to a lecture that will take place tonight at the seminar for the science of politics at the invitation of my colleague Fetscher.¹ This lecture will be given by Professor Lucien Goldmann from Paris, who, to my particular pleasure, is also present at this session – did you not understand, or is that a protest? Did you not understand what I said? – so, it is a lecture by Professor Lucien Goldmann from Paris entitled ‘Marxism and Contemporary Society’,² and will take place at 8 p.m. *cum tempore* in Lecture Theatre I. I would strongly recommend attending this lecture, which naturally has a very close connection with the content of our course.

Perhaps I can remind you – after we had to break off again last week³ – that I had tried to give you some insights into the difficulty of theory today – not in connection with abstract methodological problems, for I tried, and will continue today, to show you with a few models how difficult it is to form an adequate theory that addresses relevant questions about society. It is after all, as you know, my custom not to separate methodological and so-called contentual questions; rather, as far as possible when speaking concretely of methodology, I do not use more or less trivial examples but address issues that are theoretically relevant, at least in my view. Today I wish to pursue the problem I mentioned earlier when I referred to the role of trade unions and the increasing integration of the proletariat into society as a whole; I will do so by asking why the current situation

presents a theoretical understanding with difficulties and, through these difficulties, encourages that fundamental renunciation of theory which is codified by the so-called positivistic tendencies in social science and, as it were, mirrored in the latter's own epistemology. In other words, in connection with this problem, I now wish to address the problem of the proletariat as it manifests itself in empirical social research. And here I wish to proceed from certain findings from a study about 'work climate'⁴ carried out by the Institute for Social Research some ten years ago and published in a book – which is no longer available, and would probably be rather difficult for you to find – whose main results were interpreted and preserved in the recently published book on industrial sociology by my friend Ludwig von Friedeburg.⁵ I therefore strongly recommend that you consult von Friedeburg's book,⁶ which has appeared in our series – the *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie* – in connection with what I will tell you about the interpretation of this study.

The matter in question is the system-immanence of the proletariat, or the so-called integration of the proletariat, from the perspective of the proletarian consciousness. I consider this especially important because a large part of the established contemporary reflections on the problem of class in modern society deals one-sidedly and exclusively with people's consciousness, with class consciousness, and behaves as if the question of class were essentially a question of consciousness, leaving aside the fact that, in the theory where the concept of the proletariat as such has a systematic status, the attempt was made to define the proletariat objectively, namely by its position in relation to the means of production – by being cut off from control over the means of production – whereas the consciousness of the proletariat has never aligned itself with this objective position in any straightforward fashion. This is a fact of fundamental importance if one ever asks as to the possibility of a theory of modern society, because we are faced today with the very difficult contradiction that such a subjective consciousness in the proletariat of being such – I would not say it no longer exists, but that, at least in some important capitalist countries like America, this consciousness barely exists; and that there is evidently a tendency in countries where the labour movement has such an extensive and, I would say, such a theoretical tradition as in Germany for this consciousness to play an ever smaller part.

Of course, when we look at the results of the studies on workers – you all know the very important ones by Bahrtdt and Popitz,⁷ or also those of Lutz, Braun and Pirker,⁸ to name only a few of the most important people working in this field over the last decade; you should acquaint yourselves with these matters, because empirical

studies truly form an integral element of theoretical reflection here – in all these studies, and in ours too, there is certainly no lack of critical statements by the workers. So if one is looking for assessments of the so-called work climate, one will repeatedly encounter a wealth of critical ones, although a quantification is very difficult for certain structural reasons. Let me already say that this is so difficult because it is very hard to decide how far these critical statements refer to structural issues in society and how far to only limited situations within the companies. Thus the impression one gains when dealing with this material is primarily that, at least in Germany, some people still employ old terms from the tradition of the former Marxist parties in Germany – they speak of capital and labour and the opposition of capital and labour – but no longer really mean what was meant by those terms; what they and their critique mean are so-called grievances, unpleasant conditions within particular companies or particular company situations that are imagined as fundamentally corrigible, as ones that can be resolved through sensible cooperation under whatever conditions happen to be given. But if, as I told you, the authors speak nonetheless of capital and labour, then these terms almost have the character of natural occurrences, which is of course extremely at odds with the conception from which this terminology has been taken. This seems to be the way that countless workers today, at least in Germany, think about it. One must be very careful with generalizations about such things across national boundaries. There are countries such as Italy, and especially France, where things are probably entirely different, but in this country, at least, what is meant is a form of unchanging, natural framework in which certain frictions ensue but can be resolved, oppositions of, to quote a famous phrase, a ‘non-antagonistic’ character.⁹ When you look at complaints, for example, you will find complaints – this is highly characteristic – especially about superiors, mostly in the lower tiers – in other words: superiors like the foreman or the overseer in the mine, who come into direct contact with the workers. These superiors are very often held responsible as individuals, as persons, for what happens, completely ignoring their function, completely ignoring the fact that, for example, they are generally obliged to maintain a certain level of production, which forces them to exert pressure on the workers, which they are, in reality, simply passing on.

Let me note here – this is really a chapter of ideology critique, but you can already see in this how far the issues of so-called ideology and the issue of immediate, lived experience today have merged – that you are looking at a phenomenon which is characteristic of an ideological area that I take the liberty of calling the phenomenon of

personalization. By personalization I mean a habit of thinking that is very widespread today: that one attributes certain grievances – whether one would normally consider them so blind and fateful that one has no power over them, or at least looks for a scapegoat or a living person to cling to so that one can somehow deal with it, to avoid being hopelessly consumed by the awareness of one's alienation – that one attributes, to resolve my anacoluthon, such grievances to the fault of persons, whereas one associates positive experiences such as the economic boom, the boom that has already lasted fifteen years, or the massive rise in living standards in Germany, with the economic policy adopted in Germany, and even considers them the work of individual politicians, without considering for a moment that this boom originated in structural aspects of the reconstruction of a bombed-out, war-ravaged country. This factor of personalization has been a trick for a very long time, incidentally, and its function seems to grow in virtually direct proportion to mass society – that is, to the alienation of the masses from the most important decisions in direct proportion to the anonymity of social decisions. In the gigantic country of America, for example, with its immense population – where the candidates in the important elections are, of course, exclusively exponents of objectively warring interest groups – the official ideology, which, as surveys show, fools countless voters, is still that the purpose of a presidential or whatever election is to find the so-called best man for the job, despite the fact that in general, of course, none of the voters can remotely assess whether Mr X or Mr Y really is the better man. This is such a simple point that one would really expect anyone who was not a complete imbecile to grasp it, but evidently the affective power inside people which resists objective, anonymous laws governing events over their heads is so immense that people will fall for this mechanism of personalization, even against their better judgement. So you can see here in this one fulcrum, as it were, how closely seeing through ideologies is connected to gaining insight into the social reality itself. That is why I elaborated somewhat on this point.

On the other hand, if one considers these matters cautiously and fairly, one should also say that there is an element of truth in the tendency of so many workers to blame their superiors for objective difficulties resulting from the employment relationship itself – and one must never simply disregard such concrete elements with a stroke of the pen – because those lower superiors, the ones with whom the workers come into direct contact, are the ones who actually give the system a tangible form for them. Roughly in the same way that the anger of the petty bourgeoisie about the large retail centres stems

from the fact that they are being handed the bill, as it were – that is, they realize how little they actually have and how little they can consume, not when the man receives his pay envelope or salary, but when his wife is forced – ‘to make ends meet’ [Eng.], as one says in America – to use the meagre cheque she has received to procure food, clothes and whatever else. My point is that even the deformation phenomena I am describing to you, such as personalization, have their basis in the matter itself in so far as people’s unreflecting, non-theoretical experience does not yield anything else. You may already conclude from this, at least in the form of a postulation, that anything resembling an understanding of society is impossible today except via theory, via theoretical thought, and that a theory-free so-called empiricism is merely an ideology that captures only apparent phenomena. And this pragmatic perspective, if you will, is certainly not the least important of those forcing us to seek the crystallization of theory.

Now, the workers very often voice a certain discontent with the current situation, but very often this discontent appears – I will keep citing our results¹⁰ – in the complaint that the workers of today no longer show solidarity with one another but instead behave towards one another in a more or less atomized state. It is quite astounding, I must point out, that the suffering of a particular group is reduced by that same group more or less to itself, not to the objective conditions; one is reminded somewhat of the arguments one encounters in surveys about democracy in Germany, where people making a case against democracy rationalize it by saying of themselves, ‘Well, we’re not ready for democracy yet.’ I will not discuss the socio-psychological consequences of this, especially the socio-psychological perspectives it opens up, but will leave that to your theoretical imagination. There does initially seem to be a degree of plausibility to this: the fact that, in the past, theory itself was binding, that there were certain programmes, that people believed the implementation of these programmes was directly imminent, and thus that the situation of the workers, in terms of their mutual solidarity, was possibly better than it is today; one should beware of ideologizations here too, however, and be especially careful not to evoke a supposedly glorious past simply because of certain flaws in the present state. In reality, it is far harder to establish what is behind these complaints than this argumentation suggests, especially because one cannot be sure whether more immediate pressure and more faith in the possibility of change would have brought about more solidarity, or whether this change might have been cancelled out by a less advanced state of consciousness among the workers, some of whom were simply dragged into that

sphere without being equipped for reflection in the way that people are today, simply because of the increase in communication. To be scientifically conscientious, at any rate, one would have to say that there are no figures to compare concerning this question of solidarity. The most plausible option is probably that this fantastic, legendary solidarity probably existed within certain cadres, certain leadership groups in the organized workforce, from where people then tried with varying success to implant it in the 'rank and file' [Eng.], whereas the decisive aspect today is more that, at least in Germany, such cadres who were able to provoke such a sense of solidarity hardly exist any longer. In addition, if one posits for a moment this apparent fact of an increasing bourgeoisification of the proletariat – we will later address this apparent fact in a very fundamental sense – it naturally makes sense that the characteristic behavioural patterns which would otherwise apply within the dominant group in society, namely the behaviours of the competition, would also become increasingly common in the proletariat. The more bourgeois the workers feel in their own subjective consciousness, the more they will view one another as competitors, just as other groups in society do. And, incidentally, there is actually no lack of symptoms in empirical research showing that, clearly, there are already competing groups within today's workforce. The most important competition is between those factions involved in the actual production – who thus consider themselves the productive workers according to the old definition of Saint-Simon and Marx¹¹ – whose numbers are dwindling because of the increasing mechanization and automation, and, on the other side, the countless individuals who carry out repairs, which the classical definition views as mere services, but are becoming more important in a sense, primarily because they are becoming ever larger as a group in comparison with the actual production workers and therefore, to the extent that there is something like a numerically significant class, are becoming increasingly significant within that class. Between these two groups, the growing and, in a sense, more modern group of neo-craftsmen in repairs, on the one hand, and the classical workers who consider themselves productive workers but who are becoming less numerous, on the other, one can observe the development of increasingly clear mechanisms of competition. And here, too, the people are entirely naïve about this competition, because they cannot grasp the social mechanisms that bring about such a thing without theory, and because there is not really any genuinely contemporary, fully developed theory that explains these differences.

Beyond these aspects, however, there are a great many other motifs that I will show you to refer to what one could, from the outside

and somewhat too lightly, call integration, and what I will instead term the systematic thinking or system-immanent consciousness of the workers. Of these, the best known and most important is the improvement of general living and working conditions, which one naturally cannot ignore. Any theory of society which neglected the fact that the lot of workers today is actually no longer as it was in the classical analyses of Marx and Engels, that, simply stated, the proletarians today genuinely have more to lose than their chains,¹² namely their small car or motorcycle as well, generally speaking – leaving aside the question of whether these cars and motorcycles are perhaps a sublimated form of chains – there is no doubt about that, at least; and if one fails to incorporate these aspects into one's theoretical reflection, it is abstract in the bad sense and falls short of the phenomena in question. Then one must think of the radical depoliticization of the trade unions – in this country, at least – and in connection with that also the lack of political training, which is tied to the problematics of political education as a whole, which I will not dwell on in this context; there is no doubt, at any rate, that something like a true political training, in the theoretical sense, no longer exists, and if anyone does attempt such political training, they will not usually have such a good time of it. A significant factor for the tendencies I have characterized – which are generally just presented to you as a trend that is so strong that one must quite simply take note of it, without giving it any further thought, which means without analysing its reasons – is a rather important element on the side of subjective consciousness: the scepticism towards all politics that took hold of people in Germany, and I mean the entire population, not just the workers, after Hitler. For Hitler, *tant bien que mal*, did achieve one thing: an incredible politicization of consciousness. The content of this politicization was wrong and ghastly, but recalling the time before my emigration, when I actually experienced Hitler in the flesh, I can tell you that the extent to which every issue in the world was seen as a political issue, in the consciousness of the masses too, was incredible, and that one can barely imagine today just how far that went. This has changed radically. People saw where things can lead when someone decides to become a politician, which is why they are now fed up with the entire sphere of politics and think it best for them to stay away from it. The entire restoration period in Germany can be considered a period of reprivatization in a number of ways, both in the sense of state-owned enterprises turning back into private enterprises, or the seeming transformation of the large businesses into private property, and in the sense of a reprivatization of individual consciousness – but a reprivatization in which there is little virtue,

because, despite this reprivatization of consciousness, people are objectively tied to their socio-economic contexts more than ever.

For now I would like to touch on this problem of politics at least with some short theses, because I think it is fitting to address the sphere of politics in a course of lectures on the theory of society. On the one hand, the entire sphere of politics is certainly an aspect of ideology, that is to say, it seems as if the power struggles take place in the political sphere proper – the sphere of government, the sphere of legislation, the sphere of elections, in all these elements of political institutions – as if they were the matter itself, whereas they are epiphenomena over the real social process that carries them. It is especially difficult to see through this – as simple as it may sound if I say this to you now – because the things with which people are first confronted, aside from persons, are really political institutions that represent the social, and because it already demands a substantial and analytical process of abstraction to perceive the underlying play of social forces. It is no coincidence that the theory of the state is incomparably older than the theory of society, which, though it too can be traced back to the Stoics, is – as a distinct theory – little older than the eighteenth or, at the earliest, the late seventeenth century. But, on the other hand, the sphere of politics as the sphere of seizing power, where it is quite possible for the entire fundamental conditions of life, especially the economic ones, to be decided, is after all a sphere, an ideology, that holds within it the potential to become something more, something different from mere ideology. If you want to see a demonstration of what is meant by dialectic, by social dialectic, in a very simple model, then such a definition of the nature of the political is probably the best paradigm one could find, because here you find two opposing aspects united in a single concept and almost in the same sphere: on the one hand, this ideological aspect that politics only conceals what is really going on underneath, and, on the other hand, the political as the potential to change precisely what is going on underneath. So, to be precise, politics is the manifestation of ideology that can take hold of the substructure and move it in a different direction. As the possibility of thinking the contradictory and the dialectical is increasingly in decline and is giving way to a simple binary logic in people's consciousness, such a concept of politics is no longer grasped. The possibility of politics as something other than ideology is no longer even conceived; instead, politics in general is seen only as the ideology it also is, namely as the sphere of a negotiation of interests that is actually determined by far stronger interests over which individuals believe they have no power, and which as a result they view largely with disinterest. On the other hand, the sphere of the political is now

equally compromised – and this applies especially to the workers – by the abuse of what has happened to politics in the entire Eastern bloc under the name of socialism, where politics, to a large extent, is genuinely like politics in the bad traditional sense: an expansive, more or less imperialistic power politics, or certain groups clinging to those in power while completely abandoning the actual socialist tenet that political action should end in the abolition of politics. But God knows that people over there play politics – the famous great game of politics – the same as they always have. If one also takes into account the stark difference of living standards, especially among the workers, between the people beyond the border and in this country, then this impossibility of having a real idea of politics is entirely understandable. All the more because the element on which the entire Soviet conception of politics rests, namely the idea of revolution and the possibility of revolution as such, has obviously become – I refer here to the extremely interesting study in *Merkur* written by Mr von Kempfski about this point¹³ – something so technologically questionable, or perhaps even entirely impossible, through a concentration of military resources that presumably consign a notion such as that of armed revolt to what one can only call the realm of childish dreams. And so it is understandable if a concept becomes a myth at the moment when it obviously and actually becomes what it had previously only been in a bad theory, namely that of Sorel,¹⁴ and can then, within the – in some ways – oh-so-enlightened humanity of today, no longer take hold of the masses.

To avoid any misunderstanding, ladies and gentlemen, I am not saying all this in order to justify these phenomena of subjective consciousness, but I think that the task of a theory is precisely to grasp all changes of consciousness, and also of reality, that are generally, according to the dominant thinking habits today, simply tolerated and accepted as such. I have referred to any mere acceptance of what is the case with a term I stole from psychology and transferred to sociology: concretism. This is analogous to the psychopathology of people who are incapable of abstraction and therefore do nothing but cling to what is closest. A number of analyses of the state of the proletariat, for example the famous study by Bednarik¹⁵ about the young Austrian worker, which some of you will perhaps also have come across, essentially point to the concretism thesis, to the fact that people are unable to resist their immediate interests – the aforementioned motorcycle, the television and a number of other things and behaviours connected to all this – and that they are consequently also prevented subjectively from attaining that theoretical consciousness which, as I showed you, faces such extraordinary objective obstacles.

There has always been a degree of truth in the concretism of those who have to bear the burden. I think that the people who are given the burden, and consequently walk bent over with their heads bowed, that it has always been very hard for them to hold those heads up high – to stay with the image – and see more than their immediate interests. Expanding one's consciousness, having a wide, unrestricted view, is itself already a form of privilege, yet those of us who like to think we have such a consciousness often fail to realize how much it is due to our inherited advantage that we are even able and allowed to have it. On the other hand, it does strike me as highly probable that this phenomenon of concretism, which people so often ascribe to the workers, especially the young workers, is not actually group-specific but, rather, a phenomenon that has spread throughout society as a whole in connection with all the things I have described to you, and hence that this restriction to the immediate, and the decision to clench one's teeth and avoid looking beyond what is closest at all costs, that this is where we find something resembling solidarity in society as a whole.

LECTURE 6

18 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the last session, in which I did not remotely get as far as I had intended, I began by outlining certain problems regarding the consciousness of the proletariat, always from the perspective of the difficulty of forming a theory, an adequate theory of society today – but also by attempting to contribute to such a theory with an analysis of one of its elements; here it is actually somewhat coincidental that I am speaking about the proletariat. I could just as easily have chosen the middle class as a model for the problems of forming a theory. If I did not do so, this is simply because we have the data from the ‘Work Climate’ study, which I attempted and will continue attempting to interpret a little for you.

Now, you will perhaps remember that the last concept we arrived at was the concept of concretism, which is the tying of consciousness to the immediacy of the given conditions, and more specifically the tying of consciousness to the consumer goods that people are presented with on such an overwhelming scale today. This overwhelming quantity of consumer goods, incidentally, like the advertising apparatus, points back to objective structural problems in society – I will only touch on this – namely the whole question of overinvestment and overproduction, as well as the necessity for the system, in order to survive, to exert an additional pressure in every conceivable way in order to shackle people to these very consumer goods. So I told you that this so-called concretism is not really group-specific but, rather – this is admittedly a hypothesis, and strict

researchers among you may point to a lack of certain analogous analyses for the lower middle class or indeed the ‘middle’ middle class, though we do know a certain amount about the lower middle class, especially here – something that is not group-specific but present in society as a whole: those phenomena that contributed to making Helmut Schelsky speak, with reference to this structural similarity of consciousness between the different classes, of a ‘levelled middle-class society’,¹ a concept that proved to have an extremely significant effect, though I assume, after my last conversations with Schelsky himself, that he himself no longer actually adheres to this concept in the form in which it became famous. But that is how it always is for those like us: as soon as a concept we have formed is turned into a sort of master key, such concepts make us uncomfortable, but then it is usually too late. The phenomenon of concretism stands in a correlative relation to this, and, while it does not prevent the objective possibility of theory formation, the incredibly complex and ramified context makes it seem opaque to the naïve person, if I may put it so crudely, by which I mean people who do not reflect on these matters or automatically proceed from a theory. Perhaps the argument repeatedly used in this context – and used especially often by my American colleague Robert Lynd² – namely that society has become so immensely complex and complicated that people cannot comprehend it and will therefore adhere to concretism – is not the last or the most profound word to be spoken on this matter. For one could certainly counter that, in our modern centralist – or, as people like to say nowadays – dirigist society, countless intermediate levels between the sphere of production and the sphere of social domination on the one side, and the consciousness of the masses on the other side, have disappeared; probably, because of the incredible concentration and rationalization of the methods of production and the adaptation of social forms to these methods, things are genuinely no longer so terribly complicated. I think you should familiarize yourselves with this thought, for complicatedness can also become an ideology if faith in complicatedness per se takes hold of the masses. I would think that the true origin of this phenomenon of concretism lies much deeper, that it is not really true that one cannot trace social processes to their relatively simple roots in economic planning and economic power structures, but rather that, because of the incredible disproportion between all individuals, every individual, wherever they might be, and the concentrated power of society, the notion of resisting this agglomerated power seems illusory. And that applies even within the labour organizations themselves, which are usually controlled so firmly by narrow groups, just as in the other forms of

rule, that, within them, resistance against the general line imposed from above – I am deliberately speaking so vaguely – has a futile and superfluous quality from the outset. It should be the case, however, that theoretical interest – and this is truly an aspect of the unity of theory and practice – wanes wherever people have the feeling that they cannot really change anything about the object of theoretical reflection. This consciousness may be false – and it is a vicious circle, for this sense of powerlessness obviously leads to a reinforcement of powerlessness because it really prevents people from doing anything – but, at any rate, as soon as one has the feeling that, despite one's correct insight, one's theoretical insight into the overall structure, one cannot change it – as it seemed to the labour associations a hundred or 130 years ago, one should note – the consciousness of the structural context, and even the negative consciousness of the machinery in which we are bound up, only really becomes a further source of suffering and is therefore kept at arm's length by people, and certainly not without reason, which leaves them focused on what is close, what is directly in front of them, the concrete. But that is no longer what was previously the concrete, in the sense of immediate relationships and immediately useful goods; now the closest genuinely consists of consumer goods, commodities and mass products, whether of a material or a cultural nature, with which people are flooded for economic reasons and to which they bind themselves.

Perhaps you can already recognize something here that I really consider extremely important for a theory of contemporary society, namely that the so-called levelling tendencies which can be observed and which it would be pure superstition to deny are not such that they reveal a levelling of society as a whole, for it is rather in the levelling itself that the supremacy of the dominant social mechanisms is reflected; and the theorists of levelling, who simply keep to the subjective consciousness that we are discussing now, very often keep quiet about this, producing a skewed picture of the social situation of consciousness. With this concretism, one must also distinguish between different aspects. For it would be wrong simply to denigrate this concretism in keeping with some puritan notion of unchanging, divinely enthroned spiritual goods, some culturally elitist ideas. Because of the immeasurably increased number of produced goods, the things to which people's consciousness attaches and limits itself genuinely offer them all manner of gratification and convenience, and to sneer at this and condemn it is the very last thing that would befit a theory driven, after all, by the material interests of dissatisfied people. On the other hand, concretism is not limited to such utility values, as I will formulate it for now, to the increase in these genuinely positive,

sensually material qualities of the things that are available to people; rather, the synthetic character of the evoked needs is expressed in the fact that – if I may fall back on an old and perhaps not completely economically ironclad formulation I used thirty years ago³ – people do not only consume or attach themselves to utility values; rather, they are attached to exchange values. By this I mean that what an object represents as a monetary value, its exchange value, already becomes a source of pleasure on that basis, almost becoming a utility value, yet not directly, but mediated through this exchange value that such an object has on the market; in other words, the aspect of the commodities that is enjoyed now itself constitutes their utility value – their fetish character, one might say. And if one speaks of a reified consciousness, I would say that one of the central aspects of this reification of consciousness is that it attaches itself to the fetish character of commodities, to what things represent on the market, instead of attaching itself to what these things actually mean for people. What one usually means by ‘prestige categories’ and the meaning of the prestige associated with all manner of commodities is a relatively superficial observation that is based only on the relative assessment of various goods, and therefore cannot grasp this very profound structural change whereby people consume exchange values instead of utility values. I certainly have no intention of selling you the theory I developed somewhat blithely in the study on fetish character, now published in *Dissonances*,⁴ as wisdom that still holds absolutely true today, especially because something like the enjoyment of exchange values can only truly be grasped socio-psychologically, in terms of certain Freudian categories, and is thus, strictly speaking, not actually social. So I am very much aware of the shortcomings of such a theory, but I still think the questions raised by this for the cohesion of contemporary society are of such central significance that I would at least encourage you all to give some thought to this complex in which it is exchange value rather than utility value that causes pleasure. One can already find formulations in Marx, incidentally, that point in a strangely similar direction, such as when he says that there is a class in society that actually enjoys the negative, namely its own alienation from things and people;⁵ and if one extends this Marxian formulation a little, it can certainly be brought into agreement with what I just outlined to you.

When I speak of this concretism and the relative inability to recognize the connections correctly, you should think of it in very concrete terms. When a worker in a study refers with a certain generality to ‘the powers that be’, for example, without any accompanying idea of who ‘the powers that be’ actually are and what their function

is, let alone any notion that the behaviour of 'the powers that be' is determined by their own interests and they are not some demigods or epicurean gods who live up there and make carefree decisions about humans, this delusion – like all social contexts of delusion – has a social reason, namely that they will simply never reach 'the powers that be' in the hierarchy; society is arranged and constructed so hierarchically that the possibility of coming across the managing director is eliminated from the outset. If one ever has a chance to speak to the labour relations director, who is also on the executive board, that is already something of a miracle. He will usually be extremely obliging and extremely friendly, and it may seem to the worker who is speaking to him about their problems as if he is paying attention to their interests, but in reality he will not do so seriously for different, formal-sociological reasons, namely because he is on the executive board and, as they say, 'integrated' into the uppermost hierarchy of the firm. Within the consciousness of the workers, this leads – to continue this point – to the appearance that the need somehow to voice one's wishes spontaneously, and be heard, will no longer even be felt; rather, as long as they can live a reasonably comfortable life in the economic boom, they will content themselves with delegating to functionaries, specialists for the problem complex of capital and labour, who will represent the labour side. So the division of labour between the workers and the lobbyists will be reproduced within the workers themselves, as it were; it repeats itself, which then leads both to the familiar consolidation phenomena within the labour organizations and ultimately also to the monopolistic structures that are becoming apparent in all labour organizations, the so-called political ones as well as the apolitical trade unions.

All this needs to be examined – as I believe I have outlined to you, at least in its overall perspective – by means of a social theory. But here you must realize once again, in order to see the difficulties I wish to convey to you here, and to advance independently the ideas which I can essentially only set in motion with these lectures, that the theory itself, which truly attempts to get to the bottom of the relationship between capital and labour, has been elevated to a state religion in the Soviet Union and its entire eastern sphere of influence, distorting it to the point where it has virtually become the opposite of what it was once meant to be. So one cannot blame anyone in the world if they no longer adhere to this theory in its powerful – that is, socially sanctioned – form but, rather, have the gravest doubts about it. I have noticed, if I could just say this in the present context, that those students who fled from East Germany and, because they supposedly learned dialectical materialism there, have now listed

this for some examinations as an area they know about, usually – and I say this without the slightest reproach towards these fellow students, merely to characterize a phenomenon that concerns more than just consciousness – have no idea of the simplest concepts in the theories of dialectical materialism and Marxian economics, that is, from the very state religion that is preached over there. Thus they produce the most nonsensical answers to questions with which one would expect them, having allegedly had this theory as their basic curriculum, to be familiar. It is evidently part of the transformation of a theory into religion that it is removed from people's living thought and living experience, and that, as soon as it is presented dogmatically, it ceases to be comprehensible and forfeits its solid theoretical structure – and only these can give it any force. If I could just say one more thing about it: this perversion of the theory of class relations I am speaking of consists primarily in the fact that Marxian theory, like every theory of society that seeks to understand society as a totality, is essentially a theory of the existing capitalist society of its respective time – and if one were put on the spot and had to name the difference between Hegel and Marx in this respect, it would initially be only that the laws of movement in society, which Hegel, Smith or Marx define as positive laws, are now criticized by Marx, and consequently all categories he uses for society are critical categories; we will yet discuss this much more fundamentally. And the aforementioned perversion or dogmatization and distortion lies in the fact that all possible categories, especially those concerning the supremacy of economics and referring to materialism, were simply elevated to positive categories in the dominant thought of the Eastern bloc, as if dependence on a material superstructure or the primacy of economics, or even the primacy of production, which is certainly an intra-capitalist category and was described and criticized by Marx as such – as if these could simply act as the categories of a non-capitalist society too. And thanks to this sudden transformation of critical categories into invariants and into a form of basic doctrine applying to every possible society, the concept of a theory of society – even where a developed one already exists, and people still think they can invoke it – really turns into the childish mockery that reveals itself in all manner of phenomena, some of which are familiar to you.

Though I spoke of concretism as the inability to perform what the German Idealists called 'self-elevation', incidentally – which is supposed to refer not to some cloud cuckoo land in this context but simply to the individual consciousness freeing itself from its restriction to the immediate conditions and objects it faces – this concept of concretism is insufficient to describe what I meant; rather,

one should say that it also has a correlate which Horkheimer once termed 'abstractism'. So, if I might return to my earlier example – the ominous talk of the 'powers that be' – this is concretist on the one hand, because people are focused only on the foreman Meier, who is supposed to be such a bad man, but it is simultaneously abstractist, because there is no longer any genuinely implemented notion of concrete contexts. This abstractism I would like to call the inability to have genuine experiences, and this inability to have experiences and the fixation on the mere objects of immediate exchange, which are affectively charged, idolized and fetishized by people, are essentially the same thing. This loss of the ability to experience is something that psychology found long ago, especially analytical social psychology, and for which it has also pointed to a number of psychologically genetic aspects; those who are interested can find a great deal regarding this in particular in *The Authoritarian Personality*.⁶ But today – as the perspective we are discussing is only accidentally the subjectively psychological one, and we are interested primarily in the objectively dominant structural issues of society – I would like to draw your attention to a different aspect, namely the question, a question that has perhaps not yet been thought through in this way sufficiently radically, of whether something like experience is even still possible in the reality in which we live today. Aldous Huxley, who, as well as having some strange ideas about the correct human state, was blessed with an eye for the sinister, tried to show in *Brave New World*⁷ – I believe I once referred to it in a text⁸ – how the conversations between the people in the dystopia he depicts increasingly degenerate and become more and more pathetic, because they are essentially no more than conversations about different forms of commodities, produced and launched by oligopolies, from which they have to choose; thus the tendency is for conversations to become no more than a comparison between different product catalogues. I fear there are enough conversations if one has the slightest sensorium for such things that move in this direction; at any rate, he extrapolated a tendency, extended a tendency, that already exists. Probably experience is tied to what – if you will permit this abstract formulation for the moment – one might perhaps call the possibility of the new, or the openness of the world – namely that the world is not subject to laws of its own reproduction that are preordained and set in stone, that at any moment there can be something which is not already pre-arranged or, in modern parlance, 'scheduled'. But wherever that is not the case, where precisely those forms of mass production which constantly produce the same under the guise of the new result in such fixity, experience is very severely compromised in objective terms. And if people, let us

say in novels, still report or deal with immediate human experience today, then the very fact of speaking about oneself, one's experience, one's immediacy, already has something that I would almost call ideological, something that pretends human immediacy and human destiny still exist, whereas we are actually all debased, even in our innermost being, to mere masks of the ghastly reality principle to which we are bound. So when some novels, novels from all sorts of countries, avoid portraying individual destinies and become mere montages of objective social facts or contexts, one should by no means see in this simply a positivist, record-taking mindset gone wild; rather, one should see the compulsion, the necessity, to attempt any form of utterance about this reality, to show oneself any sort of match for a reality that one can in fact no longer experience. This seems the most profound reason for those interrelated phenomena that I tried to present to you dialectically – on the one hand as concretism, the restriction to the merely existent, and on the other hand abstractism, meaning the inability to have living experience.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most dangerous habits of thinking is to blame the phenomena which I have described to you without any sugar-coating, I would say, on the workers – assuming the workers are the issue – by accusing them of so-called bourgeoisification. The late Belgian social psychologist Hendrik de Man,⁹ for example, who had a background in sociology, proceeded from certain observations about the levelling of the so-called proletarian consciousness into a bourgeois consciousness to pass a sort of verdict on the bad bourgeoisified proletariat and then moved more or less consistently from this verdict towards fascism, ultimately leading to his rightful expulsion from Belgium as an exponent of the same. With this bourgeoisification, whose most blatant symptoms are such concepts as the social partner, which have meanwhile become widespread in workers' circles and are possibly considered there as something especially progressive and modern, one must not hold these phenomena against the people who behave in this way. For these phenomena of the so-called bourgeoisification of the proletarian consciousness simply reflect the overall tendency of society to suck up the consciousness of the workers and to ridicule any notion that their consciousness is not immediately identical to either the consciousness of society or the interests of society as a whole. So one cannot reproach them for this, and I would like to add that, if Marx's theory of immiseration¹⁰ has proved to be wrong in countless spheres, and over such long time-spans that one would have to be delusional simply to pass over these periods, then it is also quite unjustified to blame the workers for thinking the way people think if they have more to lose than their chains. For that is not

a betrayal; rather, such accusations against the workers in particular usually amount to agreement with those whose only response to the concerns of the labour movement is to reach for the truncheon. If the workers do indeed have more to lose than their chains, then that may be painful for the theory, but it is initially very good for the workers. And I think that a theory which fails to recognize that, and therefore does not incorporate those aspects where the way things have so far gone materially has not actually resulted in the extreme situation predicted by Marx – I think not only that acknowledging this fact is the most basic matter of academic honesty but also that a theory which dismissed this and expected the workers to behave like starving people when they are not starving, that this would no longer even be a theory and would risk becoming a mere figment. That would not, admittedly, answer the question of whether this condition is static, whether it is really something structural, or whether that too does not belong in the realm of mere appearance. But theory must also respect appearances; that is the element of truth in positivism which one must concede, and which was conceded by no less a person than Hegel, in the famous formulation in the second part of his *Science of Logic* that ‘essence must appear’,¹¹ and that, if it does not appear, it is not actually the essence.

Incidentally, the observation of the divergence between socialism as a conception of the right society – something Goldmann referred to two days ago, with a term I did not consider very well chosen, as ‘worldview’ [*Weltanschauung*] – and, on the other hand, the immediate, concrete experience of the workers within the work process, which seems essentially causal-mechanical and not finalistic, is obviously not something that was just invented yesterday. What one calls the everyday class struggle, after all, has always differed from the setting of large-scale political goals and has always had, in part, a tendency to defer the setting of political goals to the Greek calends and thus degrade it to ideology again. This tension has expressed itself time and again in the extremely variable relationships between trade unions and political parties, and it would be a grave mistake to locate trade unions on the side of, shall we say, concretist compromise as mere lobby groups and political parties on the side of utopia. It has certainly not always been so, and at the moment – if I may venture so far into concrete social analysis for a moment – it seems that precisely, because the political parties negate the fundamental tensions in party practice, it is the trade unions – which must register that daily struggle, after all, but have officially been separated from politics entirely – that still have some possibility of realizing critical elements of theory within the framework of social practice.

LECTURE 7

23 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

We were involved in reflections on the subjective state of consciousness among the workers in Germany, on the problem of divergence between general socialist positions that used to be predominant – though, except for some fragmented transmissions, they seem to have waned now in the young generation – and what one used to call the everyday class struggle, meaning the uninterrupted efforts within the given circumstances to create better living conditions, especially higher wages and shorter working hours.

I would like to point out that, in this problem – if I may say so – there is also a direct manifestation of a philosophical one; or, to put it perhaps more accurately, one can learn paradigmatically from this very question how artificial, how deeply dictated merely by fear on both sides, is the distinction, so ingrained today, between philosophy and sociology as two separate branches. This involves a dialectical problem. Hegel taught that we do not have immediate consciousness of the whole, which is meant to be the truth, and that it should not be the abstractly separated, overarching concept of the whole but, rather, that the whole is realized only through the individual steps, the individual movements of the consciousness, and through reality – which, in Hegel's philosophy, are the same thing. And Marx's theory was in agreement with this strangely paradoxical notion that a way of thinking which bases its truth claim on a totality nonetheless sees the truth manifested in the particular, the detail, rather than the general outline of the whole – especially in placing what, to use the language

of the Old Testament, one might call a ban on images¹ on any abstract notion of a correct society, or any attempt to outline such a correct society, let alone to think up something of one's own choosing. This lent incredible weight to the 'next step', and the emphasis that was also applied to everyday practice in the labour movement can, here in particular, draw on the heaviest artillery from the great theoretical conceptions of the dialectical thinkers, as it were. On the other hand, it is clear that this principle of the next step, this principle that was expressed too reductively by Brecht in the famous statement that the truth is concrete,² can always entail a hidden assimilation, a resignation about the prevailing circumstances, indeed a betrayal of the idea of bringing about a correct society; for naturally the individual struggles involved are not acts relating to the whole – unless one means what one used to call revolutionary acts, the most famous being the general strike, but these seem to be out of the question now for technological, subjective and many other reasons. In short, the workforce faces a dilemma which cheap criticism can frame all too easily as guilt. For, on the one hand, the transition to the whole is blocked – and would contradict those notions of the actual realizations of socialism that once drove the labour movement – and, on the other, the politics of the next step is closed off more and more from the creation of the correct conditions, because each of these steps falls increasingly mercilessly into the context of the circumstances that happen to prevail. This dialectic is so serious because the workers are constantly dependent on the politics of the smallest step, the politics of improvement, the direct improvement of conditions, simply through their position – which, to put it mildly, is still the worst – if they are not to fall hopelessly behind the overall developments. If I say the catchphrase 'price spiral', you will all know immediately what I mean, and will know that, because of their objective situation, their only possible course of action is to seek these wage improvements but that, the more they do so, the more completely they are integrated, becoming partners and opponents who try to snatch away the national product already created in the work process, and thus being integrated all the more deeply into the overall context.

One might also say that what we call the realism of the workers has a peculiar dual character. Let me tell you from my experience in empirical social research that there have been times when the so-called integration process was considerably overestimated on the subjective side too; that is, several studies – including ones for which I was responsible³ – have shown that there are more substantial differences between the consciousness of the workers in the narrower sense and that of the bourgeoisie in the usual sense, which must include

the white-collar proletarians, the employees, than the theory of the so-called levelled middle-class society would lead one to expect, that these differences are located in the very dimension I just mentioned to you. That is, to put it in negative terms, the workers are generally more unideological, more sceptical, more dependent on an unhindered acknowledgement or understanding – the two fluctuate – of reality than the others, who still, or repeatedly, speak to the workers of their own idealism in contrast to the others' materialism. It is a funny thing – and something that requires no great theorems to observe, but has long been registered by great and certainly not socialist novelists such as Fontane in *Frau Jenny Treibel* – that those with property generally like to accuse those with nothing of being materialists while crediting themselves with idealism, going by the logic that Anatole France once formulated splendidly in *The Revolt of the Angels* – when some poor bohemian offers her services for a high-society charity party, saying that she acted with the well-known 'generosity of the poor' towards the rich.⁴ Whether and to what extent that still applies today, now that labour organization has itself taken on certain monopolistic traits, is a question for another time; these things are still present in the current notions of idealism and materialism, at any rate, where it is always the others who are the materialists. The realism of the working class, for example as described in great detail by Thorstein Veblen in his study *The Instinct of Workmanship*,⁵ has a peculiar dual character. Veblen pointed out that the workers, primarily because of their proximity to the causal-mechanical process of machine production, think mostly in causal-mechanical rather than in finalistic-teleological terms, less metaphysically and more soberly, more positivistically. And this way of thinking undoubtedly has something to do with the overall direction of the European Enlightenment, which drew the workers into its consequences through the nature of their work for as long as that nature confronted them directly with causal-mechanical processes. Whether these categories still apply today, in the face of an incredibly far-reaching mechanization that is quite opaque for the technologically uninitiated, and especially considering the potential of automation, and whether this very distance of the workers from the transparency of working processes is not, perhaps, paving the way for a form of new mythologization – I will leave all that to speculation. Suffice it to say that, in all such matters, one must be careful not to ascribe once and for all some form of unchanging qualities to the workers, for precisely such matters as the enlightened and sceptical mentality itself depend, to an extent, on the transparency of technological processes, and naturally also on the status held by the workers within the construction of society as a whole. On the other hand, this

same sober-mindedness observed in the workers, of which anyone who has ever come into contact with living workers, not simply theoretical descriptions in books, has detected a trace, also shows that the workers are initially forced to adapt themselves substantially to the machines – just as the middle classes are, something we experience ourselves when we drive a car, for example. Then we find ourselves in a forced, uninterrupted process of adaptation both to the highly complicated system of road signs and to the gear sticks of our own vehicles; and the more mechanized cars become, incidentally, and the less direct influence we can thus exert with a discrete gear system, the more precarious this entire system becomes until the automobile industry draws on advances in quite different technological spheres, such as a system of radar guidance to prevent accidents, which – and you can believe me after my experiences in America – are currently an especially serious problem. Naturally, what I initially described to you in very stubborn and literal technological terms using such a model has certain anthropological consequences, namely the tendency of ‘you must obey’ – as a maidservant of proletarian origin once said to me when I was a small child, to the horror of my parents – this ‘you must obey’, which means ‘you must follow’ the causal-mechanical conditions dictated by your work, has a tendency to spread out, and thus to kill off and prevent especially whatever points beyond the merely existent. For whether the potential for a whole lies in the ‘next step’ I told you about before, or whether that rather chokes and prevents such an outcome, only ever becomes clear afterwards; and it really takes the whole of Hegel’s metaphysics, which continues in Marx – in other words, a very solid faith in the world spirit – to imagine that the next step could simply and genuinely have an effect on the whole too.

These aspects I have now analysed for you are surely among the decisive reasons for what one might perhaps describe as the system-immanence of proletarian consciousness. This means that consciousness itself submits to the dominance of conditions and the implicit conviction that nothing significant can be changed about them, that all reflections automatically take place within the limits of the given conditions, and that the potential for establishing a reality in which things are truly different never comes within reach. I think that here, too, one must be careful not to present the historical changes involved as an absolute novelty, though it would be equally wrong simply to deny this development with the cheap argument that ‘it’s always been like that’. Rather, the dialectical factor in history, in the history of these things too, rests precisely on the fact that elements which have always been present become so dominant that others

which opposed them in an earlier constellation now seem powerless, or perhaps disappear entirely. So it was probably also true in the past that there was no agreement at all between the sober-mindedness of the worker, who always had an element of the craftsman, knowing exactly what hand action is needed and which action has which effect, and the idea of socialism. But this idea, though not quite so clear or explicit, was always effective in so far as the workers, even if they had no explicit theoretical notion of a future society or the action required to bring it about, at least joined parties that made this their programme, and which they expected to bring it about, and for which – and this is the crucial point – they were also inclined to take on board the utmost sacrifices, even persecution and imprisonment, and naturally one can hardly imagine that today.

This aspect of system-immanence, I would say, reflects what one might observe in the consciousness of the workers more accurately than the overly abstract assertion of a levelled society when it comes to the material basis of their existence. Think of something like the famous subject of wage satisfaction, which also played an important part in our 'Work Climate' study.⁶ There one stumbles on references to wage satisfaction; and also on the fact that, in terms of an operational definition of one's research tools, one can generally speak of wage satisfaction when the wages are within the bounds of what the workers consider attainable under the prevailing conditions, especially when they feel well paid in relation to other groups of workers and other companies or factories that are somehow available for comparison. What you will scarcely find, however, is fundamental reflections on the relation between your wages and the incomes of other social groups, even though we now know – and even so positivistic a researcher as my Tübingen colleague Dahrendorf recently pointed this out emphatically⁷ – that the much vaunted adjustment of workers' wages to those of white-collar employees is severely overestimated, and that the material situation of the workers is thus generally lagging far behind that of other social groups. All the investigations we carried out are subjective. I do not mean subjective in the sense that they express my subjective opinion – I must ask you to watch out carefully for this misunderstanding – but simply subjective in the sense that they reflect how the group, the social group we were speaking of, subjectively views its own situation, as opposed to the objective structure in which it finds itself.

Perhaps I could add here that one of the greatest sources of error in the whole of our contemporary sociology is probably the fact that it knows no higher norm than the so-called objectivity, unprejudiced view and verifiability of its findings; that it is subjectivist, in so far

as it generally contents itself with recording what people think about themselves and their social situation, without reflecting – especially with such a far-reaching manipulation of public opinion as we are experiencing today – that people’s awareness about themselves can, and probably does, differ infinitely from their opinion about themselves and society. And I would say, to the extent that sociology is a science, or to the extent that we aim in a higher sense for a theory of society, that this is really one of the nerve points: namely, that we should not content ourselves with recording what people think, want, and do of their own accord, but rather, while still recording what they think, want and do, and certainly acquainting ourselves with it, that we should at all times see it in relation to the objective circumstances. The connection between an empiricist mindset and that form of blindness through subjective consciousness is extremely profound, and I think it is important – precisely for those who already concern themselves with the research – that they gain an awareness of these things, unless they wish to follow a stubborn, naïve and therefore ultimately factually unproductive practice. The very form of the so-called survey, which is organized on the model of market research or the ascertainment of likely majorities in elections, is geared from the outset – simply through its techniques – towards what people think. So, such sacred institutions of sociological empiricism as the interview are, by their nature, tacit documentations of subjective opinions about all manner of things, and then one thinks one somehow has something objective if one uses these subjective opinions to arrive at a statistical tool to reveal something like an overall opinion, or dominant opinion, or opinion among key groups. And this leads extremely easily to the subreption that the average opinion thus recorded is itself something like the objective truth, that it really constitutes what sociology as a science is supposed to ascertain. It may seem a little primitive to you if I warn you of this danger, on which I believe that the theory of society must reflect very energetically, but I would at least like to point out that even this seemingly primitive element has an extremely profound philosophical background, namely one that one can perhaps describe most simply as the difference between subjective reason and objective reason. But the more the subjective understanding of reason, the means–end relation of self-preservation as it presents itself to individual humans – the *volonté du tous*, as Rousseau calls it⁸ – becomes the medium of truth in conjunction with the progress of occidental nominalism and the loss of faith in something like objective reason as such, the stronger, in keeping with this philosophical trend, the tendency becomes to view the average of subjective opinions – the average of subjective

reason, as it were – as the pinnacle of objectivity. The philosophical task of getting beyond this is an extraordinarily difficult one. The only way is a critique of precisely this subjective reason, in the sense of merely subjective judgements, by showing in detail that there is a concrete and clear discrepancy between the upshot of this opinion and the things to which it refers.

As an aside, this is also the method by which I approach the entire complex of problems regarding so-called mass communication, and that is also why I find myself in such obvious and stark opposition to what is generally termed communication research and similar things. In other words, the question of whether communications are ideology, and whether the consciousness they produce is an ideological consciousness, hardly comes up at all with the usual surveying methods. If we say that the phenomena, the phenomena of consciousness we have analysed, are actually all purely subjective, then we should add that the universal exchange principle which holds society together is undermined in all sorts of places, is in tatters, if you like, but in essence still persists. I will not embark on an analysis of the exchange act here; I wish only to draw your attention to one specific point, to a point that belongs precisely to what Marx wanted to show in the interest of an immanent critique of capitalism, but which he and especially Engels denied, or at least viewed as secondary, while I would think that, if one is accounting for exchange as a social rather than an economic phenomenon – and we are not speaking of economy here – then one should reflect very thoroughly on it. To explain this relatively drastic thing I have in mind, let me refer to a figure of speech, a set phrase, that some of you are perhaps familiar with. What I mean is the expression ‘leonine contract’. This is an expression that evidently comes from some fable – I see from the sceptical looks on some faces that this is no longer as familiar to you as it was to me in my own youth – so when the lion makes a contract with a mouse, the mouse will generally be at a disadvantage to the incredibly powerful lion and will have to guarantee whatever it demands; in addition, the lion’s means of sanction, its means of enforcing the contract, are naturally incomparably stronger than the mouse’s. At the moment I cannot recall the fable from which the term originates, but no doubt the Germanists among you will have no trouble discovering this source; I would imagine it could be found in the eighteenth century, for example in the work of Gellert⁹ or a writer from this area, and I already look forward with relish to finding the exact fable placed here on my desk. So what I mean by this exchange is that the exchange of labour power for wages that is required of every worker may be a free contractual relationship

in formal terms, with complete parity between the two sides, but in reality, of course, the workers will face hunger and have nothing to live on if they do not enter into the contract, and are thus forced by the objective circumstances to sign the contract far more than is the entrepreneur, who – viewed as an overall class, at least – can generally wait until the worker sees reason, as the saying goes, namely subjective reason, and accepts these terms. If, for a second, you do not take what I am conveying to you as individually as I have presented it but, rather, extrapolate to the conditions of society as a whole, what this means is quite simply that the decisive exchange act, namely the act of exchanging live labour for wages, in fact presupposes the class system; and it is decisively modified and modelled by this class system in such a way that the semblance of freedom for all parties which is created by the legal contract of the wage agreement is, in reality, nothing but that: a semblance. Naturally this view is completely heretical from the perspective of Marxist theory, as Marx believed that power, on the contrary, could be derived from the exchange relationship.

But I think it is theoretically tenable if one does not base theoretical analyses like those we are currently examining on some ideal-typical and ahistorical models of a pure exchange act from which this and that follow; rather, if one considers the form in which people today, we ourselves, as we are, enter into such exchange relationships, such exchange contracts, we are predetermined in the manner I have just explained to you. But even if one did not content oneself with that and demanded an analysis of the exchange relationship on the model of classical economics, one would probably arrive at the conclusion that the exchange relationship came about in the first place only in situations of an urban market society, where the one party already entered into the exchange contract with more than simply the yield of their own work or the diligence of their hands. One can witness time and again – assuming one is not persuaded otherwise, against one's better judgement, by studies in sociology – how, if one is born as a worker, unfreedom persists objectively despite the semblance of levelling and equalization. The workers whose subjective reactions we recorded, for example, experienced this through the slave-driving system in mining especially, whose technological reasons – that is, the technological backwardness and the need to meet a quota – I have already outlined to you.¹⁰ But every one of us too, every single one of us, can, in spite of everything, also experience this when for example we find ourselves in a job-seeking situation. It will be experienced primarily in the fact that what is expected of us as someone who – please forgive the impolite formulation, but I fully include myself

here – has to sell themselves on the market is not what we ourselves would like; that is, we cannot actually realize our own possibilities and talent but must largely follow what is demanded of us. And, on top of that, the ideology is that precisely this is the higher ethos, the only way in which all of us can be drilled to become real members of human society, that this will cure us of our bad and stupid thoughts.

Incidentally, it seems characteristic – perhaps I can close with this – of the present situation, especially for intellectual workers, that is, university graduates, assuming they do not become simple officials, but also in a great many other areas – and I think people have not really thought about this – that, despite the oft-cited lack of staff, the relationship between supply and demand does not work. What I mean is that, while one side is constantly whining about a lack of staff, what one finds on the other side is that highly qualified people in all sorts of fields, as soon as they really want to get in, cannot do so and suddenly, to their surprise, find the door firmly shut. I would think that this fact shows how the entire economic situation in which we live, and the entire balance of supply and demand we are dealing with, that this has a synthetic element to it, an element of being imposed from above, and that it does not actually result spontaneously. And I think that essentially, despite this prosperity, power – also in the sense of calculating changes, of a calculus for the future, leaving aside the immediate situation – expresses itself in the fact that, in this society, we all potentially experience ourselves as superfluous in terms of our work, that we live our lives only by the grace of society, one might say, even if society and we ourselves want us to believe that we are living on our own terms, and that this deep sense of superfluity is really at the heart of the general malaise, the need for security and the uncertainty that one can speak of today.

LECTURE 8

25 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

[...] ¹ in the previous session I tried above all to point out to you that the so-called phenomena of integration are essentially subjective, namely phenomena of consciousness among the workers, and that their objective significance should therefore not be overestimated; and I provided a number of models, of examples, in which one can see very directly how thin this crust of an integrated society actually is. I would almost say it is merely a form of clothing worn by society and that, if one takes off those clothes, in the very place where one would expect nature to begin, the class system now becomes drastically evident.

But now I would like to say – and this will show you how complex these matters are and how earnestly one must try to be nuanced in one's thinking – that, as soon as these subjective elements grow as far as they have today, they also take on an objective significance that feeds back into reality. You all know the worn-out old saying by Friedrich Engels that theories become actual forces once they grip the masses. ² But, by my reckoning, the reverse undoubtedly also applies: whenever a consciousness among the workers about their objective position in the social process – which is exactly what the famous term 'class consciousness' means – is simply absent, is non-existent, this also has an objective significance because then the potential for resistance is completely different from the outset. But one should not overestimate this objective significance of the subjective factors either, for one must take an extremely nuanced approach in these matters,

as with the entire complex we are currently examining as a model. The trick of the matter, the squaring of the circle that is required of someone who thinks socially, is simultaneously to avoid covering up structures through details and nuances – so one should never say, ‘There’s no such thing as workers, there are only workers in this, that or the other category, and the notion of the worker as such has no meaning’, that would be a false nuance – and, nonetheless, to conceive of the structural problems themselves in as detailed and complex a fashion as they present themselves in reality, even at the risk of considerably impairing what one might call the ‘handiness’ of the theories. So these elements too, in spite of everything, have no absolute significance. Ralf Dahrendorf – whom I have already quoted several times here and who examines these questions from the perspective of a positivist thinker, but whose the intention, despite this positivism, is to highlight more strongly the differences of real-world power, which are usually ignored in subjectively oriented positivism as compared to the merely classificatory systems of sociology – quoted a statement the other day by an author called Thomas³ to the effect that a person is exactly what they believe themselves to be. There is an element of truth in this: so a proletarian, shall we say, who does not notice in any aspect of his own existence, any aspect whatsoever, that he is a proletarian – for him, class consciousness would become a myth. But, on the other hand, we all know – and Schopenhauer famously made a rather brilliant systematic construction out of this – that the views which humans have about themselves, the views that others have about them, and finally what one might call the objectivity of their existence do not coincide at all. One of the greatest achievements of Hegel, Schopenhauer’s antipode especially in this respect – and also of Goethe, incidentally – was stating with the greatest emphasis that the mere self-awareness of humans, as long as it does not somehow enter their social reality (or externalizes itself [*sich entäußert*], as Hegel put it),⁴ runs the risk of becoming a mere ideology. And that is indeed what has happened with the belief, associated with the ‘philosophy of inwardness’,⁵ that people define themselves purely through their awareness of themselves, not by what they are in reality. If a poem by Rilke, whom one could almost call the head ideologue of the petty bourgeois theory of the elite, contains a line – just listen to the line first and then hiss, ladies and gentlemen – that reads, ‘Beggars would call you brother, and still you would be a king’,⁶ an appealing line, then I would say that this reveals the possibility of a transition from so-called self-respect to that ideology of dignity which Karl Kraus said had damaged some people’s minds in the most drastic and unmistakable fashion. One

should add, however, that such externalization – that is, the idea that one essentially defines oneself in this antagonistic world by what one is or represents in it – can equally become an ideology; and none other than Goethe, who preached austerity and externalization, realized this in a statement that should be in *Reflections and Maxims*, and which asserts that most of our public activities are nothing but disguised philistinism.⁷

I think one has to take this statement by Goethe on the one hand together with the disgrace of Rilke's lines on the other if one is to gain a little taste of what these things are really like. Certainly a major shift is required to speak of the proletariat in a place such as America, where, nowadays at least, there is barely a proletarian who still has an awareness of themselves. But one should also bear in mind that there is a shift of social pressure that is by no means the same as the abolition of social pressure. At the moment, this probably manifests itself – in a sense that I do not need to explain more closely to you after what I said in the previous lectures – in the fact that those who actually operate within the work process, especially the so-called production process, do have what is termed an integrated or elitist consciousness, but that this has not eliminated the pressure at all. I will simply remind you of the results of the latest surveys on poverty in the United States, which are a slap in the face to conventional ideas of universal prosperity; I also remind you of conditions in developing countries; but I remind you as well of certain groups here, such as the entire group of state pension recipients, or countless widows, who scrape by on the threshold of what is known in America as a 'marginal existence'. It is characteristic of all these groups, incidentally, that – in the highly capitalist countries, at least – because they are not organized and do not appear in large numbers in urban centres but often live scattered in so-called depressed areas and, due to a number of other similar factors, are far less visible than, say, the locked-out workers Zola wrote about in *Germinal*, they have what, to use a rather apt term from American sociology, one calls 'low visibility'.

I said that the theory must therefore be very nuanced in these matters and incorporate all these aspects – but incorporate them precisely to ensure that structural differences are not treated nominalistically nonetheless. After all, that same nominalism, the same tendency to deny the reality of concepts that once served the purpose of clarification, has largely changed its function and today serves primarily to prevent anything like objective definitions of social phenomena beyond subjectivity, both the subjectivity meant by these definitions and cognisant subjectivity. The function of the remark

‘Oh, there’s no such thing’ has completely changed. If people say to you today, with reference to some concept, ‘Oh, that doesn’t exist, that’s an outdated, completely obsolete concept’, then – if you will allow me this pedagogical reminder, ladies and gentlemen – you can generally suspect that the concept is being denied because someone actually wants to deny the matter to which that concept refers, and which they can then argue away as an amateur epistemologist, so to speak. For epistemology is by no means always a tool of clarification but may also be used as a way to elude any clarifying reflection. There is nothing in the world, not even something as seemingly objective as epistemology, that cannot potentially take on a social status, a function in society, which changes it into the opposite of what it originally took itself to be.

Concerning the subjective state of the workers, please do not misunderstand what I am saying because of these structural problems. Obviously, every improvement within the work process, everything that constitutes itself in the everyday struggle of the trade unions which I discussed the other day, is something good and positive and must be supported without reservation; and naturally this also includes the work climate. Anyone who wanted to prevent this for the sake of maintaining a purity of class relationships, as it were, would be both a fool and a reactionary – a reactionary simply because every form of independent understanding and autonomy is tied to a certain freedom from the most pressing daily needs, which can be achieved precisely by means of these improvements. It was surely a disastrous mistake that Rosa Luxemburg, who was led by the structural changes in the workforce to believe that she should rely on those people who suffered the greatest hardship, overlooked this aspect. This too is an aspect that must be incorporated into the theory.

But, ladies and gentlemen, you must be aware – and here I am first of all describing to you the difficulty of a theory of society, for one can only gain access to these things if one takes on board their extraordinary difficulties unreservedly, without any illusions – that, because of the nuanced character which I described to you as a necessity, the theory of society loses that same unambiguous nature which was one of its merits, especially because the subjective aspect has simply taken on a far greater significance than it once seemed to have, due to the quantitative increase in subjective so-called integration factors; and, naturally, this initially compromises the strictly objective character of the theory, namely the plausibility of an unreserved economic objectivism. First of all, I think it is important for everything we will go on to say about the possibility of formulating a new social theory that you are aware of this fundamental difficulty, which consists in

having to choose between, on the one hand, something that is theory, yet dogmatically ossified and no longer capable of nuance, and, on the other, a form of nominalism and faith in facts that, ultimately, no longer differs at all from conceptless positivism and turns into something like pure empiricism.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I expect you will object – and I think some of you have already formulated this objection in your minds – that what I am saying is initially very unconvincing. One might think, after all, that if one speaks of an increasing integration into society, as I did in the last session, and even more in the one before, that this society – in so far as it integrates, in so far as it is unified in itself – should lend itself all the more perfectly to theoretical examination; that the more integral a phenomenon is, like our current society, the more one should be able to formulate its individual conceptual core, which is after all identical to the integration of the matter itself. I think that, for now, there is no other response to this than to say that what one calls integration, what I described to you with a certain reference to tendencies in contemporary sociology that can be disputed, but not ignored, that this, in reality and in all seriousness, is no more than social semblance. Some of you came to me with the assertion that, if one is to speak of integration at all, one should first be more specific in one's formulation: integration in relation to what? I think that, first of all, for everyday use, as it were, one might respond to this by saying that the integration of society has increased, in the sense of a growing socialization; the social fabric has become more and more tightly woven, there are ever fewer areas, ever fewer spheres of so-called subjectivity that are not more or less taken over quite directly by society, that are not socialized in this sense – which should not, of course, be confused with that of socialism. If I remind you here – just to give you a catchphrase – of the oft-noted replacement of the family, which to an extent constituted the reserve of the so-called individual, or at least its formative space, by collectives that directly grip and directly form people, then let me give you an idea of what one can experience daily in the most advanced capitalist country, in America, where there is literally – even outside of professional work, whose organization takes over people's lives to an extraordinary degree – almost nothing left that is not covered by the category of 'social activities' [Eng.]. Private life, the zone of individuality, is absorbed by so-called social activities and thus likewise moulded by the 'patterns', the schemata of society, in a way that we can barely dream of in Germany, generally speaking, partly because our overall capitalist development has not advanced as far as America's, but partly because the longer pre-capitalist history

of Europe means that there is a far greater resistance to this total socialization even of so-called individual and intimate areas. In this context, you need only take a look at Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*⁸ for a phenomenology of the things I am describing to you, illustrated with a wealth of material. The whole distinction between 'inner-directed' and 'outer-directed' persons⁹ is quite simply a way of saying that, with the radical consolidation of the exchange principle, with the radical capitalization of all interpersonal relationships, the sphere of individuality, which seemingly sets all these gears in motion, is increasingly devalued; that, in the processes of social adaptation which are incessantly demanded, there is really not much more left of the so-called individual than its ideology – namely that the individual is the highest value, but without anything truly concrete corresponding to this abstract notion of the individual. On the other hand, in opposition to this growing socialization is the fact that, still, in our society, nothing resembling a unity of interests, a reconciliation of the interest of society as a whole and the interests of individual people, has been realized, and, from this perspective, society is surely light years away from the notion of integration, which it uses largely as an ideology. So I think that, first of all, this anticipatory specification limits the scope of the idea of integration without making the mistake of simply disputing the phenomena of integration themselves. But I think one should not stop at this differentiation I have attempted but should, rather, try also to approach the question of integration, not simply by making the concept more specific but by highlighting its own immanent contradiction as an expression of a social reality; though here I would say – to adapt and radicalize something that you can already find hinted at by Herbert Spencer – that social integration grows in tandem with social contradictions, with social antagonisms. Perhaps I can express that a little more clearly by saying that society becomes integrated not through the isolated spontaneities of its separate individuals, of its own accord, as classical liberal theory still postulated; rather, what we call integration today takes place from above, through the technologically applied methods of standardization in the work process, as well as in mass communication and the extensive planning by the most powerful groups, which assert themselves in incredibly influential spheres such as advertising and propaganda – and I consider any distinction between advertising and propaganda to be pure ideology – in such an extremely drastic fashion. I will even hint at the possibility that subcutaneously, despite the increasing integration of society we are observing, there is something like disintegration becoming apparent beneath the surface. So, while the different groups in this society are coming ever closer to

one another, to the point of indistinguishability, in their 'patterns of behaviour' [Eng.], in their customs and conventions – go out to the country and you will find hardly any difference between rural and urban dress, to give you just one rudimentary example – the reality is that, precisely because society is ruled by a few very strong power groups thanks to the monopolization process and its organizational forms of reflection, the struggles and confrontations taking place in this society are increasingly reduced to struggles between the most powerful groups – one could almost say to pure clique battles. The sphere of the political, meanwhile, which presupposes something like the independent, autonomous and spontaneous formation of the will of the *demos*, is largely a mere semblance or reflex motion by comparison and no longer constitutes anything at all substantial.

This was particularly evident – this phenomenon of a latent disintegration of a society that can no longer keep itself together but can be held together only by an iron clamp, as it were – under fascism, where the social struggles that continued and in some cases took on an extremely bloody character became incredibly distant from the foundation of people's real interests, finally culminating in different cliques cutting each other's throats, as is commonplace in South America. I will leave open the question of how far fascism was simply the go-getter, as it were, demonstrating in a somewhat impetuous and violent fashion the direction in which its own objective spirit seemed to be moving by itself. At any rate, to move out of the speculative realm a little (though I do not see why one should not be allowed to speculate on these matters), we know that, in the realm of individual psychology, integration based on a social pressure that has reached disproportionate levels is extremely closely related to a disintegration of one's person. The phenomena one has lately grown accustomed to describing as collective schizophrenia are also intimately connected to these questions. Many years ago I stated – in analogy to a Marxian concept¹⁰ – that the individual's organic composition grows within the individual itself – though in this case the word 'organic' is a *lucus a non lucendo*.¹¹ What I meant is quite simply that people are increasingly becoming instruments, means of their own self-preservation at the expense of the sector – forgive the quantitative turn of phrase – at the expense of those parts of their person that the instruments into which they are turning themselves should really be serving.¹² In other words, the increasing rationalization of humans themselves, in which people are turning into their own means of production and becoming ever more suited to reality, contradicts their own reality principle because there is nothing really left for these tools to work for. Then they become an end in themselves within people, they

become irrational; they are no longer *for* anything, because what should be *for* another becomes something 'in itself'. Hence this rationality approaches irrationality and, ultimately, even something like a system of delusion.

This problem presents us with the following choice: if one believes in society's integration in the way its objective spirit demands of us, and in the way the prevailing ideology demands of us in countless areas of life, and in almost all of public opinion – in other words, if one defines society with two seamlessly reconcilable concepts based on extensional logic, one is falling for a mere semblance. So the system of society which one then constructs as a theorist actually conceals, through the unanimity, the smoothness, the identical and contradiction-free character it assumes, the continued existence of the antagonisms – and that, ladies and gentlemen, this concealing function of the system, is really the basis of my objection to the conventional systematic content of theory formation in sociology. And this is also the reason for the difficulty in formulating a theory of society that penetrates to its core but simultaneously divests itself of the wrongly, falsely systematic character of which I hope I have at least given you some notion. The antagonisms continue; they are not directly visible, often not even indirectly visible as contrasts of lifestyle or contrasts between terrible poverty and abundant wealth, but they continue in the shape of an antagonism of social power and social powerlessness that has reached an extreme level, and – this is the dialectical essence, this is why I told you before that I would try not simply to differentiate but to dialecticize – this contrast of power and powerlessness prevails today precisely because of the increasing integration of society as a whole.

Goodness knows this tendency is not new, like all of these things; but the art of social thought also includes not letting the knowledge that something has always been the case blind one to the fact that, through the growth of certain quantities or qualities, even something old and immemorial takes on a new quality. The reason this has always been the case is that, in a society that was held together by free and fair exchange and which had always been integrated in the name of the exchange principle, the different functions were brought down to a common denominator, truly unified, by this exchange. This concept of exchange, or this reality of exchange, was at once the medium that enabled the formation of class, perhaps not originally creating it but certainly reinforcing it, meaning that the model of such a disintegration, or an intensification of antagonism through integration, has existed since ancient times. But this has reached such a level today that – to make it very plain to you, ladies and gentlemen

– the more integrated society is, and the fewer are left outside in the literal or the metaphorical sense, the more each of us is devoured by this society from head to toe; and the more we ourselves are modelled even in our very structure by this imposed form of society, the more powerless each of us automatically is before this whole. That is precisely the definition of the increase in antagonism or, if you like, the disintegration through the growing integration that I have attempted to show you.

While the great classics of German philosophy, first Kant and later Hegel most of all, taught that the identity of the general and the particular was the *telos* of history, one might say that the world in which we live today has arrived at something like a false identity of the general and the particular; that is, frequently the particular is already as mutilated to begin with as the general could ever want to make it. Karl Kraus, for example – perhaps I can refer to him once again, as I am currently occupying myself very intensively with his work¹³ – showed this with reference to a nerve point, namely a phenomenon of consciousness or forms of reaction that he observed sixty years ago among women who do not rebel against their own oppression in patriarchal society – sometimes even refraining in the name of professional emancipation – but rather internalize this oppression and, when confronted with any kind of erotic freedom that might be imposed on them, stage their own morality congresses, whose expressions of moral outrage possibly even surpass those of police institutions. This is a very particular sphere. I would say it is even unjust to hold those women responsible for that, because they are the ones who always have to foot the bill, which is why even such a reaction gains an element of truth within the antagonistic whole. It is beyond doubt, however, that the primary reactions of countless people today, owing to an unconscious knowledge of the hopelessness of resistance and the need to make things easier for themselves, follow what psychoanalytical theory calls ‘identification with the aggressor’¹⁴ – they voluntarily affirm and even seek the forms of repression that are forced on them from without. And this truly produces a ghastly parody: the identity between the objectively prevailing state, or the conditions objectively forced on people, and their own consciousness, something outlined for the first time by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, which is now thirty-four years old. Let me conclude by saying that the argument which could be made here, namely that if such an identity prevails, however it may have come about and whatever its content might be, ‘everyone is happy nowadays’ [Eng.], as Huxley puts it in his novel, strikes me as sophistic and therefore invalid, because cracks in this false identity

appear in countless places, and because it is immediately paid for with neurosis, suffering and all conceivable phenomena of mutilation as soon as one looks even a little beneath the surface of this happy agreement.

LECTURE 9

30 June 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

[In the session before last] I drew your attention to the very difficult social-theoretical problem of whether there is a primacy of power relations over the economy, or of the economy over power relations, and to the term 'leonine contract', which I interpreted to mean that social power already asserts itself in the exchange contract on which the employment relationship rests. But I told you that I did not know its origin, I had completely forgotten it. Now some of you were kind enough to inform me that the motif of the leonine contract comes from Aesop, the ancient Greek fabulist, and from Phaedrus, a Hellenistic fabulist from the time of Caesar Augustus. So that is the source of the phrase; I am glad I was able to add this.

Now let us return to where we left off. You will recall my saying last time that a false identity between the general and the particular is emerging, meaning that, in a great many areas of life, the particular already seems so deformed by nature, having internalized and embraced the deformation visited upon it, that the rupture between the general and the particular is no longer properly visible. And I spoke of a negative unity of society in its overall unfreedom – if one wanted to be very spiteful and mocking, one could almost say that we have arrived at a parody of classless society – and I also pointed out that countless conflicts reveal the damage done time and again to individual people, that this unity, which the prevailing ideology considers one of the essential concerns – to use the popular word – to assure us of and to drill into us as a positive, that it is actually a

mere semblance, that this integration is not true. I will only add here, after we have so far concerned ourselves mostly with the question of the workers, that this aspect is by no means a matter for the working classes or the underclass, for the phenomenon I am describing to you, namely the semblance of freedom that is created only by a certain visible satisfaction of needs, without any change to one's real status in the production process, also manifests itself in the ruling view – which is naturally extremely narrow – namely in the fact that even the members of the ruling class have infinitely less freedom of choice, and also far less opportunity to enjoy their property and their independence, than one imagines. Already in my youth I was surprised how little use the richest people whom I had the chance to study actually made of their wealth for personal enjoyment, and there was a very concrete reason for that, aside from an internalization of the puritan work ethic: it was quite simply a fear of attracting attention. Today there is undoubtedly a tacit, extremely widespread social regulation which ensures that anyone who uses their wealth unreservedly exposes themselves to a sphere of, shall we say, petty bourgeois scrutiny that not only spoils the enjoyment they might otherwise have had but in addition – and this is far more important – could also lead to all manner of commercial disadvantages. Such a man would immediately be suspected of being a playboy, would be viewed as dubious, and the amusement he indulged in would immediately lessen his credit, and thus possibly the material basis for that same freedom which he cannot wholeheartedly enjoy.

This already points to an objective aspect of this situation – and Marx also saw this with full clarity, which is one of the reasons that, for all his scathing criticism, his hatred was directed far more at ideologues than at the members of the ruling class as persons – namely that, within a system defined by the necessity of accumulating and exploiting capital, the individual people appear, to an almost unimaginable degree, merely as 'character masks'¹ or, put more simply, as functionaries of the capital relation, which determines every one of their decisions and naturally, in case of conflict, necessarily sucks in their private life too – in so far as a thin layer of semblance still distinguishes it from professional life – whether partially or completely. So here, too, one can say that the levelling, the apparent levelling that reveals itself in the comparison between the lifestyles of the haves and the have-nots, is a semblance that conceals coercion, oppression and forced adaptation. Perhaps I can say at this point that, to me, the significance of exploring and criticizing ideologies lies primarily in the fact that, in the ideologies, one can show to a large extent what I am talking about, namely the

semblance of society's freedom. By analysing the ideologies that are promoted today, especially those provided by the culture industry, one can see how much the antagonisms live on, despite the semblance of levelling, simply through those constant efforts to make people forget the antagonisms – through that intention which evidently makes its presence felt, simply under the pressure of the reality of the antagonisms, and which accordingly, as Goethe puts it in *Torquato Tasso*, like every intention that is noticed, causes annoyance.² One need not stop at this annoyance, however; one can elevate it to a concept, that is, one can show in detail that such ideology – especially where, with a form of pseudo-realism, it seemingly presents people merely with an image of their own reality – falsifies this reality by making the central antagonisms disappear and replacing them with merely private conflicts, always characterized by the fact that they remain in the private sphere and can be resolved privately. 'Always' is an exaggeration, incidentally: naturally the culture industry also includes a great many products seemingly connected to so-called social issues, but that is precisely where the falsifications I mean are carried out most cunningly; and it would almost be more important to expose the illusory nature of so-called social tear-jerkers than the rather spurious private ideologies which seek to persuade the shop girl that the boss is only waiting to marry her. I am talking about these things so that you might understand, as we are speaking here about a theory of society and must therefore consider the status of individual sociological interests, why the analysis of the products of mass culture, of the culture industry or of ideology forms a not inconsiderable part of my own work. Today one can say that this ideology no longer consists so much in offering people complementary ideas that deviate from reality and comfort them, because exactly this ideological procedure evidently no longer promises enough success in the face of a humanity that has become increasingly sophisticated through technology and communication; rather, it seems that ideology today merges to an ever greater degree with the image of reality as it actually is, so that, to refer to Max Weber once again, the 'disenchanted world' – in addition to everything else – is glorified as its own meaning or its own ideology. I say 'glorified' because the presentation of this world creates the impression that it must be so, that it cannot be any other way, and that, what is more, this is something very profound.

If, in the context of science-theoretical argumentation, I keep having occasion or feel the need to criticize the prevailing positivist mindset in the social sciences, then you will probably find in what I have just said – goodness knows I have no intention of fooling you

– the true motive that inspires me: namely that I believe positivism itself to be a manifestation of ideology today, and an especially dangerous one, because the positivist mindset declares itself the most anti-ideological, sober, objective one of all, but, by rejecting everything that is not a fact, through this exclusivity of the factual, it bestows an aura upon factuality that is generally drawn from the very same metaphysics which the current positivists consider such a taboo. So that is why, when I inveigh against positivism – just to dispel any doubts you might have, to make this point fully clear to you – it is not with the intention of salvaging, in opposition to positivism and for the sake of the social reality in which we live, something like a positive meaning in that which is the case as something existent, but rather the opposite: the point of my critique of the positivist method is, in fact, precisely to prevent the reflection of merely existent facts, whose falsity is not even judged according to any theory, from fraudulently claiming, *faute de mieux*,³ the very meaning whose non-existence is so often the object of these theorems.

Perhaps I could draw your attention to the significance which the concept of the ‘human being’ [*der Mensch*] has taken on today, and which I addressed in an essay, ‘The Jargon of Authenticity’, which appeared some time ago in *Die Neue Rundschau* and which I turned into a book of the same name, with the subtitle *On German Ideology*, which will be published in November in the ‘Edition Suhrkamp’ series,⁴ and in which I think I managed to show something, namely the connection between immanent philosophical and social analysis on the one hand and ideology critique on the other. In this book – and I am only telling you this to illustrate the specific nature of ideology today, and at the same time the tasks of an ideology critique – I dealt with the concept of the human being, the only one that counts, and at least tried to show – you yourselves must judge whether or not I succeeded in this – how the assertion that it is always a matter of the human being and nothing else, that only the human being matters, that this, if one could one day conceive a typology of ideologies, is what one might call a complementary ideology; because, in this world that is completely dominated by social objectivity, it is precisely not the human being, the individual subject, that matters. That is why – purely through the language, the tone, that a word like ‘human’ takes on in linguistic configurations – there is an impression of the opposite, namely that the machinery in which we are actually viewed purely as prospective customers, that this really exists for our sake, and that this is where the purpose of it all lies. The interesting thing here is that, if one examines such things seriously, one must do so in an extremely nuanced fashion.

It is precisely the most brutal phenomena that can only be grasped adequately through an extremely high degree of sensitivity and nuance; and here I will say that the important and telling thing is that, when the human being is presented as something meaningful, this concept of the human is thus robbed of any meaningful relationship, and it seems as if one need only say 'a human being' with a verbal roll of the eyes, as it were, and this will prove how meaningful a human is. The simple reason for this is that, as soon as the ideologues claimed some positive transcendence on the part of this human being, it would immediately bring them into conflict with the ruling state of enlightenment, or rather jadedness, among their consumers. So they have no choice but to employ their taboo words, their sacred words, as precisely that – as sacred words – because any attempt to define their content in some way or other would immediately turn into an outright lie, which would immediately bring all the fun to an abrupt end. This also shows you a very peculiar dialectic, in the sense that, because the existent *tel quel*, the way it is, is made the ideology of itself today, when there are not really any meaningful ideologies left, the ideology of truth moves extremely close, creating the impression that one has only to pull a little and the ideological veil will fall. But it strikes me as a sociological law that, the thinner the veil between reality and ideology becomes, the more difficult it becomes to destroy this veil, and that if there is no ideology left anyway, as it were, then the ideological, that is, reified consciousness will have reached its greatest height. If I am not mistaken, this phenomenon is one reason why ideology critique must primarily and essentially become language critique – to an extent that Karl Kraus already saw and aimed for as an artist, though in his case this was still separate from the theoretical consciousness of society; and this critique must be informed by an explicit consciousness of society if it is to be truly fruitful. The antagonisms of which I have spoken – let me repeat this – are, at least in the most developed countries, no longer directly visible as antagonisms of property and lack, even though, as I told you, there is still no absence of – how should I put it? – decisive proof of antagonistic circumstances today; rather, they reveal themselves through the growth of the extremes of social power and social powerlessness, which leave those people who, according to ideology, are all that matters in a state of complete nullity – as indeed the idea of 'nothingness' usually accompanies the ideologies of the human being or, as they are more nobly termed, of existence [*Dasein*]. But I cannot carry out this critique now; I can refrain with a clearer conscience because in a few months you will have opportunity to read this for yourselves, demonstrated, as it were, by the

most philosophically substantial carrier of this sort of ideology, at least in German.⁵

But if one asserts, as I just tried to show you, that social antagonisms still exist and are extremely effective, then one is immediately tempted to suggest – because they are so substantial – that one accept them as something directly present, as simple facts. But that – and I consider it my duty, on this central point, to address you as unideologically and honestly as I possibly can – would be just as wrong, in its own way, as the mistake I have criticized and whose correction is the purpose of ideology critique, namely to deny the existence of antagonisms and pretend that, thanks to technology, we have come so wonderfully far that there are no longer any contradictions, without people giving much thought to how technology alone is supposed to achieve that without substantially affecting the conditions of social production. On the other hand, there is also what one could describe as the danger of mythologizing those antagonisms, something strongly evident in notions that were still widespread in the Eastern bloc not so long ago, namely that in capitalist countries – in Chicago, for example – there were starving workers hanging around outside the factories or lying in the streets. In the east, this went so far that the major economic analyst Eugen Varga,⁶ who went against official eastern theory by crediting capitalism with an initially unlimited viability, was expelled from his position and banished for this prognosis, which has been fully confirmed in the meantime; and, if I am correctly informed, he was brought back to Russia only as a very old man after the death of Stalin and after the changes in Russia that you are all familiar with. Directly in parallel with these deformations one can observe in the east, one finds such constructions as the idea that obviously virulent social antagonisms, for example those in China, are treated as if they were not antagonisms at all but, rather – and the very word deserves to be exhibited – as ‘non-antagonistic’ contradictions. I did not invent this word, ladies and gentlemen. From what I am telling you here, one must surely draw one conclusion about the very fundamental questions we are dealing with, namely that one cannot hammer a theory into people against their own experience and that, as soon as the kind of discrepancies between theory and experience that I have described appear, when the theory of antagonisms runs amok, then something is wrong with the theory itself, at least in the established form that is imposed on people.

The task of a theory of society today – and this, I think, takes us to one of the central difficulties faced by the conception and formulation of such a theory of society today – is that it must

incorporate even what is contrary to it, what deviates from it, and, if one proceeds from this point, one can open up a new way to the concept of dialectics as a theory that is capable of incorporating even those elements which are theoretically contrary to it at first. This would not be the worst definition of dialectics, if indeed one insists on such a definition, and at this moment the concept of dialectics is meant subjectively, in the sense of a theory of society; but naturally the concept of dialectic also has an objective meaning, namely the antagonistic process of society itself, of which I would like to remind you. In other words, one must also grasp the rupture between theory and experience theoretically – which is a great deal to demand of a theory. In the structure of the east which I described to you, which certainly includes the phenomena one keeps hearing about, namely that the naïve citizens of the Soviet Union believe that, for example, the radio or underground trains were invented in Russia and that the Moscow underground is the first of its kind, then this is still relatively simple. What I mean is that here one can simply say that the fetishization of theory in relation to experience and the facts corresponds directly to the ruling clique's need for power and thus constitutes an ideology of obfuscation, an ideology of idealization, in the most basic and concrete sense. But such innocent and, I would say, clumsy explanations are not sufficient in the area I am telling you about, namely the rupture between theory and experience. Rather, one probably has to say that, on the one hand, people are disappointed and sceptically opposed to theories that try to talk them into ideologies, they distrust theory formation in general, but that, on the other hand, they are increasingly incapable of experience in subjective and anthropological terms, that their ability to have a primary experience is withering away, and they are thus willing to make do with substitutes for experience which no longer enable a confrontation between what they view as experience and what is actually the case.

The few people who have theoretically elaborated on this loss of experience, this imminent loss of experience, and whom you know to be connected in their theoretical convictions – such as Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and myself – have done so at such length and in such detail that I can restrict myself here simply to emphasizing the value of such insights within an overall theoretical conception of society, without having to repeat the individual reasons for this loss of experience. There is just one curiosity that I cannot refrain from mentioning: an Italian philosopher, Count Castelli, who is strongly influenced by German essential ontology and certainly does not proceed from the social-theoretical considerations with which I am molesting you here, wrote a book about the concept

of time in which he develops the thesis that, in fact, people today are no longer truly capable of experiencing time at all.⁷ Some have even gone so far as to view the current boom in the metaphysics of time as a form of complement to this inability, arguing that people today think so much about time and therefore consider it the key to being because time has essentially become problematic for them and attracts thought because the continuity of temporal experience has fallen apart – a thesis with which I would certainly agree, albeit with the modification that I think this collapse of temporal experience ultimately refers back to the form taken by the work process today. It is naturally a great deal to ask if, as I do, one demands that a theory should incorporate these aspects, the near inevitable deviations from every self-contained, thoroughly structured theory – or that must be the initial impression, at least – and this diminishes the plausibility of the theories themselves and now forces us to address in earnest the concept of theory itself, and especially, in connection with that, the concept of theory as a system. On the other hand, it must be said – and perhaps this is actually a justification for a theory that has so little to do with the traditional concept of theory – that, without such a theory, it is impossible to deal with the extraordinarily complex situation of our historical moment at all. And let me add one more thing: the reflections on this which I presented to you in the last session, and which I would like to think that some of you found somewhat plausible and convincing, that they are really parts of such a theory of society, with the methodological peculiarity that, in them, the theory refers to itself through critical reflection.

Now we must move on – the timing is very unfavourable, as the lecture is almost over and we must really begin a new section – to an examination of such concepts as a theory of society, the system and everything connected to these things. If you think back for one second to what I have just told you about the necessity for the theory to incorporate the irresolvable elements, those aspects to which the theory qua theory cannot be reduced, one might also take the view that theory today is forced to be at once system and non-system – a system in so far as it must express the wholeness and unity of society that we encounter, or at least encounter as a potential, and to which I referred you, but on the other hand also a non-system in so far as it has transpired that this wholeness itself reproduces the antagonisms, that this unity itself, in its absoluteness, creates precisely this division by its own nature. One might also say that a theory of society must itself be rational in a twofold sense: on the one hand, it reveals the rationality of society, as indeed everything in this society happens as it should, according to its rules; on the other hand, it is also rational

in the sense that it does not simply acknowledge the elements of irrationality displayed by society in countless aspects as a corrective – that would leave us with precisely the sort of patchwork theory with which we cannot content ourselves – but rather, in principle at least, elaborates the irrationalities of the prevailing society from the very nature of its own rationality. So that would really be the idea, or, if you prefer, the model or archetype, of the only theory of society that seems possible and certainly necessary to me today. And I would like to take this opportunity to say that this demand for theory was at least registered by Max Weber, to the extent that, with a degree of freedom and loyalty, one could interpret what he did, including his own doctrine of science, as showing that he held on to the idea of theory in the sense of a rational unlocking of society, in the sense of ‘understanding’, as he put it, but at the same time refrained from giving this the form of a system of society and instead tried to demonstrate the entire structure micrologically using individual models that he constructed. That would be a recuperation of the concept of the ideal type, as it were, in terms of what knowledge is possible today, albeit a recuperation that I know Max Weber would certainly fight tooth and nail if he were alive today.

LECTURE 10

2 July 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the last session we began to apply the more or less material-sociological reflections we had undertaken with reference to a theory of society, and I tried to ask what that means for the concept of our theory, and at the same time to investigate the concept of theory itself, the traditional concept of theory. We had reached the stage where the indifference point we were confronted with, in comparison to the naïve notion of theory, was that reality which ultimately dictates the rules for any theory that seeks to grasp or recognize it, is internally contradictory, and that any theoretical construct whose highest value is the absence of contradictions will therefore contradict its very object, even as it flatters itself that it has mastered it with the utmost logical elegance and soundness. One could say that reality is itself both logical and alogical. Now that is nothing really new; it is an inherent structural determinant of bourgeois society. Marx already viewed society as rational and examined its own claim that everything is in order, with commodities being exchanged for their equivalents, and – and this is exactly the dialectical salt in Marx's theory of society – showed, or at least tried to show, that precisely because everything proceeds as it should, because equal is exchanged for equal, everything is not in order, for the principle of equality results in inequality, whether created or reproduced. This may remind you of a thought I sought to convey to you in the previous session with greater or lesser success, namely that social antagonisms establish themselves because of their integration, not

in spite of it, perpetuating and possibly consolidating power structures within society. But, in the older type of theory, this aspect I just mentioned did not emerge as clearly as I think it must emerge today; that is, and this is historically quite understandable, people tried for too long to come to terms with an internally contradictory and antagonistic society using a concept of contradiction-free and unified theory. Incidentally, you can see that the assertion of the link between rationality and irrationality, indeed their interconnection, is not something that was inserted into the equation after the event by the fact that, in the classically rational formulation of a theory of society, namely Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, in addition to the laws of exchange that he defines objectively, the author already introduced the principle of fair play, which subsequently entered everyday language, even the German language. So this means that the entire construction applies only if certain irreducible irrational moral laws are followed, laws whose essence is that one should follow the rules of the game.

One could say that, here in particular, one finds one of the central reasons why such strictly rational models are no longer adequate for understanding society, namely that society is increasingly disregarding its own defined rational rules. When Hitler, for example, to give you a very drastic illustration – we analysed these things a little in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*¹ – makes a contract, then declares that he hopes Mr Chamberlain, or whoever it might be, will be reasonable and see sense, then reason here no longer means upholding a rational contract based on rational laws; rather, if one analyses it, it means he should recognize that he, Mr Hitler, has more numerous and more powerful cannons, at least at the time of presenting such demands, and that Chamberlain should therefore yield to his power. So, in this phase, the same reason that once insisted precisely on following the rules is emancipated from keeping to the rules and now becomes what it was not in its better days: a recognition of the respectively prevailing, blind power. If I can just skim a little cream off the top of that for a philosophical theory of society, I would say it shows that, even a category such as reason, which was taken as an invariant formal-logical rule, for example by Kant, as a permanently self-identical and eternal category, changes with the structures of society. So this means that, if one is the weaker party facing an outwardly incredibly powerful and aggressive dictatorship, the reasonable thing to do is precisely the opposite of the concept of reason, the contradiction of reason as classically understood, though with the addition of the specifically fascist dynamic, where reason itself now turns into manifest unreason.

So, that covers the relationship between rational and irrational elements in society, and I consider it especially important for you to understand that rational and irrational elements do not exist alongside each other in society, as one might think after a more or less topographical assessment of society; certainly that is also true. What I mean is that, on the one hand, there is an incredible degree of technological rationalization while, on the other hand, say in the organization of agriculture, agriculture can only survive if the weaker family members, women and children, are exploited in the most irrational fashion because the family is respected as having absolute value; that is an example of this coexistence of rationality and irrationality. But what I mean is something much more far-reaching – and I think it also shows you a little what I have in mind when I speak of a philosophical theory of society as opposed to a descriptive theory of society – namely that the rationality within the prevailing conditions, that is, rational work, calculation, financial accounting, where the stronger party receives the maximum benefit, that this rationality itself naturally produces the irrational elements; or, if it does not produce them directly, it is at least the reason why, despite all the particular and partial rationalizations in our society, the irrational sectors survive, indicating in a sense that the whole, in all its rationality, has remained something irrational after all.

The fact that the reality which the theory needs to grasp is an antagonistic reality in this very radical sense, a sense that can be dated back to the concept of its own reasonableness, demands a dialectical theory, as formulating a dialectical theory of society, quite simply means understanding the inner workings of society in such a way that one elaborates these irrationalities from its own concept. So this brings us to the same matter I explained to you in the last few sessions, insisting that one of the central tasks of a theory of society, and of sociology in general, is to understand even those aspects that seemingly contradict a unified theory formation. And a theory that is capable of grasping precisely those things that elude the traditional concept of deductive theory is the exact elaboration of this paradox, if you will. That is really what can be expected of a dialectical theory – which is anathema to the conventional attitudes with which we are all infused – and this is the real effort which I would say that both philosophy and sociology demand of you. In this respect, I would think, there is in fact no difference between the two disciplines – I will not go into the reasons for that now. At any rate, the task with which you, with which we, are confronted is quite simply to liberate ourselves from the notion that, simply put, the best and truest and most adequate theory is that which is most coherent

and contradiction-free in an immediate sense, without consideration for what the reality actually is and what reality imposes on us.

Naïve thinking – and this naïveté, ladies and gentlemen, by no means refers merely to pre-scientific thinking but, rather, is a naïveté that I would argue is possibly hardened and consolidated in us by the traditional concept of science and its classificatory structures – insists on a kind of choice. Here we are expected to choose all or nothing, to think in binary terms. So the demand is to select either theory in the sense of a contradiction-free, possibly deductive or at least unanimously organized system or, if one stumbles on the fact that this system is not without problems, that something is lacking, one immediately throws the entire system overboard and says, ‘So, our faith in systems’ – people especially like to speak of faith – ‘has been shaken, which means that we must do without any system.’ So all one has to do is start with a clean slate, without prejudices, as they say, collect facts and arrange them into an order. This form of binary thinking is precisely what undialectical thinking means, namely a form of thinking which simply distinguishes between two opposing possibilities and demands that we choose between them, as it were, without asking whether the extremes thus defined might not actually condition one another, or, as one says in the language of dialectics, whether they are not mutually mediated. It seems to me – and you will forgive me if I speak in a rather pedagogical manner, though on the other hand it is not pedagogical, because I am simply stating it very openly – it seems to me that, of all the thinking habits with which people generally approach theory, one of the most dangerous is to do so with demands that stem from their own needs rather than being immanent to theory itself, in particular such needs where one simply cannot say *a priori* whether a theory will fulfil them. For example – to describe a very common and, in my opinion, very dangerous way of thinking – when people demand time and again that a theory should give us instructions for correct action and possibly a correct practice here and now, it is dogmatically assumed that theory is capable of this, whereas one can certainly imagine situations which are so deadlocked that the famous direct transition from theory to practice is impossible, and that theory consequently does not simply lead to consequences, except that life will become a little more uncomfortable because one sees that all exits are blocked and no theory can provide the keys to them. And this leads precisely to that anti-theoretical stance which says, ‘Well, if a theory doesn’t give us that, we’d rather throw it away altogether.’ Obviously, this may serve only to reinforce the dull-minded insistence that things are simply one way and no other. It is the same if one approaches

theory with a need for absolute security of knowledge, be it a security elaborated from a concept purely on the model of mathematics or a security of absolutely indisputable facts, and it is highly characteristic of this way of thinking that it essentially always operates with this 'all or nothing' approach. So either a theory should produce everything at once of its own accord or, if it cannot do that, if the slightest bit of reality protrudes from it, as it were, in such a way that it cannot be elaborated entirely from the theory itself, then the whole thing is worth nothing at all. Brecht once formulated that rather brilliantly with reference to bourgeois thinking in general, saying that only bourgeois thinking is actually radical, not a critique of bourgeois thinking, which the members of the bourgeoisie find so radical, so worrying and terribly dangerous.² I think this is especially true of the attitude towards the concept of theory. This 'all or nothing' – I already touched on this – is quite simply the demand that theory should satisfy the need for absolute security of knowledge, instead of knowledge being determined by what is actually known, however difficult that may be to achieve. According to the traditional view, one might say that these certainly correspond to the system deduced mathematically from the concept or, on the other hand, pure facticity. This way of thinking, the traditional way, is quite simply incapable of behaving openly, open in the sense that it does not replace the matter itself with the criterion of consistency of theory or knowledge but, rather, considers the matter itself – which is naturally always mediated by our means of acquiring knowledge – the *terminus ad quem*, not the method one chooses to apply.

I think that, if I had to describe to you what the predominant mood in the entire social sciences is today, and if I simultaneously had to define as concisely as possible the point of difference where the way of thinking that I espouse, and which I share with a few other people who are also familiar to you, diverges from this prevailing habit, then it is this: for countless people working in the field of social science, it is more important to have something like a unified theory covering as many things as possible, with enough space to accommodate whatever facts one finds, than to have, instead of such a sociological theory designed to act as the measure of what is true or false, a theory of society that is not so unified in itself, namely one that reflects the nature of society. This glorification of unified knowledge at the cost of truth, which is not unified, essentially amounts to what I wish to describe as the fetishization of science. The general fetish character of commodities, which has long since spread to countless so-called intellectual goods, this being precisely what has reduced intellectual goods to intellectual goods – this fetish character

has finally also taken over the concept of science, which is now being replaced by its own object and has taken it as an absolute in an act of obedience and respect towards its own rules.

This is roughly the context in which I would ask you – if I might speak a little topologically – to see the matters concerning the critique of current academic life which I outlined in my text ‘Philosophy and Teachers’,³ and especially in ‘Note on the Humanities and Education’ in *Interventions*.⁴ I will not expand on the things I wrote there but instead tell you a little about this change in the function of science, for I think that, if one takes my earlier demand seriously, the one concerning an open approach, then this is possible only by adopting a very pointed critical stance towards science that respects it but does not fetishize it. Just let me add that the ‘open’ aspect, which I increasingly tend towards viewing as a key concept, that this – and this is perhaps very telling – by no means comes from the philosophical tradition, although philosophers such as the American John Dewey⁵ have used the term, but it was actually – in our German tradition, at least – Hölderlin⁶ who used it with the emphasis I wish to give it; and I would say that he is of incomparably greater weight, philosophically speaking, than is thought by those who believe they can consign him to the special realm of poetry, but also – and this is almost worse – by those who would presume to mythologize him.

So now, *ad vocem* science: you must be aware, ladies and gentlemen, that the concept of science has gone through an immense change of function, and that this category too, whose incredible practical successes have increasingly led it to tout itself as the only manifestation of truth, that this category too is interwoven with the whole of social life and the totality of consciousness, and that it takes on highly varied meanings within it. First of all, the concept of science was used polemically against the dogmatism of the Church and the related realist philosophy. So its point was that one should not presume anything that is not seen *clare et distincte* by the individual, the individually thinking, judging mind; and, at the beginning of the modern age, the leaders of the two feuding schools of philosophy, namely Bacon and Descartes, were entirely in agreement on that point. Both of them directed the concept of science in the same way against merely traditional, dogmatically adopted knowledge. Then, in a process shaped primarily by the increasingly consistent development of the great rationalist systems, the concept of science as the production of the world from pure thought established itself in more and more radical ways, finally becoming the concept of ‘absolute knowledge’⁷ as an absolute consciousness and absolute reality that produces itself from itself. Naturally this is

already implicit in the idea of mathematical deducibility that runs through the whole of Spinoza's philosophy,⁸ and, perhaps in far more exemplary fashion, perhaps most blatantly, in a sense, in Leibniz's theorem,⁹ which essentially boils down to the fact that every monad – and, to speak with a certain largesse, without overly close analysis of the object itself – that every individual really carries the entire universe within itself without realizing it and can produce it purely from within itself, through its own thought. From Leibniz one learns about such things as pre-established harmony or the doctrine of the representation of the universe in the monad, but, if you learn that in the usual philosophy-historical way, you will often not realize that this amounts to this incredible claim that science, as the epitome of the self-generating whole, equals the absolute truth. Consequently the Leibnizian concept of a *mathesis universalis*, a rational universal science, is connected to the doctrine of pre-established harmony and the productive imagination of the monad in a way that is far from merely superficial; rather, these two major tendencies in Leibniz's philosophy are directly linked in their innermost motivations. So this now grows into the doctrine of the absolute character of science as the attempt to elaborate the totality of everything that exists from the philosophical concept itself, as first shown formally and expounded methodologically with the greatest precision by Fichte, before Hegel attempted, with a force that was never achieved again, to apply it in every detail. If you read Fichte or Hegel, if you read phrases such as 'doctrine of science'¹⁰ or 'science of phenomenal consciousness'¹¹ in Hegel, you can only understand the concept of science if you perceive its twofold character, namely that, on the one hand, it follows on from the incredible progress of rational science made in the modern age, but, on the other hand, it is almost taken for granted from the outset, presenting the claim that this science itself is actually the phenomenal absolute – a claim, moreover, that, in a certain sense, was already present in the far more cautious and less – how shall I put it? – less self-indulgent Kant, for Kant doubts and critically analyses all manner of things, but never questions the validity of science itself.

I cannot provide you with a history of the concept of science here, so let me just say this much: with the decline of the great idealistic philosophy, all that really remains of this equation of science with truth is the absolute certainty of the individual insights as its truth. This means that the sole concern of the science which later developed from this philosophy, naturally both through immanent development and, even more so, from the immanent development of the individual sciences, was that the scientific method and its results should be

in order, be coherent, regardless of how accurately this grasped the matter in question, and without one's consciousness becoming entangled in doubts as to how far it could even be grasped adequately as a matter. One might also say what the fetishism of science means is that the division of labour which led to the separation of a specialist branch, namely science with its fixed methods, has been turned into an absolute, or at least glorified, such that this newly grown branch, science, from which anyone remotely organizationally involved in it derives not only their material existence but also their social status and their prestige, that this branch is the *index sui* or the *index veri et falsi*, without genuinely reflecting on its own preconditions. And this is taken to its ultimate conclusion in modern positivism, which, if one describes it in these terms, essentially states that philosophy should really consist of nothing but the epitome of scientific procedures, not reflected upon but only abstracted and distilled. One might even say that science, in the context of the overall nominalist tendency to focus on the outward aspects of things and to slur any insight into their inner workings as speculation, becomes its own most precious commodity, the *summum bonum*, the more it actually dispenses with truly understanding anything. Similarly, in the social sciences, to put this in a specific social-scientific context, it was one of the most famous sociologists of the previous generation, Emile Durkheim, who made it a criterion of sociology that it does not grasp but, rather, works on its objects *comme des choses*, that is, from the outside and using merely classificatory methods, refraining from actual comprehension,¹² which is dismissed as a sort of metaphysical prejudice; so here the approach of science towards its *terminus ad quem*, namely the unlocking of the matter itself, is directly made the norm. One could also say that the method posits itself in place of the truth while, in reality, it is really nothing but the means for the recognition of the truth. But the tendency to substitute means for ends is, for very profound social reasons, so much a part of the foundations of bourgeois thought as such that the habit I just defined to you, as a universal tendency of bourgeois thought, probably needs to be addressed.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you not to misunderstand me, and especially not to take my criticism, my very fundamental and also mediated criticism of science, as anything like a rejection of science in favour of intuitionism or some other such thing. I would like to think that the continuity of what I am saying protects me somewhat from such misunderstandings by the well disposed among you, but, on the other hand, the fact that one cannot say everything in a single statement means that one repeatedly finds oneself in danger of such

misunderstandings. So, let me make this highly necessary correction: naturally it is not as if the methods of science have nothing to do with the object, for the sharpening of scientific tools, the refinement of the criteria one uses in order to assess the validity of scientific theorems, of course means that something of the matter asserts itself. This means that what is ruled out as impossible by these criteria are very often simply the 'idols', as Bacon puts it,¹³ that place themselves in the way of our knowledge of the objects and deceive us. So it would be an abstract separation of subject and object, of method and matter, if I said that the development of methodology as such simply prevents an understanding of the matter; in a sense, the fact that the method becomes more and more critically refined, and rules out more and more things that are not methodologically applicable, brings us closer to the matter, which is why I have no intention whatsoever of opposing the sharpening of scientific standards with a 'loosening' of scientific norms, criteria and validity. But it does ultimately make a decisive difference whether the method and its consistency, the coherence of the method, is made the *summum bonum* of the scientific method, with everything measured in relation to this ideal, or whether reflection on a matter might possibly be capable not of abolishing or suspending the scientific rules, but of pushing them towards a reflection that reveals objective areas in which the norms established by science are simply not adequate to grasp reality. If one proceeds from what I have told you – namely that the scientific method would come closer to the heart of the matter through its own critical purification, if I can put it like that – if one simply and straightforwardly infers from this that, the more purely the scientific method is designed, the more smoothly and directly it leads us to the matter itself, then this is precisely where the mistake lies, which leads to science obstructing our view of the truth. And what really leads me to oppose the currently prevailing social-scientific ambitions of sociological systems in particular is their fundamental assumption that the most elegant – taking the word in its mathematical sense – possible construction of the scientific apparatus corresponds to a higher degree of truth, so that, wherever this form of elegance *more mathematico* is dispensed with, it has a fundamental effect on the truth of the thoughts themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am well aware that I have managed to demonstrate this to you only in formal terms. I also realize that I genuinely owe it to you at least to illustrate this point, which is of central importance for a theory of society, using a concrete model. I will do that in the next session and will refer to the teachings of Talcott Parsons, who, as you may know, sees it as one of the most

essential methodological aspects of the so-called human sciences to develop them from a certain minimum of categories; and I will try to show you next time, with reference to a central point, that this is impossible and why it is impossible.

LECTURE 11

7 July 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin today by presenting the problem I would like to discuss with you in the most concise and clear terms, because it is important to me that you truly understand very clearly what I wish to convey to you. I wish to show you that the ideal of the scientific method which is familiar to you from the positive sciences, especially the natural sciences, does not contribute to the truth in the social context but, rather, can counteract the truth in a determinable sense, because the structure of this context does not correspond to what the traditional ideal of science – which is not itself philosophical – demands.

To this end, I would like to refer back briefly to the tradition of philosophy. In the *Discourse on Method* by Descartes,¹ who has in a sense remained canonical for scientifically oriented philosophical thought, despite all changes, the third of his principles, the third rule, is ‘to guide my thoughts in an orderly way by beginning with the objects that are the simplest and easiest to know and to rise gradually, as if by steps, to knowledge of the most complex, and even by assuming an order among objects in cases where there is no natural order among them.’² It is very interesting, and I will point out to you in passing that Descartes himself was evidently not fully at ease with this principle, as he said that he assumed this order, this gradual succession in the matter itself, even where one cannot suppose such a gradual ascent naturally, that is, in the matter itself. If one reads a text such as the *Discourse on Method*

through a magnifying glass – and I think that the only fruitful way to read philosophical texts at all is to read them extremely closely, in a certain kind of immersion – then one can already discover in this unassuming statement the very thing we are considering today, namely the conflict between the postulates of scientific method on the one hand and the structure of the matter on the other. This problem was simply spirited away by the subsequent rationalists – by Spinoza in the dogmatic assertion that the order of ideas and the order of things is the same, and by Leibniz in a far more refined and detailed way by applying the principle of continuity, the principle that nature does not make any leaps, and that this leaplessness in things themselves corresponds to a leapless way of thinking. And then, as his next rule, Descartes demands that, ‘in all cases, [one should] make such comprehensive enumerations and such general reviews that [one is] certain not to omit anything.’³ It is hence the postulate of a gradual progression that makes no leaps, from the perspective of a possibly attainable completeness [...]. And Leibniz then refined this, in keeping with the advances in mathematics, by replacing this graduated, I would almost say semi-medievally hierarchical sequence of subject areas with infinitesimal rather than gradual transitions, infinitely small crossings of boundaries, which are intended genuinely to allow completely seamless transitions from one thing to the next. For now, I will pass over one problem that will become central later, namely the assumption that the first thing is at once the simplest, or, put differently, that the intrinsic aspects from which one would have to proceed to the epiphenomena are at once the simplest, and everything else follows from them. Perhaps you have noticed that, in Descartes, the dogmatic, arbitrary assertion accompanies the openness of the first great discoveries with unmistakable clarity. But I will concern myself all the more with the demand for an absence of leaps or the demand for continuity, of infinitesimal continuity, in Leibniz. For although these philosophies themselves – after Hume’s critique,⁴ then Kant’s, and then the entire positivism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – are barely recognized as valid for the individual scientific disciplines, it is nonetheless the case, peculiarly enough, that a postulate such as the one I just picked out for you continues to be relatively undisputed in the sciences, especially in the organization of the sciences. It is a strange business that while, on the one hand, this specifically scientific pathos, if one wants to call it pathos, this emphasis on being scientific in the specific sense, has something so anti-philosophical about it that many positivist scientists essentially mean it as an insult when they call a philosopher a philosopher – this has happened to me in various contexts of late,

so I am speaking from experience – and yet, on the other hand, it is precisely these positive sciences, because they have become so distant or estranged from the advances in philosophical reflection, that unthinkingly carry all manner of baggage with them from the very philosophy they have declared obsolete – baggage that now, in fact, obstructs the matter itself. Within the field of the social sciences, then, in the form that prevails today, it is more or less expressly demanded that the so-called human sciences – as one calls them, using a highly problematic phrase – join together as seamlessly as possible, that they form a type of continuum; there initially seems to be a solid support in this term ‘human science’, because these sciences seem to share a basic category, namely the human being, which – so they conclude – remains the same thing whether it is the substrate of biology, psychology, sociology or economics. In terms of established scientific logic, this also means that, as far as possible, the same categories should appear in all these so-called sciences, and – this would be the mathematicizing continuation – the smaller the number of basic categories used for this, the greater the scientific dignity of this entire complex known as the ‘human sciences’.

This ideal I have just outlined for you was explicitly formulated in one of the most effective, or probably *the* most effective, systematic exposition of sociology that exists today, namely that of Parsons,⁵ which you have all at least heard of, and which many of you specifically concerned with sociology have probably looked at more closely. In two texts – produced in collaboration with the extremely epistemologically oriented American, formerly Austrian, psychoanalyst Heinz Hartmann⁶ – Parsons essentially postulated the demand for such a uniform conceptual system, both for depth psychology and for sociology. So here you have very clear demands for a unified method covering several scientific branches, characterized by uniform categories of conceptualization. The crucial point I wish to show you is that, in a society like ours, the individual and society are not only not in direct harmony but, in their interests and, one might also say, in their internal composition, stand in such contradiction to each other that this demand for a scientific continuum with a uniform conceptualization does not take us any closer to the matter, or rather deeper into the matter, but instead becomes more superficial at both poles – that of psychology and that of sociology – the more it adapts itself to Parsons’s postulate. First I will express this logically in the simple form that, if Parsons’s demand were objectively justified, then the basic categories of society and the social point of view would automatically be the most productive for psychology, and psychological categories would conversely be equally productive for sociology.

I have no intention of leaving it at the formal assertion that this is not the case, and I will at least show you briefly in what sense this is not the case, to give you a slightly more concrete notion of what the necessity of dialectics means in the relationship between the individual scientific disciplines. Because I must be brief here, and only grant this matter its appropriate position in these somewhat general reflections on social theory, let me refer to my essay 'The Relationship between Psychology and Sociology',⁷ which appeared in the volume *Sociologica I*, the Festschrift for Horkheimer, but also the one of the revision of psychoanalysis from the volume *Sociologica II*.⁸ So those of you who are interested in a further, concrete analysis of this situation should look up these texts. What matters to me here is quite simply that psychology leads deeper into the structure of the individual the more it ignores what could, in a superficial sense, be referred to as social aspects of individual psychology. In the language of analytical psychology we call this 'ego psychology'. In Freudian theory, the ego is that part of the overall structure of the psyche that largely corresponds to consciousness and whose function in the individual's life process is essentially to test reality, to distinguish between what is in keeping with reality and what is not. According to Freud's very plausibly demonstrated theory, this zone we call the ego, which also reacts to social stimuli in a clear and directly observable manner by acting as the authority that supervises the individual's adjustment to society, is actually an extremely thin layer, while the entire force of the drives, the entire libidinous energy from which the ego energy is simply siphoned off psychogenetically, lies beneath it and is not so willing to participate in this reality testing. So now people have genuinely attempted – and this was primarily the achievement of the various so-called revisionist schools of psychoanalysis, for example that of Karen Horney⁹ and that of my former colleague Erich Fromm,¹⁰ or already that of Alfred Adler,¹¹ if you like, who initiated this form of revisionism – not to analyse the unconscious and thus the fundamental libidinous aspects and development in early childhood but, rather, to focus on the socio-psychological layer and the socio-psychological determinants, which in practice has actually led to some quick therapeutic successes. But it also became apparent that the genuinely deep conflicts, the things truly going on unconsciously inside the individuals, had not been accessed, and that the effects of such a therapy were actually more akin to a form of massage; one could use it to keep people reasonably fit for work and action, but without getting to the truly deep conflicts that lie within them. In other words, one can show in detail that the attempt directly to sociologize psychology failed

because individuals in their individual formation are largely archaic and are not connected to the socio-psychological stimuli around them so directly – which, incidentally, corresponds to the thesis of the essentially archaic and, if you will, static character of the unconscious formulated by Freud long before this controversy. This separation of the individual from society, the fact that the individual and its drive energy have remained so archaic that it has not kept up, in a sense, has social reasons itself, namely that same mechanism of universal refusal by culture which has repeatedly imposed not only its ontogenetically but also its phylogenetically archaic layer on them.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the fact is – please pay close attention and do not misunderstand what I am saying as primitive individualism – that this deep layer of the individual is, of course, also of a social nature; that is, the images and fundamental constellations one encounters in the unconscious themselves also refer back to social conflicts. But these social conflicts, as mediated through the father figure, are something completely different, something much older and far less tangible than the immediate ego conflicts one experiences through narcissistic injury, or if one goes through the so-called ego neuroses that so many people suffer from today and which are familiar to all of you under the name ‘inferiority complexes’ – if not from your own observations, then at least from current phraseology. In other words, what genuinely proves collective and social when one immerses oneself in psychology is not the immediate effect of society on the unconscious here and now but, rather, a pre-stored, sedimented form of social pressure and social control that is therefore much deeper, much harder to take away, but also impossible to access so readily through changes in social situations. One can conclude from this that, if one were to apply directly the categories of our present society – as attempted by Ms Horney, for example – to explain psychological conflicts, one would actually reach only external conflicts, not the specifically individual ones beneath them, those where one finds the truly collective conflicts; and this would prove, on the psychological side, that such a uniform concept formation between psychology and sociology is not [...]. On the other hand, the converse applies equally to sociology. For if one attempts – as people have constantly done, and as was the great illusion of Freud himself – to conduct sociology as a form of applied psychology, to think that it is nothing but the application of certain basic psychological categories to the forms and content of socialization, then one can certainly observe some quite productive and appealing things, for example in Freud’s brilliant text ‘Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis’,¹² which many of you have no doubt read, where Freud shows that a whole group of behaviours,

namely those described by Gustave Le Bon in his *Psychologie des foules*,¹³ can actually be explained quite adequately by mechanisms of individual psychology. But without wanting to diminish the significance of these findings by Le Bon and Freud in the slightest, and while conceding that they do make excellent contributions to an understanding of mass fascist movements, for example, they all deal only with a relatively limited area of socialization, namely the area where one is really dealing with unconscious or pre-conscious human reactions in very specific constellations, omitting precisely the aspect that generally determines their social actions: the pressure of social objectivity, mediated in relation to people's consciousness by their own rationale. In other words, wherever we can speak of the social in a specific sense, in the only cases where the constitution of such a special area of social science is actually justified, in fact, one always finds – because of an overall social constitution in which the interests of the individual people and the construction of the whole point in different directions – that the individual people are largely character masks, even where they believe they are acting as psychological persons, where they think they are free, act freely and are identical to themselves, and do only what is dictated by their function, their objective function within society. This, incidentally, is the true reason for the phenomenon that has become so terribly fashionable under the name of the 'role',¹⁴ except that the concept of role is so problematic because here something is hypostasized which derives from the structure of society, namely that people in this society have to do something that does not really correspond to who they are – and playing a role literally means that one has to do something, and pretend to be something, that one is not¹⁵ – and, if one leaves out this aspect, the concept of role loses all meaning. This concept of role, which is only explained by the fact that people are forced by the totality of society to act in a particular way that differs from how they would act of their own accord – I am saying that this concept of role, which very much depends on concrete social aspects, is being hypostasized as if the role were some kind of primal quality in the nature of society itself, which is roughly like trying to derive an ontology of reality directly from theatre.

But I do not wish to say any more about this problem today. I wish to show you in this context only that, if one undertakes such reflections as we are dealing with today, such catchphrases that people now assume can really crack everything open like a safe breaker, like the concept of role, that this is also a highly problematic affair. At any rate, individual psychology does not reach the decisive, socially relevant form of action, namely economic action. And it is

strange, and a very clear contrast to Parsons, that important social theorists who normally have extremely divergent views actually agree on this central point, even though my esteemed Harvard colleague Parsons has not, as far as I am aware, acknowledged this yet. Likewise, Marx rejects any attempt at a subjective or psychological reduction of social processes, which are elaborated from the thing to which humans are attached, namely the exchange relationship. Nor does someone like Durkheim, who was a completely differently oriented, very much positivistically oriented sociologist, accept the psychological perspective; rather, he defines the social – and herein lies something very brilliant in Durkheim's thought – as the aspect of *contrainte sociale*,¹⁶ the element of constraint, where society confronts us as something foreign, objectified and reified, something over which we have no power, which he contrasts emphatically with any idea of understanding social motivations, and hence with any psychology. His whole endeavour, the whole effort of Durkheim and the earlier Durkheim school grouped around *L'Année Sociologique*,¹⁷ lies precisely in always attributing sociologically relevant facts to social objectivity, which he objectifies to a collective consciousness and not to the individual psyche of separate socially acting humans.

In this context especially, I would like to add a word about Max Weber's stance on this problem, which is particularly instructive. Max Weber placed himself – for the very honourable reason that he believed it the task of sociology to understand social action, not simply to register it – in very sharp opposition to Durkheim's aforementioned thesis; he essentially inaugurated the concept of an understanding sociology that attempts, in a certain sense, to follow the overall movement of the positivist era and understand the facts of the subject's socialization from the perspective of the subject, much as Pareto¹⁸ did, and in a very similar fashion to how so-called subjective economy, the theory of marginal utility,¹⁹ tried to explain the whole of economic activity in terms of people's subjective needs and thus, ultimately, with their psychology. So in that sense, looking at the matter superficially, you might initially think that Weber's sociology contradicts what I have expounded to you. But, if you look more closely, this is not the case. You will all know that the key concept in Max Weber's thought is that of rationality. I will not address the highly ramified problematic of this concept now but will just point out one aspect that lies within the issues we have been examining in this lecture. For rationality is certainly identical to what I described to you earlier, when I was speaking of psychoanalysis, as the layer of the ego, or of reality testing, and rationality was good fodder for Max Weber – forgive the vulgarity – for it combined two splendid qualities

that were virtually irreplaceable for his methodological intentions. On the one hand, rational behaviour is understandable: in so far as a person behaves rationally, we can reconstruct their motivations, the course taken by their behaviour. So, let us say that someone is offered a position and then turns it down out of rational considerations, and we are somewhat acquainted with the circumstances; then we can reflect on these same considerations, and if we give some advice to the person in question and say, 'It's better for you not to take the position', then we will usually learn, to our shame – for people are extremely quick in such matters – that they will already have undertaken all the reflections that informed our well-meant advice and, as they are directly affected, will probably have done so much more consistently and rationally than even such worthy sociologists as myself are capable of doing. In that sense, rationality certainly represents the sphere of something understandable. On the other hand, rational social behaviour is always the behaviour that, as I told you, being adequate to reality, adapts itself more or less completely to the given objective social circumstances. So one generally behaves rationally – by following one's ego principle and not allowing one's drives or one's super-ego, one's conscience, to dominate – as far as, and only as far as, demanded by the objectively social structure, that is, the prevailing conditions of social production. What is actually mediated by this subjectively understandable rationality is really just the primacy of social objectivity over the subjective drives and the immediate subjective impulses, as highlighted so strongly by such objective theorists of society as Marx or Emile Durkheim, who agreed with him only on this one point. From this perspective, it is surely no coincidence that Max Weber, although he followed a similar concept of understanding to so psychologically disposed a thinker as Dilthey,²⁰ especially in the name of the objective clarity of the rational, vigorously set his form of sociology apart from psychology.

So now, *quod erat demonstrandum*, this closer examination of the problematics of psychology and sociology has shown that they by no means constitute that continuum, that direct continuum in which psychological and sociological facts can be understood using the same categories. Rather, the opposite is the case: the categories that apply to the one are invalid for the other. As I make this final point, please note that this opposition naturally still contains the same categories, if you will, but that the category which appears positively in the one [science] is negated in the other; in this sense, one can say in all simplicity that there is a true dialectical relationship within the matter itself, and that the attempt by Parsons to extract or impose on us a

form of unified science and unified continuum really leads to nothing but a smoothing over of social and psychological conditions where the opposition, the antagonistic relationship between the individual and society, which is also mirrored in the constitution of the relevant sciences, is simply conjured away in this fashion. Then it looks as if the world of the individual and society were a self-identical, uniform world, and through the predominance of scientific systems, of unified scientific concept formation, the decisive aspect of the matter – its own antagonistic character – is concealed.

I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that this adequately supports my thesis that so-called methodological questions are not irrelevant to the matter, that not every road leads to Rome, that one cannot proceed like clockwork from psychology to sociology and from sociology to psychology, but that considering the relationship between these disciplines means reflecting on them in such a way that one rises above the semblance of their uniformity and recognizes in the scientific structure those antagonisms which, in reality, obviously stem from the matter itself. In other words, then – and with this I will summarize what I have told you today – through the fact that the method becomes an end in itself, that the methodological scientific demands deduced by Descartes and Leibniz are elevated to criteria of a science, this very method finds itself in tangible opposition to the matter, and one is forced not to act unmethodically but to reflect critically on the concept of method itself.

LECTURE 12

9 July 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the last session we examined the relationship between scientific methodology and the matter itself, and I tried – if I may just recapitulate – to give you a more concrete idea of the thesis that the fetishization of methodology replaces insight into the matter by showing – or at least formulating the general train of thought, which one should obviously not consider a solid proof, for such proof must be very detailed – that the attempt to create a form of conceptual continuum in the so-called human sciences for the sake of a unified method can only fail.

Now, it goes without saying that this does not do away with the problem of method, and I think that, after stirring things up, as it were, I must now see to it that you do not isolate the motifs I have presented, and that you do not misunderstand me by supposing that I wanted to throw method as such on the scrap heap. Initially, after all, method simply means that one makes the forms of logic – the forms that have crystallized in logic itself, that is, the forms of correct concept formation, of adequate judgement and, above all, of the correctly drawn conclusion – into general principles, not only of the individual insights gained in these logical forms but also of demands aimed at knowledge as a whole, or at the ideal of science. For, because science or knowledge is impossible without thought, it is self-evident that the forms in which thought takes place remain valid as much for the aforementioned individual logical operations as for the overall context. Without that, thought would genuinely regress

to mere arbitrary reaction, the mere spontaneous idea [*Einfall*], or what Kant, in a passage where he polemicizes against Aristotle of all people, who was certainly methodical enough and from whom the entire cult of method essentially originated, terms 'rhapsodic thinking'.¹ Such a regression must be avoided, for it would actually mean that the thought would stop being a thought at all. Now, this motif is very often misused, especially in the usual view of science, to denigrate every isolated – or unconnected, as the logical positivists have become accustomed to terming it – insight simply because it carries the flaw of this rhapsodic, pre-logical and pre-methodical quality within itself. I certainly do not deny that such completely arbitrary insights exist, but I think the mistake that is made here is that the unconnected appearance of these insights – that is, the mode of their acquisition, the way in which they appear – is equated too easily with their objective structure, their truth content. I would say that, for a thinking that is in control of itself, that genuinely shows it is worthy of the name both in itself and in the matters it deals with, the so-called spontaneous ideas, which we are always told cannot be learned, are not the present from heaven which they have always been imagined as by the theories of intuition² in particular, or, on the other hand, through their defamation by theories of science; rather, in general, when one 'has an idea', it is often a case of thought processes that began unconsciously, far in advance, suddenly rising to the surface and becoming visible, in the same way a body of water sometimes does. And I would actually say that a thinking fundamentally shows its quality, its carat value, in whether the unintentional element is genuinely unintentional or, rather, represents the unity of the intentional and the unintentional within itself – that is, whether it possesses that quality of the spontaneity of the suddenly emergent yet still results from an unconscious continuity. So I would almost say that, the more intensive a way of thinking is, the more emphatically one thinks about something, the greater the chance – if I might once again put it in very vulgar, almost materialistic terms – that one will have an idea, that is, the spontaneous ideas could then be considered the fruits of these thoughts that continue working underground, not aware of themselves at all. Without this aspect of the suddenly and unconsciously emergent, which generally tends to be the new quality of a thought, there can be no such thing as productive thinking; on the other hand, if it is not present in this continuity, it is entirely worthless. But it seems to me that, wherever these so-called sudden ideas are truly of significant weight, they have stored up the power of unconsciously continuing thought processes inside themselves. So, in other words, there is something like a unity between a thinking that

is methodical and controlled by logic and that other aspect which, on its subjective side, I have characterized as the spontaneous idea, and which one might perhaps better refer to in its objective quality as the abruptly emergent contentual component of insight.

Nonetheless, I think that the reflections we have undertaken do not invalidate or devalue method as such, but they do circumscribe it in a particular sense. There is a distinction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* – which, to be completely honest, I viewed for many years, decades in fact, as an entirely superficial distinction, a distinction that was due merely to the overall architecture, something which is indeed quite abundant in Kant's critique of reason – namely the distinction between so-called formal logic and transcendental logic. For one could dismiss this distinction as superficial with the very concrete objection that, for Kant, the unity of the entire system lies in the concept of reason, and that reason – and thus logic – is always the same, which means that the basic categories of reason must always be the same too; and indeed Kant himself emphasized this by essentially using the same arrangement for purely logical categories and categories referring to objects. In keeping with this reflection, then, one might say that there is something artificial and unconvincing about this entire distinction. In reality, however – and here I am also giving you a pointer as to how you might read Kant fruitfully, and will try to shorten the path for you that I myself had to take before, after many decades, I truly began to understand Kant at all, to understand what experiences, what spiritual experiences lie beneath the surface of his critique of reason – there is actually a very substantial difference here, namely whether thinking genuinely refers to other things or keeps to itself. And the profound insight that Kant had here – and, I would say, an insight that contradicts his own doctrine of reason but which should be highlighted all the more because he discovered it precisely in relation to the construction of his total philosophy – seems to me that the character of reason itself changes according to how reason, in its progress, is substantially dominated by its own mechanism, that is, by formal logic expanded into a method, or whether this progress of reason confronts itself with the aspects of things, with that to which it refers, when it is not remotely clear a priori whether it actually follows these rules of logic and their expansion into a method. I do not know if I have succeeded in expressing this correctly; if one looks at the prevailing scientific logic, whose content I demonstrated to you in the last session using Parsons as an example, then one can say that there is naturally also a certain connection between the method, or the expanded formal logic, and the objective things, in so far as the formally logical

categories and the methodological demands, for example the unity of methodological progress or the minimum number of concepts to be used in the given case, then become the organizing principle for the objects. But – and this is seemingly a mere nuance, ladies and gentlemen – philosophy is such that the greatest things are located in the nuances, and that therefore the Devil is in the detail, and only in the details. It makes a difference – a decisive difference, albeit a mere nuance – whether the laws of formal logic and method are imposed on experiences as an ordering principle or whether their validity, their applicability, is constantly confronted with what the things themselves are saying.

So, to return to what I laid out for you in the last session, and to make it fruitful, if possible, for the considerations at which we have now arrived, the demand of formal logic and method is that of freedom from contradictions. Now it makes a decisive difference whether one applies this demand for complete consistency simply to the organization of the material *tel quel*, without regard for the specific character of the material as such, or whether one suspends this concern for consistency where it transpires that the phenomena themselves are as contradictory as I have attempted to show you, and that individual human existence and social human existence contradict each other. But logic and method gain honour nonetheless, for it has an obligation in turn to grasp this difference, this logical contradiction, this inapplicability of identically fixed categories to a manifold material, methodically and logically – that is, to find, as far as possible, a common perspective from which this alogicality itself becomes comprehensible again. If you ask me what I actually mean by method here – and probably the question will occur to many of you after this lecture – then I would say method means precisely that, on the one hand, one [...] the alogical or anti-logical, contradictory elements of reality, that is, one does not directly order them according to the categories of formal logic, but that, on the other hand, one does seek thinkingly to grasp these contradictions or deviations from formal logic; and when I speak of seeking to grasp them thinkingly, this refers us to a form of higher freedom from contradictions, because we are so bound up in the mechanism of our own thinking, much as a rhinoceros is bound up in the cumbersome growths and armour that surround it and from which it simply cannot escape. Now, we ourselves are a little like such rhinos or armoured dinosaurs, and perhaps this very aspect is an archaic aspect of us, perhaps we will one day manage to emerge from it; one could probably say that such attempts, for example the theory of relativity or modern quantum mechanics, are attempts at such an escape from this rhinoceros

armour. But, as long as we are still inside it, we have no choice but to incorporate the contradictions that come about between the thinking and the facts – into thinking once more, that is, at least to integrate them into the thought in such a way that these contradictions appear as part of reality but do not constitute the simple contradictoriness of the thought itself. And if dialectical philosophy has placed such value on the concept of totality or unity, I should say here that this is not simply the principle of identity gone wild, running amok, thinking it can subject everything in existence to its dictate, the dictate of the conceptual mechanism; rather, it also dictates that, on the one hand, thought is not fully absorbed by the facts and the facts are not fully absorbed by thought, but, on the other hand, thought itself, as logical thought, does not actually permit anything except an attempt to reconcile the two. And the attempt to master this very deep, by no means easily resolvable paradox, this attempt was made by dialectical philosophy, and I would say that this is actually what the specific significance of theory should be today. So, in other words, theory requires self-reflection in the sense that it neither dispenses with logical unity, in the sense of the merely arbitrary registering of individual experiences or observations, nor dogmatically presents the order of thoughts as the order of things themselves – as done in early rationalism and most classically by Spinoza, who literally taught that the order of things and the order of ideas are the same – but, rather, subjects these two aspects to constant reflection. As strange as it may seem: it is precisely this reflection that has essentially been absent from the realm of method and theory in general – with the one, still exemplary exception of Hegel, I must say – and if I had to name the aspect of thought or theory that is not naïve, that is scientific in a higher sense than the naïve execution of mental and observational operations, then I would say it consists precisely in this reflection which I have tried to show you.

But what makes this so difficult is that the idea of the absolute primacy of method is deeply tied to the idea of *prima philosophia*; it is no coincidence that, in Descartes, the idea of a rational philosophy elaborated from the cogito, from thought, is directly linked to the idea of methodological unity. Historically, if I may just touch on this, the need for method in order to progress from the simpler to the complex, and thus to understand the simple as the foundation and the complex as its consequence, goes back to the need for didactics, the need for teaching – in a specific sense, to the teaching method of the Pandects,³ the teaching method in which Roman law was represented as a system, even though the tension between the need for didactics and the need to express the matter itself is already

evident in the two versions of πρώτη οὐσία [prōtē ousia], first being, in Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle;⁴ he also states there that in the didactic sense, the sense of the construction of a doctrine, that which is directly given – the sensual intuitions – is the πρώτη οὐσία, while, proceeding from a reflection on the matter itself, he considers the uppermost metaphysical essences or categories to be this πρώτη οὐσία. In social reality, however, to move slightly away from these very speculative thoughts, it is by no means the case that the complex can always be directly explained by the simple. Capitalism is not simple at all; capitalism is something extremely complicated and extremely complex, and anyone who thinks they can reduce it to its simplest and most coherent concepts for the sake of a method, and understand the world from that perspective, is actually falsifying the real state of things for the sake of a structure of representation, for the sake of didacticism, for the sake of doctrine. The demand for a method is not, or rather not only, an extension of the demands of formal logic to the whole of a science or the whole of scientific operations and procedures; rather – because the method becomes independent and then, having already taken on a life of its own, is projected back, transferred back onto the oppositions – it comes from the fact that the matter is supposed to reveal itself through the supposed final preconditions of thought, namely the basic logical principles, when it is far from certain, far from clear, whether they are applicable to the matter. In that sense, the famous methodical thinking, in comparison to rhapsodic or aphoristic thinking, is the very last thing it wants to be, for it is dogmatic in a certain sense because it moves away from the matter and back into subjective reason. One might say that the notion of an absolute first thing is a fiction, and if, in the light of the things we have examined today, you make the effort to read the ten or twelve pages of the introduction to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* – the introduction, not the preface – then you will find that essentially, beneath the casing of the idealist system, this case against epistemology or method as the recourse to the simplest and most abstract, as the very first and most original thing, is presented superbly and very drastically by Hegel. Incidentally, when I said that capitalism is complicated and that it is wrong to view capitalism as a very simple model and take this simple model as one's point of departure, there is a certain contradiction between this and Marx's procedure, which – as many of you will know – proceeds from a relatively basic and relatively simple analysis, namely an analysis of the exchange relationship, and tries to elaborate not only the totality of economy from this analysis but even the totality of the social context, which also means power

structures. But, ladies and gentlemen, Marx does not actually make things as simple as those people who read only the first volume of *Capital* – and I suspect that this still applies to most readers of Marx – might think. My former teacher Grossmann⁵ described the Marxian method, and I think he was quite accurate in philological terms, as a method of progressive differentiation or progressive self-correction, and this has the exact meaning that ultimately the categories of circulating capital, the circulation process and the overall process of capital also feed back into the categories of capital production, into the capitalist production process. If we just consider for one second this aspect of the Marxian procedure epistemologically or philosophically, that is, from the perspective of a theory of society, then this means something very similar to what I have just explained to you with reference to didactics. It means this theory recognizes that what begins at the simplest level for purposes of representation is not actually the absolute first thing, for if the precondition for the whole of capital – a precondition that Marx asserts with an almost dogmatic and violent severity in many of his texts – is that the phenomena within the sphere of production are the key to everything else, for example the key to all the processes one conventionally assigns to the sphere of competition and which vulgar economics, unlike that of Marx, considers the primary sphere, then the upshot of this correction – if you apply what I have told you today – is that the first and simplest elements are in reality not the first at all. For if this first element, the process of production, is itself affected by the complicated processes detailed in the second and third volumes, then this is where the character of a kind of *prima philosophia* or system necessarily ends. So, in Marx, we certainly also find this aspect that one cannot deduce the entire world from exchange, as with some naïve scientific method, and as taught beyond the eastern border, in a very simple and obvious systematic approach. When I speak of what is taught in the east, by the way, I am still being too optimistic; as far as I can tell, the precedence of the production process is not taught properly at all, and what is left of Marx are really just bits and pieces in a way that beggars belief. But that is just an aside.

But now I would like to say that there is something unsatisfying about this methodological situation in Marx that I have just described to you, a certain ambivalence, for naturally one cannot see why Marx initially preaches the existence of a first thing, a key thing, and then modifies it afterwards. In doing so – and this applies to the whole structure of the Marxian system, if I can just apply this term to Marx – he made a concession to the prevailing scientific logic of his time, as it were, by supporting a unified method that proceeds from

the simple to the complex, and when he said that he had toyed with the dialectical method, he had actually toyed too little, not too much, something that one often finds in the world.⁶ That is, he did not go nearly far enough, otherwise he would not have presented next to each other in so disconnected a manner this entirely logical and pre-dialectical view, on the one hand, using primitive categories from which everything else is elaborated by deduction, and a correction after the fact, on the other. Instead, he should have combined these categories from the start in such a way that they would also have been dialectical in the sense that this absolute primacy of the sphere of production would have come to an end, though no doubt this would have greatly impaired the political effectiveness of the theory, which was meant to be a theodicy of the proletariat, after all, or at least became that. So that is what I want to say about the structural question, as it were, in the theoretical model one finds in Marx.

I would say that the concept of methodology we have treated here, as it generally manifests itself today, is turned on its head in the sense that it actually no longer reaches the things themselves, not least because it defers things ad infinitum and always says, 'Well, we haven't got that far yet, we can't do that yet.' It is always put off, and supposedly it will happen one day. But after a hundred and fifty years of this postponement, which is already codified in Comte, no sensible person can believe that this kind of scientific concept formation will ever catch up. On the other hand, however, this primacy of method as something in its own right within the actual practice of empirical social science has an extremely harmful consequence today, one I wish to point out to you, and which is also acknowledged by the more perceptive empirical sociologists in America – namely that the choice of topics for study, and the nature of the studies themselves, is based on the availability of methods, and that the methodological interest – that is, the interest in proving or disproving the utility of a method and possibly differentiating the method from one's interest in the substance of what one is trying to understand, namely society – takes very clear precedence. This, incidentally, is why, in America, countless empirical studies are duplicated and carried out again and again with slightly different instruments, and if there is a certain merit in the good old book *The Authoritarian Personality* within the whole [...] of empirical social research, it was undoubtedly that, although it insisted very energetically on a particular methodological perspective, it was guided more by an interest in the matter that was apparent there, namely the connection between character structure and social structure, rather than being sworn purely to its method.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that is the practical consequence, as it were, of the cult of the method per se. Let me add that the concept of method, especially in the field of the social sciences, has two different meanings that you would do well to keep apart for now. Methodology in German social science corresponds roughly to what you will find gathered together in the volume of Max Weber's writings on scientific theory,⁷ namely mindsets that could, in a perhaps science-organizational way, be described as a special form of epistemology, one that no longer keeps to the highest generalities of the so-called constitutive problems of objects as such but, rather, focuses on the constitutive questions or epistemological questions of the knowability of objects in a particular area, an objectively constituted area, such as interpersonal behaviour and all the other things examined in traditional sociology. On the other hand, there is also – how should I put it? – an epistemological-practical understanding of methodology that is especially developed in America. If someone in America, while discussing a study, asks, 'What is your methodology?' [Eng.], then what they mean is actually 'What is your method?' [Eng.] – that is, they really mean 'How do you go about?' [Eng., *sic*], how do you start the whole thing, how do you proceed? So this second understanding of methodology could perhaps be termed the technological understanding of methodology, which focuses on the knowhow, the aspect of 'How can I learn something, how can I find something out?' It is interesting that, in American sociology in particular, which is seemingly so empirical and so 'down to earth' [Eng.], so *terre à terre*, this second understanding has attained such a strange preponderance. One of the most famous empirical social researchers in America, really one of the most famous, if not the most famous, once told me in conversation that, as a sociologist, he was not really interested in any specific object, only in how one finds something out. I think it would be impossible to formulate a more damning critique of purely methodologically oriented thinking than this statement, for it admits that it is concerned only with the techniques and not really with the matter itself; and I think that this statement, whose authenticity I can vouch for, actually relieves me of the entire critique I have carried out for you if you have understood it correctly after my analysis. But I will say, for the sake of fairness, that the two conceptions of methodology which I distinguished from each other for the sake of clarification, specifically with reference to sociology, in fact have extremely similar results: in both cases, the method dictates the matter and not vice versa. For when Max Weber measures the various facts against the ideal type, then the mere fact of this, and of the incredible weight that this methodological application

of ideal types gains for him, the adequacy or inadequacy of the facts in relation to the respective ideal type really becomes more important than an insight into the facts themselves. Then it is really more a matter of whether they align correctly with their ideal type, and not what the actual nature of the structures is. So the verbal definitions assert their precedence – although one hears time and again that they are only definitions and arbitrary designations – over insight into the internal laws of the matter itself; actually, a thinker like Max Weber would most probably have denied that such internal laws exist in the first place. I would add that the meaning of method naturally varies historically, and the method which emerged in the time of Bacon and Descartes, the gradual and internally regulated process of insight, was naturally immensely productive but, like all aspects in the fabric of the bourgeois process of production, has meanwhile become a fetish in itself, which means that its function today is completely different from what it was three hundred and fifty years ago. But more on this next time.

LECTURE 13¹

14 July 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

It may have amazed some of you that I keep harping on about this difference between method for its own sake, or as a primarily methodologically oriented way of thinking about society, and an approach that corrects the method based on reflection about the matter; and perhaps some of you assumed that this was some form of obsession, and that I was assigning an exaggerated significance to a more or less particular aspect. Perhaps I can say that the point on which I was so fixated, if I am not mistaken, is truly at the heart of the entire current socio-theoretical controversy. This issue, with the so-called flawless, foolproof method on the one hand, where the concept of science becomes an end in itself, and on the other hand the attempt to grasp the matter even if that matter, because it is internally contradictory, eludes any contradiction-free logic and any total context of foundation – that is essentially what the whole dispute is about between positivist thinking, in the broadest sense, in social science, on the one hand, and on the other hand those sociological positions which God knows you will find represented here in Frankfurt by our sociologists and philosophers.

So this is really the point on which the interests of social science diverge today. I would certainly say that today, as was equally true fifty years ago, the interest in method or methodology has become so dangerously predominant that a certain immediacy of approach towards a matter, without all the epistemological, let alone empirically experimental undertakings, is more productive than the so-called

methodological neatness. Hegel already knew this – I believe I pointed this out to you – when, in the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he criticized an epistemology that is isolated, autonomous and independent of any method as formalism, even in its highest form, namely the Kantian form, confronting it with the saying that one becomes a blacksmith by working in a smithy.² If I can say one thing to you today in relation to your training in the social sciences, I would almost hazard the paradox that it is the task, not only the task of professors, but also your own task in particular, if you are to work critically on yourselves, as they say, to acquire naïveté. One would think that the opposite is the case – that one arrives at university with naïveté, shall we say – that is, with a wealth of attitudes, ideas, notions, prejudices too, and all manner of things – and that this naïveté is then disciplined by reflection on the correct way of gaining knowledge, namely through the *intentio obliqua*, the self-referentiality of thinking. In reality, it is the other way around: what I call scientific fetishism, that is, the predominance of a method that has been declared valuable in its own right and cultivated accordingly, is so immense that naïveté, in the sense I mean here, is actually what people find most difficult, and that this is what they actually need to acquire first. And in fact I keep experiencing, for example in examinations or among those students – sadly there are too few from your circles – whose individual development I can follow a little more closely, that they essentially find it hardest, that this is where they need the most encouragement to have spontaneous ideas, to devote themselves to the matter itself without regulations and embrace a primary observation. Instead, from the outset, as if under a spell – the spell of science as organized in the university – they forbid themselves to have any unregulated idea, and especially any direct view of the matter. And I would say that this manifests in the fact that it is far harder, as becomes clear if one carries out a so-called content analysis³ in a seminar – that is, a sociological analysis of some printed, let us say propagandistic material – that the students generally find it much harder to produce all manner of ideas and thoughts on what is behind it, what it means, than to set up the methodology for an investigation or assess material in a methodological-statistical way, or that sort of thing. It is a most peculiar mechanism of delusion – and I would genuinely ask you very practically, as a follow-up to this highly theoretical lecture, to check your own behaviour, to reflect on yourselves, on this curious hysteron proteron – whereby the actual material that was meant to be organized is later and weaker than the forms of intellectual organization that take its place. Naturally the blame for this lies with that almost unspoken ban which is part of the

entire university system and, as I wish to emphasize, is by no means limited to the natural sciences, the exact sciences, where a primacy of method, especially in pure mathematics [...], but also asserts itself in the primacy of certain philological viewpoints in the humanities and prevents people from developing a primary connection to the matter itself, from penetrating into the actual organization of a work of art; so it prevents us from, shall we say, examining the conditions of its production or the conditions under which it existed historically, or all sorts of things that initially seem external to the matter itself. It is really a little like the story – which is entirely true – about my friend Horkheimer, who once found himself in the situation of owning a dog that adamantly refused to bark, and then taught it how to bark. We should really be teaching you to bark instead of, as is customary in the training of dogs – and I hope none of you will be offended by this animal analogy, I would be happy to identify with a dog, more than with most people; yes, I cannot help it, I did not actually force it on you, ladies and gentlemen, I was only speaking of myself – so I would urgently advise you to examine yourselves on this point, for I have attempted to characterize the sterility we can observe today in the whole of intellectual life, and which almost all of you have probably noticed in some way and must labour under, with reference to the hysteron proteron, at least in the field that can be termed science.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, there is another highly peculiar – how should I put it? – another inversion of the facts initially given, because one would think that a concentration on method would lead to a constant sharpening and intensification of awareness towards undisciplined thinking, that the mental capacity, by becoming specialized, by training as an independent skill, grows stronger in a similar way to particular muscles. [...] Hugo von Hofmannsthal said on some occasion that cleverness is an especially dangerous form of stupidity,⁴ meaning cleverness for its own sake, where thought processes are automatized, in a sense, running by themselves without being interrupted. These thought processes thus take on something mechanical, with the ultimate result that the connection to the matter itself, which is devalued by the primacy of the method, is increasingly truly lost. So it is already the case that concentration on more and more polished and more and more cunning methods, if I might put it like that, leads to the point where a kind of stultifying process sets in. If you analyse certain empirical studies of the kind one finds in the *American Journal of Sociology*, you will be struck by the incredibly polished nature of the methodological apparatus, which draws on the most sophisticated mathematical tools, combined with the utter poverty and irrelevance of the resulting findings. That is, this concentration

on the method truly leads to an inability to understand the matter itself, and this, ladies and gentlemen, even becomes an ideology in the dominant positivist mindset, that proud ideology which, as soon as it encounters an intellectual construct guided primarily by the matter itself, declares with a more or less heavy shrug of the shoulders, 'Well, I don't understand that'. But this non-understanding simultaneously becomes the *index veri* for what lies behind this – if one analyses this 'I don't understand it' – is the belief that, if I, with the whole phalanx of science on my side, as it were, don't understand something, then it's obvious that it can't be anything at all, so that takes care of that.

I am using this opportunity to make you suspicious, to turn you against any statement in which a person behaves especially proudly, for that is always a highly questionable affair. I will only touch on this point now and say instead that a true method – and I told you last time that I am anything but a despiser of method – must constantly reflect upon itself, based on its relationship to the matter it is dealing with. Let me return to Max Weber for a moment, as I have promised you on repeated occasions that we would take a cursory glance at some of his basic positions, at least those of the methodologist Max Weber. There is a passage by Weber in which he turns somewhat spitefully on both the mere 'material-collector' and material-collecting, and, with a neologism, also against spirit-collecting.⁵ That spirit is here equated with a mere accumulation of material through linguistic education is itself an expression of a certain rancour to which Weber, incidentally, was forced more by his own position than by spiritual qualities – for a lack of spirit, a lack of primary observation of the matter, is really not something of which one could ever accuse Max Weber. He just overlooked one thing, namely that there is a precise correlation between material-collecting on the one hand and the cult of methodology on the other. This means that, wherever method becomes an end in itself and something more or less formal [...], as a kind of corrective or to assuage its guilty conscience, it has a tendency to accumulate the greatest possible amount of material and then attempt to place this back inside its famous casing. What makes the term 'spirit-collecting' so extremely unjust is that spirit is precisely that behaviour of the consciousness, of the scientific and philosophical consciousness, which refuses to bow to the separation of instrumental, merely tool-like reason on the one hand and qualityless, collectable and classifiable materials on the other, and seeks to establish a specific relationship between the two.

As it happens, this exact aspect of instrumentalizing reason, that is, of separating the method from the matter and from dialectic

too, is very much a social phenomenon, deeply interwoven with the bourgeois spirit, which after all began – accompanied by a number of basic laws that have been modified but remain binding – with a ‘discourse on method’. So really, if one wishes to use the social categories reflected in this, the precedence of the method over the matter is, from a social point of view, quite simply the basic principle of bourgeois society itself, namely an abstraction from the specific utility values, the specific qualities that things develop in themselves and through interaction with humans, in favour of their general form of equivalence, their value, which is then abstracted. And just as everything in our society is, in reality, judged according to this abstract principle of value that is divorced from the matter itself, so too, in science and philosophy, this abstract aspect, which is simply split off from the specifically qualitative character of things, is turned into a quality in itself. It seems to be a universal law of bourgeois society as such – and connected to the fact that bourgeois society is rational, but only partially rational, that is, only in the pursuit of limited individual interests, and not rationally transparent as a whole – that there develops something like a predominance of the means over the ends. And this general predominance of the means over the ends then became what one can observe today as a fetishism, if not a religion of science. What is more, these things extend extremely deeply into anthropological behaviours: the relationship countless people have with technology, for example, where they are immediately more interested in how some machine works, and are drawn to anything technological, without the actual function of the technology playing a substantial part any longer. Probably an infantile mode of behaviour, incidentally – that of the child, which cannot rest until the clock has been opened up and it can see how the little cogs work inside it – this essentially infantile and repressed behaviour, which replaces the ends with the means because people are ultimately denied these ends in the world in which we live, is probably the innermost dialectical-anthropological reason for this fetishism I have attempted to describe to you.

But what makes this question I am discussing so serious, I believe, is the fact that this instrumental mindset, this united front of material accumulation and methodology, has led to something like a general defamation of spirit in science as such, and I think it is important for you, in your academic training, to be aware of this education-sociological or knowledge-sociological fact of the defamation of spirit. Certainly, spirit is recognized where it is covered by great names and bears great prestige – Hölderlin and Goethe had spirit, so there’s nothing one can do about that – but if one simply behaved

towards them like someone who knows like by like, one would immediately be accused of being unscientific, and they would try to put one in one's place – not by the rules of the individual but, naturally, by those of strict, ascetic science devoted purely to the matter itself – even if this devotion to the matter itself is completely opposed to that matter, namely to spirit. If I tell you that once, in an academic committee, when I pointed out the lack of quality in an especially vacuous piece of work, I was told, 'Well, the quality lies in the work itself' – that is, in the fact that this text contains so much material, and not in what insights are to be gained from this material – then you will understand that, when I point these things out to you, I am not speaking as a blind man speaks of colours.

But I do at least want to say, and I think this is necessary because one very easily arrives, due to the spirit-strategic situation in which one is operating, at formulations that are strictly speaking one-sided and undialectical, which is why I want to emphasize this especially strongly: do not, for heaven's sake, confuse the fact that the concept of spirit, which I have now tried to contrast with the concept of method, meaning a purely formal cleverness, as well as with the blind material – do not think that I am confusing this concept of spirit with an idling of the thought mechanism within itself, which then satisfies itself via itself, as it were. I tried earlier to show you, at least briefly, that spirit is what attempts to overcome the separation of the thought as a means and the matter as the material to be worked on by this means, through a form of constant self-examination with reference to the material, and I would like to go a step further: nothing is more beneficial to spirit than for it to surrender to the material as a blind, intentionless material, not one that is already prepared, classified and mutilated to suit what is cultural and strong. Spirit is realized in the material, not in the mere contemplation it finds within itself. Benjamin once told me – I was still very young at the time – how much stupidity is required to think a decent thought; and I later learned that there was a very substantial element of truth in that, because one surrenders to the material without always being able to escape one's experience of it by subsuming it under existing, fully formed categories. And when I spoke earlier of *naïveté*, I did not simply mean that one comes up with an idea about the material – because one always comes up with something – but that one really surrenders to it exactly as one finds it; and that one can wait for this material itself, precisely in those respects in which it does not already fit into categories, in which it is not preformed [...] that this is precisely where it offers what actually matters for gaining insight. If that is not the case, if one has lost the ability to surrender blindly

and unguardedly to the material, this is no better than, on the other hand, embracing an empty and abstract methodology, and I would argue that the two behaviours are in fact virtually the same.

You may now ask the reason for the scientific fetishism I have described to you, for it is scarcely enough simply to describe such things. If one truly wants to get beyond them, one must also gain a sense of what has caused them; one can only overcome them by understanding them in their own processes. You must understand, ladies and gentlemen – and I am the last person who would keep this from you or minimize it – that the development whose consequences, in the sense of deformation, I have presented to you essentially has the entire force of the development of modern society behind it. And I must therefore tell you that the deliberations I have undertaken with you, assuming you follow them through, really lead you into direct opposition to the entire complex of what one generally calls traditional thought or traditional theory. If some of the things I have expounded to you strike you as plausible, do not let this plausibility fool you; for the solid, very solid majority stands against what you have heard here, and engaging with these ideas can only possibly be fruitful for you if you are also fully aware, from the outset, of their powerlessness in the reality we inhabit and the almost desperate isolation that awaits you if you pursue such ideas seriously. So one can first of all say that, on the objective side, this scientific fetishism is a result of the incredible triumphs – it is no coincidence if one thinks of a word like ‘triumph’ in this context – that science has genuinely achieved in its dealings with nature. What I have presented to you here as something very problematic in philosophy and the general area of the social sciences, and which I feel has proved so powerless in sociology itself to this day and beyond, has been immensely successful in its model, namely the model of the mathematical-physical natural sciences, and has brought about an upswing in all the forces of technical productivity that enabled the expansion and dynamics of recent history in the first place. And naturally people can easily point to this whenever one advances the objections that I have laid out for you. From the outset, then, we are in the situation of the tiny little David against the gigantic Goliath. Then there is something else, something I might call the metaphysical aspect: I think that today we can barely imagine how devastating was the loss of the κόσμος νοητικός [kosmos noetikos], the closed Christian world of the Middle Ages, how horrific it must have been for people to learn that the world was not a vault extending over them as something objectively meaningful, that it did not offer them the certain prospect of salvation and a kind of restitution for all the terrible things facing

them in life. And it was science that showed the power to topple the old theological cosmos, and which contains that incredible, almost irresistible stringency of pure method [...] which replaced that same cosmos; and it took a long time to develop and really reached fruition only with thinkers such as Nietzsche and Henri Bergson to teach people that scientific thinking cannot act as a substitute for this κόσμος νοητικός, as people once believed.

On the other hand, there are unquestionably also subjective reasons for the specific scientific fetishism of today, by which I mean reasons that also point back to the social element, namely the ego weakness of individual people. It is surely true – and this explains why this fetishism is passed on, why people keep falling prey to it if they do not think about it themselves – that, if there is nothing else to a thing, and, I would almost say, to a person, then it is (or that person is) at least science, with a recognized place within this overall context of scientific thinking and non-thinking, and will thus vicariously gain a form of respect and legitimacy, both in their own eyes and in those of others, that they would not otherwise receive. So – if one considers that today this scientific fetishism, which is generally associated with the nineteenth century and which people once believed, around the time of Max Scheler, had been overcome or was passé, is once again stirring with such incredible force – a form of spiritual reflection constituting an ever stronger (I am slipping into paradoxes), ever greater ego weakness among individuals, whose real powerlessness in society makes it increasingly hard for them to believe (intellectually too) that they can get by on their own, under their own steam, autonomously. This is based on the excessive need for security that people have in general. One feels safe with this concept of science in the same way an employee of a mega-corporation feels safe from the hardships of natural disasters, society and the economy, failing to see that the elimination of mental risks also corresponds to the socio-economic situation in a certain way, where the earlier so-called business hazard is largely eliminated, or at least seemingly eliminated. So one has the feeling that nothing can happen to one. But in matters of spirit, and any matter of insight that is not mere nonsense, it is simply the case that there is no truth without risk, the risk of untruth, just as in moral philosophy – and one could scarcely level this criticism at Kant's moral philosophy – there is no good in the world that has not been wrested from the risk of evil. Good that can be taken for granted and follows automatically, as it were, is something we have every reason to view with great suspicion. It is quite simply a withering of the aspect of play, of genuine experimentation in thought, which is only one aspect, but destroys truth itself if it is entirely absent.

Today the situation in intellectual matters is the same as what we are confronted with everywhere in social and political reality, namely that what causes people the most difficulty is the very thing which one would initially think is the primary concern, the one their entire needs revolve around: freedom. A problem, incidentally, that has received much attention from the most diverse authors and perspectives – I will name only the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, who has examined this problem, and here my national economist colleague Veit, who, quite independently of Fromm, also devoted a book to this problem of the ‘fear of freedom’⁶ – but I think it has not quite been grasped how far this problem also extends into the realm of spirit, and above all the theory of society; and, because this self-reflection has not occurred, no one has set about fundamentally correcting these things as would be necessary for a theory of society. I would say that a thinking which is essentially and primarily method-oriented is actually, I am exaggerating again, an employee mentality, that the people who think like that are already behaving like employees, even if they are not in terms of their own social position; it is a thinking where one no longer really has the confidence to think. This reflects – and that is where this is so devilishly serious, and I say that without the slightest irony, for I take these things extremely hard – that people have so little cause to be confident in reality, and it is very hard to demand that people’s spirit should show confidence when, in their actual existence, this confidence is almost inevitably followed by disappointment and cannot be realized at all. So the reason for this need for security, and thus for scientific fetishism, is the insecurity of the individual subjects, the uncertainty of us all, in so far as we – rightly – view ourselves as social objects. To carry out the reflection we have just performed – and I am now repeating something I have already told you elsewhere – requires a theory of society that, as I have at least tried to outline, deduces the need for security, whereas the need for security rejects theory in an emphatic sense. The situation of the employees of science is, in reality, the situation of people who no longer decide their own fate and despair at deciding it.

But there is, even for theory, a form that at least seems to promise this security, and that is the form of science as a system. On the other hand, it is precisely this system character and the closure and security of the system that have brought it into such conflict with the form of reality; I have said a number of things about this conflict already. I think my next task will be to show you what the word ‘system’ actually means, and why theory, in its current state, can on no account be a system any more – but now from the other perspective, which I have not yet touched on, namely that the idea of a system

which is entirely independent of society as a philosophical idea is no longer tenable and that it is historically obsolete. And that is where I shall begin in the next session.

NOTES OF LECTURE 14¹

16 July 1964

The functional change and inner historical transformation of the concept of system – which would be a topic for a doctoral thesis – offer substantial insights into the change of consciousness, and thus into its current state. For lack of time, Adorno has to stay at an overly high level of abstractness. The historical-objective problems of the system should be elaborated in detail. System in a strong sense has existed since rationalism. Some also speak retrospectively of system in Plato and Aristotle (Hegel),² but this is an inauthentic approach. Classical philosophy lacks the historico-philosophical preconditions for what modern thought calls ‘system’. The ideal of the system in rationalism is the closed deductive context, based on a minimum of presupposed theorems, where these theorems are meant to be so self-evident that they are signs of their own truth. In this sense, Fichte’s philosophy is the ultimate perfection of the system: to deduce the totality from one theorem, even one concept. Any attempt to reduce the many to the one involves recourse to thought. The epitome of thought is subjectivity. The system is potentially geared towards an absolutization of the thinking subject. One might consider presenting the entire history of systems from the perspective that the primacy of subjectivity asserts itself ever more purely and consistently.

Hegel, Erdmann³ show that all major systems based on the subject or on thought do not quite work, that they are all patched together in certain places where critique should begin, for example Descartes’ two-substance theory,⁴ where, in medieval-ontological fashion, substance = thought. How the *res cogitans* and *res extensa*

come together remains entirely unsolved. Likewise Spinoza:⁵ if there is only all-encompassing identity, how can there be a multiplicity of things? Pure identity is achieved in the epitome of godlike nature, of the whole of being. But the absolute comes at a price: the transition to manifoldness comes about only dogmatically through the concept of modes, which are changing manifestations of substance. The philosophy of Leibniz constitutes the most ingenious attempt to master these difficulties, but the decisive problem of the transition from the pure concept to existence remains unsolved, as the fluctuating definition of the monad – pure force field on the one hand, spatial-material being on the other – shows. To be truly consistent, Leibniz would have to be a pure spiritualist, but he actually proceeds in a contradictory, unreflecting fashion. Confusing the concept with the existential judgement is also the essence of Kant's critique of the ontological proof of God's existence.⁶

But the consistent opponents of the rationalists, the empiricists, also have difficulties with the problem of mediation. Their critique of causality, which is so central to Spinoza and Leibniz, must itself presuppose causality everywhere. The mutual mediation of concept and sensual manifoldness is necessary; herein lies the historical root of the origin of dialectics.

The two-hundred-year frenzy of systems until Hegel's death can be explained by the need to reconstruct the disintegrated cosmos, the *ordo*, as presented most purely in the *Summa* of Aquinas, by means of the same spiritual power that dissolved it; to reconstruct objectivity by going through subjectivity.

The problem of the system concept becomes manifest in idealism. The problem of the non-identical has not been solved.⁷ Kant's philosophy already presents itself as a system, but only as one of pure reason, of subjective forms, which does not let in the manifoldness of the sensually given. Only in a complicated and violent fashion does Kant, drawing on the concept of infinity like Leibniz, attempt to reconcile the two. The aim to deduce the abundance of the existent from pure thought, from the pure subject, was never fulfilled.

Nietzsche and Kierkegaard dispute the possibility of a system. Nietzsche speaks of the dishonesty of the system.⁸ Kierkegaard calls the system the hubris of finite human reason, which is so limited that it sets itself up as the absolute. All significant philosophy after Nietzsche is a rejection of system. Following on from Husserl, it was thought that one could move directly towards an ordering of being, now that it was no longer possible via thought. But a structuring of being does not work directly either. The idea of system was reduced to absurdity, but the systems did not disappear. Attempts to make systems after the

crisis of the system can simply be dismissed as having fallen behind the world spirit, as 'professorial philosophy' (Schopenhauer).⁹ But the fact that the systems remain is not entirely coincidental. One needs systems in a different sense: no longer as attempts to grasp reality through one principle but, rather, as ordering schemata, found starkly in Heinrich Rickert's concept of the open system,¹⁰ which is like a house, with enough space for an entire person to settle in. But the metaphor of the house as a structure that can be equipped with materials resigns before the system's claim to give meaning and amounts to its self-liquidation. Thus the system loses the very thing that constituted its idea: the character of objective, binding validity, mediated by the subject. All the great systems were meant objectively (Kant, Hegel); objectivity of truth is to be established by means of the subject. Now objectivity is forgotten; the systems remain, change into ordering schemata, into merely thought-practical undertakings, in order to arrange material through thought in a well-organized, clear and convenient fashion. Meanwhile, the actual theorems from which the structure is supposed to follow are not truth judgements, *ideae innatae* or synthetic a priori judgements but, rather, arbitrary axioms.

For example, during his work in the USA, Adorno was supposed to compile a list of key statements expressing dogmatically fixed views, with each one following more or less stringently from the other. For example, the objective quality of works of art is a dogmatic conviction; that had to be put at the start, and then one would know how to proceed. But if one cuts off the movement of motivation and explication in this way and starts from such a statement, then the form of the axiomatics conceals the fact that this is an insight into the context of art. This is a direct misrepresentation of the matter.

Systems regress to what they were before philosophical dialectics, to mere modes of representation that organize their material from without, making systems of little compartments without understanding the matter itself – which would be possible only if the categories unlocked the phenomena themselves. A twofold deformation results: that of classification and the arbitrariness of instrumental categories that fulfil only practical requirements for organizing material. In addition, the means-to-end relation in philosophy falls apart; the end, namely to understand the matter itself, is driven out of theory.

The system becomes a contradiction of its own idea; it pushes administrative schemata and procedural rules into the foreground. The systematics of smooth subsumption already prevents thought itself; it matches the demands of the administered world. The concept of system becomes an empiricist image of reality in which everything stems from an organizational form comprising arbitrary

concepts. The system of subsumption and order corresponds exactly to the world of today. The unity of subject and object is attained, an identity from which objectivity, the attempt to define the matter itself, is spirited away. Such identity is the opposite of a system and a world in which subject and object would be genuinely identical. For the individual sciences, the crisis of the system has remained strangely powerless and without consequences. The individual sciences, which consider themselves so realistically sober and factual, unknowingly don the threadbare wardrobe, the cavalier's wardrobe from the philosophy of yore at a discount price. Systems enjoy great popularity in the positive sciences; they are not only a scholastic tail, something where the area of school did not keep up with the development of spirit; they are accommodated by a need in people for the systematic. This is connected to the weakness and excessive caution that afflict people today like an illness. In his play *The Little Relatives*, Ludwig Thoma portrays a stationmaster whose favourite word is 'category', roughly in the sense that 'every person belongs in a category.'¹¹ The spirit represented in the individual sciences resembles that of the stationmaster in Gross-Heubach: arranging everything in categorially assigned schemata. When theory and system are equated, as by Parsons, theory is no more than a polished and elaborated ordering schema.

Instead, one should call for an understanding type of systematic standard. The essence must be the focus. It is not tied to seamless unity, as the system once claimed. One can distinguish between essence and appearance, even if one is not keeping to an abstractly superordinate schema. On the other hand, one must hold on to an emphatic concept that is not limited to the classification of the facts it covers but, rather, has an element of independence.

NOTES OF LECTURE 15

21 July 1964

The necessity of the intuitive idea, of spontaneity and unregulated experience as a precondition of social-scientific behaviour: a true artist, for example, can command their ideas out of the necessity of observing something they face, calling them forth out of an awareness of the problem. This has nothing to do with inspiration from above. A criterion for whether a spontaneous idea is any good – a criterion that should not, however, be made into a rule or instruction – would be to examine the idea in terms of whether it ‘fits’, whether it reaches to the heart of its object or is simply an association. The danger with a spontaneous idea, as opposed to stubborn methodology, is ‘thinking up’ something simply to be different, without any element of necessity coming from the matter itself. Only in the context of the problem should one decide whether something simply ‘occurs’ to the artist or whether it arises from the matter. One must develop an organ that subjects the idea to constant self-examination. Productive thought requires a subjective element that cannot be eliminated from science. The spontaneous idea refers to a connection between subject and object in which the subject, instead of merely facing the object as something cold, alien and distanced, stands in relation to it; it is an object relationship, not something that comes purely from the subject, as one falsely imagines in art. Kant disagreed, believing that science and philosophy were independent of this. He took the objectivity of mathematics as his model and ascribed spontaneous ideas only to art, thus overlooking the aspect of work.

The notion developed here opens itself up to accusations of being undemocratic, charismatic, presupposing talent – some have it, others do not – and making insight a privilege. Social science must be independent of the subject, it is argued, and its scientific character even rests on this independence. This shows a fear of losing oneself to subjectivity; hence the ideal of pure cognition borrowed from the natural sciences. Max Weber, following on from Rickert, heavily accentuated the difference between mathematical sciences and social science but also adopted the prevailing view, the ideal of objectivity.¹ ‘If one puts too many spontaneous ideas into a scientific study, it becomes a prejudice’, as a young staff member at the institute said years ago. This means that the consciousness approaching the matter should be the ‘*tabula rasa*’ of John Locke.² Spirit and idea should be removed from the realm of knowledge as cleverly as possible. Precisely this is reified consciousness, which views itself only as an instrument for registering some fact or other. Thus the genetic relationship is inverted: whereas the tools of the trade are only an extended arm, reify here becomes the model for social-scientific procedures. One must reflect on this reification in order to come closer to the objects. In reified consciousness, truth appears only as a residual category: whatever remains after deduction of the subjective production costs. An economic model provides the ideal. This only works with a largely dequalified material such as that of the mathematical natural science, but not in qualitatively human conditions, however deeply the qualitative element might be hidden under statistic generality. There are entire areas where the objectivity of insight increases the more the subject contributes of itself. But that is the power of an immersion in the particular, fantasy as the ability to extrapolate on a small scale, to use Benjamin’s phrase.³ The fruitfulness of a study [is all the greater] the more unregulated experience is added to it – though it must be harnessed by an objectifying procedure. When compiling a questionnaire, for example: one has to think up the individual questions, and ideas that fall short are then eliminated.

Kant’s distinction between the ‘worldly concept’ [*Weltbegriff*] and ‘scholastic concept’ [*Schulbegriff*] of philosophy:⁴ the pre-scientific experience of realizing something about the world is not simply a genetic precondition but an objective precondition for insight. If someone has not realized anything about a matter, they will not have any insight. Social-scientific investigations that are not based on broad experience and an unbiased view of reality are sterile. How much comes out is determined by how much unregulated experience one puts in.

So shouldn’t it be enough simply to be a shrewd fellow, without any need for empirical studies? There is something in that, but empirical

research can produce something different to what one had assumed. Else Frenkel-Brunswik, for example, in a study connected to *The Authoritarian Personality*,⁵ reached the conclusion that children who were well behaved and not refractory had no prejudices; it was the others, the rough 'podges', who took out their prejudices on other people. This did not entirely conform to the main study; but I should have anticipated it from my own school experiences.

Should everyone, in keeping with democracy, be equally capable of gaining knowledge? This demand contains both truth and untruth. Everyone has the right to knowledge. When Kant, in his moral philosophy, reserves conscious reflection on morality for scholars, this is privileged and elitist thinking that cannot present itself as truth. But people are too uncritical in taking the universally comprehensible natural-science experiment as a model. Experimental situations are extremely rare in the social sciences. Chemically pure experimental conditions demand the elimination of an infinite number of aspects of social reality. What remains are completely artificial situations that can no longer be extrapolated for application to society; facts which are so reduced that nothing else finds its way in, that they have no meaning beyond that situation, whereas society is present in every *fait social* and cannot be incorporated into the experiment. Thus the criteria of repeatability and general comprehensibility are also lost.

To be realistic today means to recognize the state of actual conditions as a product of manipulated power relations and to hold on to the idea of a better society. By comparison, the so-called realists are unrealistic. The mechanism that reifies consciousness has expanded so far that most people have fallen under the spell of the ruling apparatus and their immediacy has been cut off. The majority of people are mutilated. It is not possible for all people simply to gain insight; consciousness would have to be changed first. Subjectivity is not an ingredient, an ornament or a sauce that one adds to objectivity to make for a tastier write-up. The subjectivity which the matter requires in order to reveal itself must be extinguished in the matter. The ideal of insight is this extinguishing, but it cannot be gained by the trickery of making subjectivity eliminate itself from the start. 'There must be correct customs for everything' – but insight begins where there are no customs, where one finds oneself in the unknown, unprotected, without the stronger battalion behind one. Subjectivity is not itself objectivity, nor can objectivity disappear in subjectivity. Perhaps objectivity takes precedence, but, just as there is nothing subjective that is not mediated, there is likewise nothing objective that is not mediated. This is the truth in idealism.

NOTES OF LECTURE 16

23 July 1964

Now, towards the end of the semester, Adorno is in the situation of Hamlet, who spends five acts reflecting before littering the stage with corpses, including his own, in the final fifteen minutes. So far Adorno has only laid out the problems, but now he wants to present elements of a theory of society. The zone in question differs from both conventional sociology and national economy. It deviates from a sociological meaning in the sense that one cannot content oneself with formal categories such as interpersonal relationships, etc., but must reflect on the concrete state of the contexts in which people's lives take place. On the other hand, it also differs from national economy, which focuses in mathematized fashion on states within established market society.

The concept of a 'transcendental reflection', a special status between formal logic on the one hand and contentual insight on the other, gives us some idea of what needs to be done. Not in the sense of Schelsky's transcendental theory of society,¹ however, a theory of invariants, but rather in relation to specific historical aspects of a theory of society today, though in such a way that certain categories or theorems are confronted with certain recent tendencies of development. So one starts from certain categories that are modified in the course of examination and show how far they still apply.

We continue to live in a society of exchange and profit. 'Classless society', 'levelled middle-class society', etc., are epiphenomena and do not affect the fundamental structures. This is not under any serious dispute. The obsolescence of class is itself obsolete, an institutionalism

of particular schools today. To the extent that classes exist, they are concealed by the subjective consciousness, and that is less true than people thought. There are differences here depending on the status in the production process of those who are questioned. The rupture between objective social position and subjective consciousness is not so great. The law applies that the more social issues relate to people's immediate interests, the more clearly the differences emerge. The problem of class is not primarily and essentially a problem of consciousness but, rather, depends on people's positions within the production process, on whether they control the means of production or not. Furthermore: the progress of technology makes labour objectively superfluous to a large extent, that is, the superfluity is more one of labourers than of labour. Each of them feels threatened by advances in technology. It remains a matter of appropriating the surplus value, even with a minimum of workers. But because society would explode if there were no control over these aspects, as Hegel and Comte realized, this appears in a modified form: part of the appropriated surplus value goes back to the people via the trade unions, etc., in an irrational form, as a kind of mercy. Despite prosperity, most people do not decide their own fate.

Society presses people to its breast, almost suffocates them and degrades them to planning objects. The heteronomy of imposing conditions on people prevails. There are planning purposes, but the totality cannot be planned. The whole remains irrational while the rationality of the individual sectors grows, as recognized first by Karl Mannheim.² The growing particular rationale does not reduce the irrationality of the whole but, rather, increases it. This is where the phrase 'the administered world', coined by Adorno, applies. One can speak of a merging of rationality and irrationality. There is rational planning from above, but the planning processes remain irrational towards humans. They are objects of administration, like the simple person who powerlessly enters an office as the object of the respective official, who will first of all let them wait a while.

The form taken by the central antagonism has shifted. It still applies that foreign policy must be understood in terms of domestic policy, in terms of the underlying economic conditions. One example is the resurrection of the concept of nation at a time when economic and technological development have moved beyond that. The existence of blocs, of armaments: the world reproduces itself economically only through the establishment of the armament apparatus, in the East and the West, an apparatus that guarantees prosperity while devouring the national product and threatening humanity with annihilation.

Here one should differentiate rather than proclaiming dogmatically: where can one identify the continuing class character, the antagonism that prevails despite an abundance of goods? It reveals itself in the unfreedom of humans in most decisions. Naturally, subjective freedom is not primary – for example, when one is not employed based on one's own calling but on what is needed in society, and then has to function within the profession anyway – but the aspect of unfreedom extends to the utmost level of intimacy, to the psychology, to the most delicate and private things. It is important nonetheless, because our antagonistic society presents us with the bill. After all, even the best classical theory of class is useless if, at the end of the week, the working woman has the subjective experience that her salary is not enough. It must be verified with reference to the individual subjects. When Marx and Engels say that they are not concerned with distinguishing between rich and poor, Adorno has to confess that he has never quite understood that. If the central differences do not affect people's lives, the theory loses its meaning. Antagonism prevails despite the abundance of goods, where even those who cannot afford things can still afford something. But the separation from the production apparatus continues, hence the feeling of insecurity and anxiety. Anxiety is not an existential; thus its socio-historical status is cancelled out, and the phenomenon is falsified on the basis of flattening through depth. What is true is that anxiety is rarely based on hunger and directly imminent physical destruction; this distinguishes it from fear, which is directed at an object. But everyone knows that society can take back its merciful gifts. What carries anxiety is the fact that society is not in control of itself; there is no overall social subject and its acts of charity are subject to withdrawal. The anxiety about this withdrawal is not one about individual powers but, rather, exists because society cannot manage any more. Restrictions are imposed to maintain the conditions of production – restrictions going below the minimum are possible. The process of economic concentration continues. Proofs to the contrary, such as the fact that new independent professions have developed, are not sufficient. The structures have the innate tendency to conceal themselves. Hence the illusion of independence with petrol stations, car repair shops, etc., when these are actually completely dependent on the respective oil company. Formal legal independence and economic freedom of movement contradict each other; people must take what they are given and pay the price.

A further phenomenon of concealment is referred to as 'pluralism', which actually means an ideal: a situation where people are not dealt with from above, in the sense of a monocratic administration with

an abstract leadership, but are supposed to determine the concrete conditions of their lives, their needs, their coexistence and the overall social structure essentially by themselves. Adorno would say that a correct society must be pluralistic. But there is a small error in the contemporary usage of this word: society, which continues to be monocratically administered, abstract and separate from the people, creates the illusion of being pluralistic, as if there were concrete manifestations of this in life. To an extent, yes: without pressure from the trade unions, the burden on individuals would be unbearable. In that sense, there is some truth to the claim of pluralism and the notion of its merits. But: in a monocratic society, everything follows a strict logic. It is governed by the principle of exchange for the purpose of profit. Here pluralism has not only a mollifying function, the function of a safeguard, but also the tendency to become what Eschenburg calls the 'dominance of associations'.³ The most important forms of organization always interfere for the sake of their interests, in keeping with the natural tendency of society towards a concentration and consolidation of power, by asserting their own interests in addition to the abstract dynamics of democracy. If the parties in a democracy are sanctioned as organs of political decision-making, they are also a safeguard against plebiscitary elements, which today tend to join with totalitarian ones. But if – and this is a dialectic in pluralism – the stable institution of the parties influences government decisions through party hierarchy, for example, this does not only introduce highly particular interests; the interference of the legislative branch with the executive, the reversal of the separation of powers, discredits parliamentary democracy. The danger lies in giving the right of veto to powerful committees working outside the sphere of transparent decision-making, committees that interfere in governance, for example in the radio, etc.

The changes that have taken place in the invariants – which must be understood ironically – relate to the sphere of competition, which becomes less important through the concentration of capital, then to the sphere of consumption, but not to the sphere of production as a sphere of people's own control over production and over themselves.

Whatever is planned in society is particular; it remains in the sectors and does not relate to the whole. The whole is irrational, obviously in the West but also in the East, because the overall structure is so determined by the interest of self-perpetuation among the ruling cliques that, because of the dictatorial character, the irrationality is even greater there. Particular rationality is meant to plug the holes with which society is riddled during its transition to concentration; this extends to the foundations of exchange itself. There

are attempts to mitigate this, but, within the whole, the particular rationalizations and elements of planning have more of a tendency to reinforce the irrationality and antagonisms, because the sectors contradict one another. While it seems as if society were following a continuous process of concentration, there is simultaneously a disintegration. Particular rationality as the attainment of independence by the sectors within society is disintegration. Particular rationality is a reinforcement of irrationality, because the individual sectors are each strengthened against one another in relation to the whole without abandoning the status quo. The antagonism grows; it is probably even expressible in mathematical forms. In so far as the status quo – that is, liberalism – is undermined, this takes place not in the increasing transparency of the whole but, rather, through an increasing group power. The unfettered antagonism of the most powerful groups – which would be disintegration – can decide the future to a large extent. Keynesianism, that is, strengthening the public sector to prevent crises, is rational because it counteracts the explosive tendency of crises. Nonetheless, nothing is changed in the structure of control over the means of production. That is why we have latent inflation as a constant, controlled inflation as a constant. Because inflation relates to the veil of money, it is generally something that necessarily reinforces the power of the industrial production apparatus. The sector of public work contributes to undermining the liberal state of affairs and the disempowerment of the populace.

LECTURE 17

28 July 1964

Ladies and gentlemen,

[...] ¹ perhaps I can just say that, when I speak here of rationality and irrationality, I am using the terms very much in Max Weber's sense, with the intention of immanent critique – that is, to show that, in fact, society does not even live up to the notion of rationality in question. But if you are at all uncertain about these terms, I would ask you to look them up in *Economy and Society*, ² the text by Weber to which I am chiefly referring. When I spoke to you last time about the category of the administered world, what I meant by this was an overall constitution of rational irrationality, in so far as rationality rules as something particular, in so far as there is a balance between the goals set by the individual, separate and mutually antagonistic sectors of social organization and the means used to meet them, in the sense – to finally explain this concept of rationality, for heaven's sake – that the means used on the whole offer the best chance to achieve the respective goals – so that is the meaning of rationality used here – but that, on the other hand, the overall constitution of society, the purpose of human coexistence, remains largely irrational and at the mercy of a blind interplay of forces. You could also turn this around, and you could just as easily speak of irrational rationality, which is to say that this end-means rationality not only fails to resolve the irrationality of the whole but might, as I tried to show you in the last session, actually increase it.

But with these reflections, and here I am moving away from an immanent critique of Weber, it is crucial that such terms as

‘administration’, ‘bureaucracy’ or ‘management’ – that one is especially popular at the moment – are not hypostasized, that one does not use them as if the organizational forms themselves were the problem, rather than the social content which these terms represent. What lies behind these terms are not so-called purely sociological categories, that is, ones which refer to the form of interpersonal relationships; rather, they consistently express power relations, power relations that are still – and consider this the decisive point for a theory of society today – based on control over material production. So they are irrational in the old sense that these administrative categories imply not the administration of things but power over people, and by ignoring this, by treating them in a seemingly value-free way purely according to their form, namely as legally rational institutions, one is abstracting from the decisive point. And such a seemingly purely methodological abstraction, which turns these categories into ones of so-called pure sociology, actually has a contentual meaning, and precisely this contentual meaning slips through the cracks in the whole sociologization of these categories. So the power relations cloak themselves in the bureaucratic procedures, and it is because these power relations determine them, not because administration itself already has these traits, though one should emphasize one thing – I must return to it later in a different context – namely that, because these technically sociological categories, if you will, came about under the prevailing conditions of production and bear their imprint, it is extremely hard to differentiate concretely between that which is genuinely determined by the conditions of production, which has social content, and that which is of a technologically formal kind. But precisely this entanglement of social content and administrative rationality as a form is now acting as an ideology for the fact that people really consider this administrative form the decisive thing, with the implication that, whenever a rational planning of society and organization stands in opposition to an anarchy of commodity production, such power relations must be reproduced there; but this is a false assumption, for these forms take on that disastrous social meaning only because they already constitute themselves within the concrete differences of power to control the means of production. So the identity of bureaucracy and power does apply empirically; however, it follows not from the structure of bureaucracy itself but from its becoming independent, which is in turn an expression of prevailing conditions, and it is precisely this becoming independent, ultimately determined by economic motives or economic objectivities, that I meant by the administered world. So it is not a matter of bureaucracy or administration in itself; these things and their entanglement

with power are not a formally sociological law but, rather, depend on real control over the work of others. So-called purely sociological concept formation, which passes over this in keeping with the interdisciplinary division of labour and assigns to economy as a separate branch these relationships I have been discussing, and thus already becomes ideology prior to any specific content.

I think you can understand now what I meant when I once said that the bureaucrat or the manager today is largely the 'scapegoat of the administered world',³ and that consequently the concept of the administered world, if absolutized into a superficial and convenient cultural critique, is completely inadequate. The anger over personalized epiphenomena, like the role of managers and bureaucracy, does not penetrate to the matter itself and thus often has only a fascist implication, just as invective against supposedly inhuman bureaucrats plays an important part for the fascists. It is rather instructive in this context that the entire official state and city bureaucracy that existed was fought and denounced by the fascists, but, because the circumstances were not changed, it was simply duplicated and limited by a second bureaucracy, namely that of the party; and this truly shocking pluralism, this duplication of all the official bureaucracies by the party bureaucracies, was not least a factor in the general, planned confusion of power relations that, in the end, was only too favourable for the monocratic leader principle under fascism. If one rails against bureaucracy and works towards restoring more direct relations between people amid unchanged ownership conditions, this almost inevitably leads to direct rule in the sense of a people's community and similar things. So it is not about opposing administration as such but about its reification as power, which ultimately only mirrors the fundamentally reified, unchangingly reified character of the social structure.

If one now says – and this is the strongest argument, an argument that Max Weber already had at his disposal – that one can equally observe this hardening of bureaucracy in the socialist state of the east, this is undoubtedly correct as an empirical sociological observation, but not as actual proof. The reason is quite simply that there was a devilish necessity governing those developments in Russia; that is, what English economists refer to as the 'skills' [Eng.] of the workers, the development of human productive forces required to adapt to the demands of industrialism, was so underdeveloped, and might even have remained underdeveloped to this day in certain sectors, that it could only be corrected with the same whip that had been used for centuries in Europe to turn expropriated farmers into workers; this was rectified at one blow, namely with the whip, in the

incredibly accelerated process of industrialization, and this in turn caused the bureaucracy to take on a life of its own. Please do not misunderstand: I am not condoning or downplaying in the slightest all the horrors that resulted from this independence of party bureaucracy in Russia; I simply wish to show you, at least by pointing out one aspect of this historical necessity, that we are dealing not with an immanent necessity of the concept of rational administration and planning, as Weber seemed to think, but actually with situations of duress resulting from the historical facts, though I cannot expand on this now.

Having spoken earlier of planned irrationality or the collision of irrational and rational elements, I must give you a more concrete idea of this antagonism, which is actually central today, by at least saying a few words about the overall social role of armaments – armaments all over the world, independently of the respective political systems. Arms investments gobble up the income of entire countries to a completely excessive degree that goes far beyond the comparatively modest circumstances of old imperialism. One might say that, given the unabatedly anarchic production and the resulting disproportionalities, it is only by accumulating means of destruction that society today – in all countries – can survive at all in its existing forms, that it continues to exist only because it is ready to blow itself up at any moment. I think one can hardly imagine any more vivid or drastic proof that we are living in a society of undiminished antagonism. But these stockpiled means of destruction, which obviously have a special dynamic, a dynamic of their own, especially through their entanglement with those in control of them, do not only threaten the life of every single person on earth at every moment; because the funds for their acquisition are diverted from the national product, the satisfaction of people's objective needs that would be possible with the current state of technology is diminished in an almost unimaginable way, and certainly this is partly to blame for the fact that, today, on a truly telluric scale, people mistake all sorts of substitute gratification for true satisfaction. The central antagonisms, which continue to be located within the structure of society and not in the sphere of so-called politics, and which consequently appear in internal political tensions, are ideologically foisted off on foreign-policy conflicts. A substantial task for acquiring social insight today would be to analyse the entire sphere of foreign policy and armaments – on an international scale – from the perspective of domestic policy, or rather the overall social structure that conditions it. The political systems of the gigantic blocs – on both sides – largely take on the character of ideologies, preventing people from becoming aware of exactly these

underlying social conditions. They attribute to the political systems what actually lies in the nature of the societies themselves. I would at least like to point out that the incredible growth of military power in the hands of small groups, which goes beyond any previously accumulated experience, and the virtual impossibility of resistance to the military power concentrated in these groups will scarcely leave the immediate power relations in society unaffected, without wanting to go into greater detail about that here. But this thought definitely follows on from those which present the politically organizational phenomena as epiphenomena of society. Just as they are actually mere expressions of society, I fear that, in a tendency towards direct power, they will once more gain direct power over society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to use the meagre few minutes we have left to say a few more things to you – in similarly short propositions to those I advanced about the structure of society – about the position of ideology today, about the area of social reality, where my own critical experience applies most directly. First of all, let me say that, in keeping with the current negative state and the acceptance of this antagonistic state by the overwhelming majority of people in all countries, the oft-cited de-ideologization of the world is a fiction. And, to put it bluntly, it is precisely this de-ideologization itself that is one of the specific manifestations of ideology today – or, in other words, the reality in which we live, this antagonistic reality that is forced upon us, shows a tendency to become an ideology of its own. The example of this is consumerism, where people in all conceivable sectors of society consume and possibly enjoy what is forced on them out of no motive except profit, without any actual or even any potential subjective need for it; and then they even view this imposition as enjoyment and feel marvellously realistic when they buy televisions and all the other rubbish that goes with them, giving up their ideals without realizing that they are being fooled incomparably more by the trash that the entire consumer world has become than they were ever fooled in better times by ideologies, which were at least meant to have some ambition for truth, something that is now being abandoned. People see fulfilment, reality itself, in things that are mere substitutes, substitutes imposed on them by profit interests. And their so-called realism is an ideology, in the sense that their behaviour reproduces this behaviour which is forced on them – indeed, it must be said that they even continue it of their own accord. They participate in what is forced on them, they submit unconsciously to the ruling apparatus, and they consider themselves realistic because the context of delusion connecting them with what exists has become so complete that there is no longer any daylight

between the false reality and their false consciousness. I think that only if one recognizes with such uncompromising severity what the true nature of so-called realism and so-called de-ideologization today actually is, only then can one face the current situation without illusions. The counterpart on the objective side of things is the merging of different apparatuses in society, namely those of production, distribution and consciousness qua industries of consciousness. Because all these sectors are seamlessly interlocked, and also substantially connected by unity of ownership and administration, the result is that seamless social façade which gives people the illusion that the airtight semblance in which they are operating is actually semblance-free reality.

Naturally these things can almost be observed most precisely, and I would also say most drastically, in America, this being the most industrially advanced country, where the electrical industry, as one of the most important sectors of the production sphere, is really directly interwoven with the distribution sphere and the 'consciousness industry',⁴ as Enzensberger called it. For example, it is simply the case that the biggest radio stations there are directly controlled by the most powerful elements of the consciousness industry. So ideology is no longer – as it was in the good old days, when Marx still attacked liberalism as ideology – something relatively independent of existence, no longer a theory that idealizes things, yet it also has the aim, however problematic, of explaining reality. No such theory exists any more within the framework of existing society, and it was only programmatic for this – and simply slightly ahead of the now universal spirit of positivism, rushing ahead of positivism as an ideology, to be precise – that fascism essentially dispensed with theory formation across the board, and that any content of consciousness which appeared in it served from the outset merely as a means of control. As an aside, this is what makes it so pointless to discuss what aspects of older tradition were pre-fascist, or might have driven people towards fascism, and which did not. Of course there is a certain – how shall I put it? – a core tendency of ideas that brought about fascism, but, apart from that, fascism was capable of adopting virtually any manifestation of spirit, without distinction, in so far as it contained some elements that were usable for its controlling purposes. This includes equally the categorical imperative, or – I would almost have said the one total substance of Spinoza, which was perhaps spared only because its originator was racially dubious. What has remained of the ideology today – if I can formulate this in a very extreme manner, which is the only way I can speak in this final session – is, on the one hand, the naked lie, the completely wilful

invention, and, on the other hand, simply the reduplication of what is anyway the case as the only true, meaningful being, which can then justify itself with the claim that no other attitude to what positively exists is any longer conceivable. In this sense, Hegel's theory of abstract possibility,⁵ which is frightening enough in its original setting, has now taken on a veritably satanic truth.

A decisive factor in this current manifestation of ideology is what Horkheimer and I – it must already be twenty years ago – called the 'technological veil',⁶ which replaced the so-called veil of money that once concealed social conditions after this veil of money had, through recurring inflations and value manipulations, also dissolved in the consciousness of the masses, who then ceased to believe that money was the thing itself, namely value in itself. What I mean by the technological veil is that constraints and necessities resulting from social conditions – for example, all the phenomena connected to the standardization not only of consumer goods but also of contents of consciousness – are ascribed to technology as such, completely ignoring things like the fact that, under the prevailing motive of profit, technology has been developed only in a very one-sided, particular fashion, namely to keep its production costs low, and that anything connected to decentralization, individualization or qualitative diversity has been suppressed and, if I might use the word, prevented artificially by this constraint of the profit motive. Here we must again overcome the difficulty I pointed out earlier, and which is in fact one of the greatest difficulties with a critique of contemporary society, namely that both the technological potential or state of productive forces and the conditions of production are not simply independent of each other but, rather, mutually conditioned, as the productive forces themselves already came about under certain social circumstances. If one now attributes their restriction to the conditions of production, someone can always reply, 'Yes, but technology forces us, technology imposes it on us', wilfully abstracting from the fact that technology itself is already the product of the conditions of production on which it depends and with which it seems to have a form of pre-stabilized harmony. One can counter this with a simple reminder that the productive forces of technology are shackled and pushed in a very specific direction, and that the prevailing conditions prevent anything which might enable technology to break through this veil that springs from its necessity. Here, too, I am pointing out only the most drastic aspect, namely that, despite its immense technological advances, humanity has still not succeeded in making nuclear power seriously fruitful for practical purposes, and, wherever steps are taken in that direction, one hears that they are still too expensive

to be realized – and yet, as we know, nothing is too expensive when it comes to our annihilation.

The less ideology stands out, the more directly it becomes the objective spirit under which we are living. So it is no longer a theoretical construct; it is now neither the idealization of something existent nor its complement but, rather, the existent as appearance, the existent in the guise reflected in the total social consciousness, and thus objective spirit. This spirit is now infiltrating language most of all, which is why, if I may just say something subjective about my own approach, I think – and the work of Karl Kraus is already an excellent example – that ideology critique today is not so much a critique of an explicit, theoretically false content as simply a critique of the form in which certain content is expressed in the social consciousness, a form that contradicts the actual issue in question. And that, I would think, is why language critique is now really the appropriate form, or at least one of the appropriate forms, of ideology critique. Because of that – and this is very telling – a determined and radical critique of today's prevailing language is automatically dismissed by the nominalists, who pretend that there is no direct identity between language and the content it expresses, meaning that language cannot be attacked as ideology; yet it is precisely this non-identity of content and language that reveals how this consciousness, which considers itself so realistic and believes it is aware of undisguised reality, already reveals through its very form that it is not conscious of this content. Subjectively, the form taken by ideology today is what I have suggested terming the 'reified consciousness',⁷ – that is, a consciousness which obeys the technological veil and unthinkingly speaks exactly the language that is imposed on it, and which moulds it according to its own thought structure. An insight offered by the brilliant Wilhelm von Humboldt, who is not without reason branded such a heretic today, namely that thought and language are constitutive of each other,⁸ is valid to this day, albeit in the negative sense that reified thought and reified consciousness and reified language produce one another, just as – to avoid any misunderstandings – critique of language does not have to be a merely formal critique of language but, rather, by drawing on that language form, is always forced to confront it with the content expressed, and finally – as I at least attempted in my forthcoming book *The Jargon of Authenticity* – to deduce the language itself, the falsity of the language itself, from the objective untruth of the matter. What I mean by reified consciousness, then, is a consciousness characterized by a number of categories developed, albeit overly psychologically and with too little reference to the social problematics we are discussing here, in *The Authoritarian Personality*. So it

is a consciousness that is really incapable of having any experiences at all, because this objectification of what should be living relationships stands between it and its objects like a layer of armour. Being incapable of experience, it is atomistic, isolated, incapable of remembrance, gratitude or contemplation. As an acceptance of the façade it is uncritical, a peculiar second naïveté that is splendidly compatible with the jadedness of the so-called sceptical generation. It is a consciousness that adapts to the increasing reification of the world through the fact that, in this reification of consciousness, people act on the need both to turn themselves into things as far as possible and really to be dead simply in order to survive. A universal part of this reified consciousness is the 'identification with the assailant', the gesture of 'Yes, but ...' when one calls it by its true name, as well as a willingness essentially to stave off anything that might turn it into a living consciousness. It is attached – and this brings me one last time to Weber's means–end relation, Max Weber's rationality – it is always attached to means, not to ends; this is another aspect of the technological veil, namely the quantum of libido, of love, that people invest in technology for its own sake, not for the sake of any ends. A phenomenology or a comprehensive and, shall we say, systematically deduced description of the reified consciousness would, as far as the subjective manifestation of ideology is concerned, surely be the most important task at present, and, if anything remains to be done on the subjective side, it would lie primarily in shattering the reified consciousness.

However, ladies and gentlemen, let me say one more thing after all this: while the world is increasingly hardening, ideology becomes increasingly thin because it is a mere duplication of the existent; although it becomes unresponsive, being fashioned from an almost impenetrable material, it has also become so thin that it can now barely serve its traditional function, namely that of concealment. Because humans have succeeded so completely in adjusting to the violence inflicted on them, it is now the soft spot; and it is therefore no coincidence, I would say, in the sense of historico-philosophical innervation, that so much critique today concentrates precisely on a critique of consciousness and ideology. The intellectuals are the organ of this critique, and it is precisely because the only possibility of looking beyond the existent at all has taken refuge in them and in this critique that they are so maligned today. The accusation, frequently made today and recently made so vocally by Gehlen too, that intellectuals have no function because they have no responsibility, attempts to commit them to the very ideology of the existent that one is meant to serve, but which they should be shattering. But

it is not enough to analyse the details, as indispensable as that is, for all these things can only be achieved in a truly stringent fashion by gathering up what I have presented to you as elements of a critical theory into an actual unified critical theory, one that exhibits as much unity and fragility as the world today. But a programme such as the one I am presenting you in conclusion, if I am not mistaken, is precisely suited to the historical moment in which we find ourselves, namely a phase that permits such a critique, for it does not prevent it through direct violence, and yet no other kind of theory is possible because, in this phase, whose duration we cannot estimate, the possibility of an interventional, earnestly [transformative] practice is obscured.

EDITORS' NOTES

Lecture 1

- 1 The lecture schedule at the University of Frankfurt for the 1964 summer semester listed this course under the title 'Elements of a Philosophical Theory of Society'.
- 2 Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) gave an introductory seminar course in the 1964 summer semester entitled 'Introductory Seminar Course in Philosophy'.
- 3 The title was 'Professor of Philosophy and Sociology'.
- 4 See Max Weber, *Collected Methodological Writings*, ed. Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster, trans. Hans Henrik Bruun (London: Routledge, 2012).
- 5 Adorno is referring to the so-called positivism dispute [*Positivismusstreit*], one of the unresolved fundamental discussions in sociology. Prominent opponents in the dispute during the 1960s were Adorno and Popper. See *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno, Hans Albert, Ralf Dahrendorf, Jürgen Habermas, Harald Pilot and Karl R. Popper (London: Heinemann, 1976).
- 6 The 15th German Sociology Congress took place in Heidelberg from 28 to 30 April 1964, directly before lectures began, under the title 'Max Weber and Sociology'.
- 7 Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), who was teaching at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, at the time, gave a presentation on the topic of 'Industrialism and Capitalism' at the 15th German Sociology Congress; it was sharply criticized by some panel members. See Marcuse's presentation and concluding remarks as well as the contributions to the discussion by Georg Weippert, Reinhard Bendix, Benjamin

Nelson, Georges Friedman, Richard F. Behrendt and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, in *Verhandlungen des 15. Deutschen Soziologentages: Max Weber und die Soziologie heute*, ed. Otto Stammer (Tübingen: Mohr, 1965), pp. 161–218.

- 8 The phrase *Index Verborum Prohibitorum* [Index of Forbidden Words] refers to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* [Index of Forbidden Books] used by the Catholic Church until 1966.
- 9 *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) is one of the central works by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917). See Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method*, ed. Steven Lukes, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).
- 10 Durkheim summarizes his critique as follows:

Briefly, in his consideration of historical development, Comte has taken his own notion of it, which is one that does not differ greatly from that commonly held. It is true that, viewed from a distance, history does take on somewhat neatly this simple aspect of a series. One perceives only a succession of individuals all moving in the same direction, because they have the same human nature. Moreover, since it is inconceivable that social evolution can be anything other than the development of some human idea, it appears entirely natural to define it by the conception that men have of it. But if one proceeds down this path one not only remains in the realm of ideology, but assigns to sociology as its object a concept which has nothing peculiarly sociological about it. (Ibid., p. 119)

- 11 Regarding the concept of ideal type in Weber, see Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 6–22. He writes:

For the purposes of a typological scientific analysis it is convenient to treat all irrational, affectually determined elements of behavior as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action. [...] Only in this way is it possible to assess the causal significance of irrational factors as accounting for the deviations from this type. The construction of a purely rational course of action in such cases serves the sociologist as a type (ideal type) which has the merit of clear understandability and lack of ambiguity. By comparison with this it is possible to understand the ways in which actual action is influenced by irrational factors of all sorts, such as affects and errors, in that they account for the deviation from the line of conduct which would be expected on the hypothesis that the action were purely rational. (Ibid., p. 6)

- 12 See Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
- 13 See Max Weber, *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, ed. and trans. D. Martindale, J. Riedel and G. Neuwirth (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1958).

- 14 The sociologist George Andrew Lundberg (1895–1966) was one of the leading exponents of neopositivism and an advocate of mathematical-statistical approaches in sociology. He espoused the principle of avoiding value judgements and operationalism. In 1943 he became the thirty-third president of the American Sociological Association. See George A. Lundberg, *Foundations of Sociology* (New York: Macmillan, 1939) and *Social Research: A Study in Methods of Gathering Data* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1942).
- 15 Samuel Andrew Stouffer (1900–60), a statistician and pollster, was the forty-second president of the American Sociological Association. See Samuel A. Stouffer, *Social Research to Test Ideas: Selected Writings* (New York: Free Press, 1962) and *Measurement and Prediction*, ed. Samuel A. Stouffer, Louis Guttman, Edward A. Suchman, Paul F. Lazarsfeld et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950).
- 16 One of the studies by Paul Lazarsfeld (1901–79), *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2002), which he carried out together with Marie Jahoda and Hans Zeisel and published in 1933, is today considered a classic of empirical-sociological research. In 1933 Lazarsfeld went to the USA, where from 1935 to 1937 he headed the Office of Radio Research, which was initially located in Princeton and moved to Columbia University (New York) in 1939. In 1938 Adorno joined Lazarsfeld's Princeton Radio Research Project.
- 17 Weber begins the explanation of his 'basic sociological terms' with the words: 'Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences' (Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 4). Regarding the concept of 'interpretive understanding' in Weber's sociology, see Max Weber, 'On Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology', in *Collected Methodological Writings*, pp. 273–301.
- 18 The Baden School was a philosophical movement within neo-Kantianism that existed between 1890 and 1930, primarily at the universities of Heidelberg, Freiburg and Strasbourg. Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), one of its most prominent members, distinguished between nomothetic and idiographic sciences. This distinction corresponds to Heinrich Rickert's (1863–1936) differentiation between natural science, which seeks generalized laws, and cultural science, which emphasizes the meaning of the particular. See Wilhelm Windelband, 'History and Natural Science' (1894), trans. Guy Oakes, in *History and Theory* 19 (1980), pp. 223–35.
- 19 The philosopher Heinrich Rickert completed his Habilitation thesis 'The Object of Knowledge' in 1891. In 1915 Rickert was appointed at the University of Heidelberg.
- 20 In the chapter on amphiboly from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant questions Leibniz's claim that the interior of things can only be recognized through the intellect. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of*

Pure Reason, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 368ff.

- 21 The famous series of travel guides, named after their publisher Karl Baedeker (1801–59).
- 22 Max Weber, ‘Science as a Profession and a Vocation’, in *Collected Methodological Writings*, p. 342. Weber writes that

increased intellectualization and rationalization do *not* bring with them a general increase in our knowledge of the conditions under which we live our lives. What they bring with them is something else: the knowledge, or the belief, that *if we wished to*, we *could* at any time learn about the conditions of our life; in other words: that, in principle, no mysterious and unpredictable forces play a role in that respect, but that, on the contrary, we can – in principle – *dominate* everything by means of *calculation*. And that, in its turn, means the disenchantment of the world. (Translation modified)

- 23 Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) developed a monarchist worldview in the context of his pessimistic cultural philosophy, which was heavily influenced by the end of the First World War. With this formulation, Adorno is referring to Spengler’s central work *The Decline of the West*, published in two volumes in 1918 and 1922. It is an expression of the Wilhelmine era and the crisis in ‘Western consciousness’ after the First World War.
- 24 See Ursula Jaerisch, ‘Bildungssoziologische Ansätze bei Max Weber’, in *Verhandlungen des 15. Deutschen Soziologentages*, pp. 279–96. In her presentation, Jaerisch points out the interwovenness of education and power (p. 280), as well as the participation of individuals in social development through the acquisition of specialized knowledge and the determination of the scope of action within the instrumentally rational economic order of capitalism (p. 284). Following this, Adorno remarks that Jaerisch’s characterization of Weber’s mythologization of the progressive rationalization process as an inescapable destiny is one of the most fruitful critical angles on his work (p. 300). Jaerisch submitted her diploma thesis, entitled ‘Elements of a Theory of Society in Max Weber: Rationalization and Power’, in 1963; it was never published. It can be viewed in the library of the sociology department at the University of Frankfurt (reference number: 114675).
- 25 Regarding the concept of ‘charismatic authority’ in Weber, see, for example:

In its pure form charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures. The social relationships directly involved are strictly personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities. If this does not remain a purely transitory phenomenon but takes on the character of a lasting relationship [...], it is necessary for charismatic authority, which only existed in ideal-typical purity *in statu nascendi*, as it were, to change its character radically: it is traditionalized or rationalized (legalized), or a combination of both. (*Economy and Society*, p. 246 [translation modified])

- 26 Weber wrote a number of articles on Russia and analyses of Russia's significance for German foreign policy. The two texts Adorno is referring to are 'Russia's Transition to Pseudo-Democracy' and 'The Russian Revolution and Peace', in Max Weber, *The Russian Revolutions*, ed. and trans. Gordon C. Wells and Peter Baehr (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

Lecture 2

- 1 In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno writes:

a philosophy that knows it is judging neither facts nor concepts the way other things are judged, a philosophy that is not even sure what it is dealing with, would want its nonetheless positive content to be located beyond facts, concepts, and judgements. The suspended character of thought is thus raised to the very inexpressibility which it seeks to express. The immaterial is elevated to an outlined object of its own kind, and thereby violated. (*Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton [New York: Continuum, 1972], p. 110 [translation modified])

- 2 Adorno is referring to the most renowned sociology journal in the USA, the *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 3 Not found.
- 4 Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was the founder of positivism. His six-volume work *Course in Positive Philosophy* was published between 1830 and 1842. Regarding Comte's introduction of the term 'sociology', see Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Dirks (eds), *Soziologische Exkurse: Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen (Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4) (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1956), pp. 9 and 18, note 1.
- 5 Claude Henri, comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), was one of the founding fathers of sociology.
- 6 As one of Adorno's opponents in the positivism dispute, Alphons Silbermann (1909–2000) argued that only the viewer's 'musical or artistic experience' [in the sense of experiencing a work] is accessible to the sociology of music or art, and that any analysis must concentrate on these objective facts. See Alphons Silbermann, 'Die Stellung der Musiksoziologie innerhalb der Soziologie und der Musikwissenschaft', in *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 10 (1958), pp. 102–15, and 'Die Ziele der Musiksoziologie', in *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 14 (1962), pp. 322–35. For Adorno's position in 1962, see Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1988). The debate was continued in 1967; see Adorno, 'Theses on the Sociology of Art', trans. Brian Trench, in *Birmingham Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 121–8 (originally published in 1967). Silbermann replied in the article 'Anmerkungen zur Musiksoziologie: Eine Antwort auf Theodor W. Adorno's "Thesen zur Kunstsoziologie"', in *Kölner*

- Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 19 (1967), pp. 538–45, as well as Adorno's response to this under the title 'Schlusswort zu einer Kontroverse über Kunstsoziologie', now in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann with Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), vol. 10.2: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II*, pp. 810–15.
- 7 See Adorno, 'Opinion Delusion Society', in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 105–22.
 - 8 The 'Community Study' [*Gemeindestudie*] at the Institute of Social Scientific Research in Darmstadt was carried out from 1952 to 1954 in collaboration with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. It examined relations between the populace, especially young people, and institutions in Darmstadt. See the article 'Gemeindestudien' in *Soziologische Exkurse*, pp. 133–46. The study consists of nine monographs, for which Adorno, partly together with Max Rolfes, wrote the introductions (now in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20.2: *Vermischte Schriften II*, pp. 605–39). The Darmstadt study was undertaken on the initiative of the American military government's Office of Employment Affairs and advised by American academics.
 - 9 Lectures were cancelled on at least two occasions because of public holidays. In addition, two further sessions were cancelled for untraceable reasons. See this volume, Editors' Foreword.
 - 10 The quotation appears in a letter from Stefan George (1868–1933) to Hofmannsthal from March 1904. George contrasts the poetic approaches of Friedrich Gundolf and Karl Gustav Vollmoeller and opposes Hofmannsthal's criticism of Gundolf and preference towards Vollmoeller: 'Perhaps it is G.'s clumsiness and reticence that irks you – but I find this more appealing than your preferred V.'s cunning, which wants to turn the Milky Way directly into butter and adapt it to the respective needs of the market' (*Briefwechsel zwischen George und Hofmannsthal*, 2nd edn, ed. Robert Boehringer [Düsseldorf: Helmut Köpper, 1953], p. 213). See also Adorno, 'The George–Hofmannsthal Correspondence, 1891–1906', in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Boston: MIT Press, 1983), p. 215.

Notes of Lecture 3

- 1 There is no transcript of the tape recording of this lecture. The notes were taken by Hilmar Tillack.
- 2 See Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, in *Four Major Plays*, trans. James McFarlane and Jens Arup (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 165–264. Adorno also brings up the opposition of 'specialists' and 'people of spirit' in connection with the growth of bureaucratization and the significance of specialist knowledge in Weber (see also Adorno, 'Culture and Administration', in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays*

- on *Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein [London: Routledge, 2005], p. 112). In *Introduction to Sociology*, this opposition is mentioned with reference to Fichte's and Schelling's studies on academic training; see Adorno, *Introduction to Sociology*, ed. Christoph Gösde, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 102.
- 3 The parody mentioned by Adorno is a scientific parody dealing with the excavation of the witch's house from the fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel. See Hans Traxler, *Die Wahrheit über Hänsel und Gretel* (Frankfurt: Bärmeier & Nikel, 1963).
 - 4 The social theory of the early socialist Charles Fourier (1772–1837) is based on a critique of state oppression. Fourier's notion of a harmonious regulation of society aims for the satisfaction of human inclinations and drives, which leads him to describe a harmonious society in all its details. In 1966 Adorno edited the German translation of Fourier's work *The Theory of the Four Movements*.
 - 5 See Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3: *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, ed. Friedrich Engels (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), Part III: 'The Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit', pp. 247–313.
 - 6 See Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, chap. 1, 'What is a Social Fact?', pp. 20–8. At the end of the chapter, Durkheim arrives at the following definition: 'A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; or, which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations' (p. 27).
 - 7 This could not be traced.
 - 8 Adorno's father, Oscar Alexander Wiesengrund (1870–1946), was a Jewish wine merchant who converted to Protestantism.
 - 9 In Book II of the *Republic*.
 - 10 See Weber, *Economy and Society*, chap. 3, 'The Three Types of Legitimate Domination', pp. 215ff.
 - 11 This refers to the Prologue from *Götterdämmerung*: 'The ash tree fell, / the spring dried up forever! / Today I fasten / the rope to the jagged rock: / sing, sister, / I throw it to you. / Do you know what will happen?'
 - 12 Count Eduard von Keyserling (1855–1918), author of numerous novels and novellas. The quotation could not be found.
 - 13 Joseph Marie, comte de Maistre (1753–1821), was one of the harshest critics of the French Revolution and democracy. In his two-volume *St Petersburg Dialogues* of 1821 he defends the dominant influence of 'divine providence' on history and human society. See *St. Petersburg Dialogues*, trans. R. A. Lebrun (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1993).
 - 14 See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1876–96). The complex 'state integration' is discussed in §§227 and §228, as well as §§448–53; the integrating tendencies of

society through increasing division of economic labour are treated in §§763–7. On the theory of increasing socialization through integration and social differentiation, see the discussion of Spencer in *Soziologische Exkurse*, pp. 28–36.

Lecture 4

- 1 See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 2 Adorno is referring to Lukács's work *The Destruction of Reason*, especially chap. 6, section IV, 'German Sociology of the Imperialist Period (Max Weber)'. See György Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (London: Merlin, 1980). Adorno writes:

It was probably in his *The Destruction of Reason* that the destruction of Lukács's own reason manifested itself most starkly. In that work the certified dialectician lumped together, most undialectically, all the irrationalist tendencies in recent philosophy under the category of reaction and fascism, without pausing to consider that in those tendencies – in contrast to academic idealism – thought was combating the very same reification of existence and thinking that Lukács was in the business of criticizing. ('Extorted Reconciliation: On Georg Lukács's *Realism in Our Time*', in *Notes to Literature*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, vol. 1 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], p. 217)

- 3 See David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (London: John Murray, 1817).
- 4 Here Adorno is recalling the effects of the global economic crisis on the social fabric in the Weimar Republic from 1929. In 1932 the official unemployment figure was 6 million.
- 5 The English national economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946). See John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1936).
- 6 The AFL (American Federation of Labour) was the largest craft union in the USA during the first half of the twentieth century. The CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) was initially a subgroup of the AFL and left the association in 1938. In 1955, the two trade unions merged and adopted the joint abbreviation AFL-CIO.
- 7 Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64) was the first president of the General German Workers' Association (ADAV), a precursor of the SPD. With his theory of the 'iron law of wages', he claimed that, under the rule of supply and demand, the average wage would always remain limited to the necessary living expenses that were normally required in order to exist and reproduce. See Ferdinand Lassalle, *The Workingman's Programme: An Address*, trans. Edward Peters (London: Modern Press, 1884).

- 8 The ancient concept of the human being excluded slaves, who were viewed merely as tools with the ability of language. This definition comes from the Roman historian Marcus Terentius Varro (115–27 BC), who divided the ‘implements’ of a farmer into *vocalia*, *semivocalia* and *muta*. See Marcus Terentius Varro, *Res rusticae*, the section ‘agricultura’, second part. He names slaves as an example of *vocalia*, cattle as an example of *semivocalia* and finally a wagon as an example of *muta*. The description of the slave as an *instrumentum vocale* became known through Karl Marx’s adoption of the three-tier system: ‘Under slavery, according to the striking expression employed in antiquity, the worker is distinguishable only as *instrumentum vocale* from an animal, which is *instrumentum semi-vocale*, and from a lifeless implement, which is *instrumentum mutum*.’ (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes [London and New York: Penguin, 2004], p. 303, note 18)

Lecture 5

- 1 Iring Fetscher (1922–2014) had become Professor of the Science of Politics in 1963 and gave a course in the 1964 summer semester with the title ‘Exercises on John Locke: The *Second Treatise of Civil Government*’, as well as one entitled ‘The Genesis and Development of Marxism’.
- 2 No documentation of the lecture by Lucien Goldmann (1913–70) could be found.
- 3 Two lectures were cancelled, on 9 and 11 June.
- 4 See Institut für Sozialforschung, *Betriebsklima: Eine industriesoziologische Untersuchung im Mannesmann-Bereich* (1954).
- 5 Ludwig von Friedeburg (1924–2010), head of department at the Institute for Social Research from 1955 to 1962, then professor at the Free University of Berlin, returned to Frankfurt in 1966 and became one of the directors of the institute and the sociology department at the university. From 1975 to 2001 he was managing director of the Institute for Social Research.
- 6 See Ludwig von Friedeburg, ‘Soziologie des Betriebsklimas’, in *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 13, ed. Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Dirks (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1963).
- 7 See Heinrich Popitz, Hans P. Bahrdrdt, Ernst A. Jüres and Hanno Kesting, *Das Gesellschaftsbild des Arbeiters* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957) and *Technik und Industriearbeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957).
- 8 See Theo Pirker, Siegfried Braun, Burkart Lutz and Fro Hammelrath, *Arbeiter – Management – Mitbestimmung* (Stuttgart: Ring-Verlag, 1955).
- 9 This term was originally used by Mao Zedong, later also by top functionaries in the Eastern bloc to describe contradictions that could be immanently resolved.
- 10 In his essay ‘Betriebsklima und Entfremdung’ [Work Climate and Alienation], Adorno writes,

When those polled often praised the greater solidarity among workers in the past, the material did not allow us to ascertain whether there was any truth in this, or whether discontent about a situation in which one feels like a powerless atom, despite all representation of one's interests, induces a *laudatio temporis acti*, such that one projects onto the heroic times of the labour movement whatever one lacks, and for which one would rather make the times themselves responsible than oneself. One can at least identify aspects that help explain the system-immanent thinking of those polled. This initially includes the improvement of living and working conditions in the proletariat, the separation of trade unions from political parties, the lack of political training, and, after the collapse of Hitler's dictatorship, a scepticism towards the sphere of politics in general as one of sheer propaganda. Another substantial factor is the compromising of socialism by Russia [...]' (Adorno, *Vermischte Schriften II*, p. 675)

- 11 The centrepiece of Saint-Simon's historical analyses is the distinction between productive and unproductive work. He explains the contrasts between unproductive (nobility, clergy) and productive classes (artisans, workers, entrepreneurs). See *The Political Thought of Saint-Simon*, ed. Ghița Ionescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 50ff. Marx, on the other hand, primarily emphasizes the significance of surplus-value for the concept of productivity: 'The direct purpose of capitalist production is not the production of commodities, but of surplus-value or profit (in its developed form), the aim is not the product, but the surplus-product. Labour itself, from this standpoint, is only productive in so far as it creates profit or surplus-product for capital. If the worker does not create profit, his labour is unproductive' (Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value* [Moscow: Progress, 1968], p. 547).
- 12 The last lines of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), which Adorno paraphrases here, read: 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win' (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. Alan John Percivale Taylor (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 121).
- 13 See Jürgen Kempfski, 'Das kommunistische Palimpsest', in *Merkur*, ed. Joachim Moras and Hans Paeschke, vol. 2 (1948), pp. 53–68.
- 14 See Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, trans. T. E. Hulme and J. Roth (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2012).
- 15 Karl Bednarik (1915–2001) was a painter and social critic. See Karl Bednarik, *The Young Worker of To-Day: A New Type*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. R. Tupholme (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955).

Lecture 6

- 1 The sociologist Helmut Schelsky (1912–84), who joined the Sturmabteilung in 1932 and the Nazi Party in 1937, was Arnold Gehlen's (1904–76) assistant in Königsberg from 1938 to 1940. In 1949

he became director of the Academy of Public Enterprise in Hamburg, then in 1953 Professor of Sociology at the University of Hamburg. The theory of 'levelled middle-class society' was developed in, among others, *Wandlungen in der deutschen Familie der Gegenwart: Darstellungen und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1953) and *Die skeptische Generation: Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1957). See also the essays 'Die Bedeutung des Schichtungsbegriffs für die Analyse der gegenwärtigen deutschen Gesellschaft' (1953), 'Gesellschaftlicher Wandel' (1956) and 'Die Bedeutung des Klassenbegriffs für die Analyse unserer Gesellschaft' (1961), reprinted in *Auf der Suche nach der Wirklichkeit: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1965).

- 2 The American sociologist Robert Staughton Lynd (1892–1970) became known for his Middletown study. See Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), and *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937). These works acted as models for the Darmstadt 'Community Studies'.
- 3 In the essay 'On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening', Adorno explains:

To be sure, exchange-value exerts its power in a special way in the realm of cultural goods. For in the world of commodities this realm appears to be exempted from the power of exchange, to be in an immediate relationship with the goods, and it is this appearance in turn which alone gives cultural goods their exchange-value. But they nevertheless simultaneously fall completely into the world of commodities, are produced for the market, and are aimed at the market. The semblance of immediacy is as strong as the compulsion of exchange-value is inexorable. Society's consent harmonizes the contradiction. The semblance of immediacy takes possession of the mediated, of exchange-value itself. If the commodity in general combines exchange-value and use-value, then the pure use-value, whose illusion the cultural goods must preserve in a completely capitalist society, must be replaced by pure exchange-value, which deceptively takes over the function of use-value precisely in its capacity as exchange-value. [...] The more inexorably the principle of exchange-value destroys use-values for humans, the more deeply does exchange-value disguise itself as the object of enjoyment. (In *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002], p. 296 [translation modified])

- 4 Ibid., pp. 288–317.
- 5 See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. and trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961). Marx and Engels, in their essay *The Holy Family*, summarize as follows: 'The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-alienation. But the former class finds in this self-alienation its confirmation and its good, its own power: it

has in it a *semblance* of human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in its self-alienation; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence' (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Critique* [Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956], p. 51).

- 6 See Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950).
- 7 Aldous Huxley's (1894–1963) novel *Brave New World*, first published in London in 1932, was already published in the German translation by H. E. Herlitschka in Leipzig in 1932 under the title *Welt – wohin?*.
- 8 In the essay 'Aldous Huxley and Utopia', Adorno writes:

Huxley demonstrates this in the speech of his characters. The idiocy of mandatory small talk, conversation as chatter, is discreetly pursued to the extreme. The phenomenon has long since ceased to be a mere consequence of conventions intended to prevent conversation from becoming narrow shop talk or unabashed presumption. Rather, the degeneration of talk is due to objective tendencies. The virtual transformation of the world into commodities, the predetermination by the machinery of society of everything that is thought or done renders speaking illusory; under the curse of perpetual sameness it disintegrates into a series of analytic judgments. (Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber [Boston: MIT Press, 1983], p. 101)

- 9 Hendrik de Man (1885–1953) became director of the Centrale d'éducation ouvrière in 1911 and vice-president of the Belgian Socialist Party in 1933, as well as serving as a minister several times. From 1940 to 1944 he collaborated with the Nazis and was sentenced *in absentia* to twenty years in prison by the Allies after the liberation. De Man taught social psychology at the University of Frankfurt from 1922 to 1933.
- 10 Following Marx's analysis of the industrial reserve army, chapter 25 in the first volume of *Capital* contains various theories later interpreted as a theory of immiseration:

The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore also the greater the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productivity of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital also develop the labour-power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve army thus increases with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labour-army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to the amount of torture it has to undergo in the form of labour. (*Capital*, vol. 1, p. 798)

Elsewhere, by contrast, Marx points out that it is precisely the production or relative surplus-value that can enable an improvement of living standards among the working classes.

- 11 Hegel opens the second book of *The Science of Logic*, on appearance, with this statement:

Essence must appear. Being is the absolute abstraction; this negativity is not something external to it, but being is rather being, and nothing but being, only as this absolute negativity. Because of this negativity, being is only as self-sublating being and is *essence*. But, conversely, essence as simple self-equality is likewise *being*. The doctrine of being contains the first proposition, ‘being is essence’. The second proposition, ‘essence is being’, constitutes the content of the first section of the doctrine of essence. But this being into which essence makes itself is *essential being, concrete existence*, a being which has come forth out of negativity and inwardness. (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, ed. and trans. George di Giovanni [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], p. 418)

Lecture 7

- 1 The second of the Ten Commandments reads, ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them’ (Exodus 20:4).
- 2 In Danish exile in Svendborg, Bertolt Brecht had placed the motto ‘The truth is concrete’ above his desk. This was recounted by Walter Benjamin, among others. See Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), vol. 6, p. 526. Brecht referred to this motto in a number of works.
- 3 Adorno is here referring to the ‘Work Climate’ study, among others.
- 4 Anatole France, *The Revolt of the Angels*, trans. Mrs Wilfrid Jackson (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2018), p. 230:

Bouchotte invited the visitor to sit down on the little flowered couch; at his request she seated herself beside him, and our young man of fashion explained to the singer what Madame de la Verdeliere desired of her. The lady wished Bouchotte to sing one of those apache songs which were giving such delight in the fashionable world. Unfortunately, Madame de Verdeliere could only offer a very modest fee, one out of all proportion to the merits of the artiste, but then it was for a good cause. Bouchotte agreed to take part, and accepted the reduced fee with the accustomed liberality of the poor towards the rich and of artists towards society people.

- 5 Thorstein Veblen, *The Instinct of Workmanship and the State of the Industrial Arts* (New York: Viking, 1914).

- 6 See Institut für Sozialforschung, 'Betriebsklima', Part C: 'Beurteilung der Entlohnung', pp. 39–67, and Ludwig von Friedeburg, *Soziologie des Betriebsklimas*, pp. 76–105.
- 7 See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959), and *Industrie- und Betriebssoziologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1962).
- 8 'There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all [*volonté du tous*] and the general will [*volonté générale*]. The latter considers only the general interest, whereas the former considers private interest and is merely the sum of private wills' (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'On the Social Contract', in *The Basic Political Writings*, 2nd edn, ed. and trans. Donald A. Cress [Indianapolis: Hackett, 2011], p. 172).
- 9 The poet and philosopher Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715–69).
- 10 The 'Work Climate' study revealed that, in contrast to other areas of industry, the relationship between miners and their superiors was characterized especially by dissatisfaction and friction. See Institut für Sozialforschung, 'Betriebsklima', Part E, pp. 83ff., and Part F, pp. 185ff.

Lecture 8

- 1 The first sentences of the lecture seem to be missing in the transcript of the recording.
- 2 The statement which Adorno mistakenly attributes to Engels was made by Marx: 'The weapon of criticism obviously cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory also becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses' (Marx, 'Toward a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*', trans. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, in *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994], p. 34).
- 3 The quotation could not be traced. Adorno presumably means the American sociologist William I. Thomas (1863–1947).
- 4 See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 166.
- 5 Regarding the 'philosophy of inwardness', Adorno writes in *The Jargon of Authenticity*:

In the classic texts of existentialism, as in that of the Kierkegaardian sickness unto death, existence becomes a relationship to itself, under which heading nothing further can be conceived. It becomes, as it were, an absolutized element of mediation, without any regard for what is mediated; and it pronounces a verdict, from the very beginning, against any philosophy of inwardness. In the jargon, finally, there remains from inwardness only the most external aspect, that thinking oneself superior which marks people who elect themselves: the claim of people who consider themselves blessed simply by virtue of being what they are. Without any effort, this claim can turn into an elitist claim, or into a readiness to attach itself to elites which then quickly gives the ax to inwardness. (Adorno, *The Jargon*

of Authenticity, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973], p. 75)

- 6 This line is from the 'King's Song' with which Rilke introduces his longer poem 'Dream-Crowned'. See Rainer Maria Rilke, *Dream-Crowned*, trans. Lorne Mook (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 15. Adorno writes, 'Whatever wants to remain absolutely pure from the blemish of reification is pasted onto the subject as a firm attribute. Thus the subject becomes an object in the second degree, and finally the mass product of consolation: from that found in Rilke's "Beggars could call you brother, and still you would be a king" to the notorious poverty which is the great inward gleam of the spirit' (*The Jargon of Authenticity*, p. 73).
- 7 See *The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: Macmillan, 1908), p. 132: 'Our interest in public events is mostly the merest philistinism.'
- 8 David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950).
- 9 David Riesman (1909–2002) distinguishes between three types of people who represent the respective social forms through their behavioural conformity: tradition-directed, inner-directed and outer-directed. The first is defined by traditions, the second by internalized life goals and the third by the tendency to be open to the expectations and wishes of others. See Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, p. 31. 'Even inwardness participates in dialectics, though not as Kierkegaard thought. The result of the liquidation of inwardness was by no means the surfacing of a type of person cured of ideology but rather one who never became an individual in the first place, the type David Riesman termed "outer-directed." This casts a reconciling light on the category of inwardness in art' (Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor [London: Continuum, 2002], p. 116). 10 Adorno is thinking of the so-called organic composition of capital, meaning the relation between constant (costs of machines and raw materials) and variable capital (costs of labour), which Marx, in the assumption of a 'progressive relative decrease of the variable capital as compared to the constant', develops in the third volume of *Capital* into the thesis of an increasing organic composition of capital, which in turn supports the falling tendency in the average profit rate (see *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 248).
- 11 The Latin phrase *lucus a non lucendo* literally means 'the word for a grove [*lucus*] comes from not glowing [*non lucendo*]', referring to a contradiction between a word's meaning and its supposed derivation; it thus refers to paradoxical logic, to a non-sequitur (Trans.).
- 12 In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno writes:

The organic composition of human beings is increasing. That through which subjects are determined in themselves as means of production, and not as living purposes, rises just like the share of machinery vis-à-vis

variable capital. The prevalent talk of the ‘mechanization’ of human beings is misleading, because it thinks these latter as something static, which undergoes certain deformations due to an ‘outside influence,’ as an adaptation to conditions of production external to them. But there is no substrate of such ‘deformations,’ nothing which is ontically interiorized, on which social mechanisms merely act from outside: the deformation is not the illness of human beings but the illness of the society, which raises its children as ‘hereditarily disadvantaged,’ just as biologism projects onto nature. [...] The organic composition of human beings refers by no means only to specialized technical capabilities but – and this is something the usual cultural critique wishes at no price to reveal – equally to their opposite, the element of the natural, which indeed for its part already originated in the social dialectic and now falls prey to it. What still differs in human beings from technology is incorporated as a kind of lubrication of technology. Psychological differentiation, as it originally emerged in freedom and out of the division of labour and the compartmentalization of human beings according to sectors of the production process, itself steps in the end into the service of production. (*Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. Edmund Jephcott [London: Verso, 2005], p. 229 [translation modified])

- 13 At the time, Adorno was working on his essay ‘Morals and Criminality: On the Eleventh Volume of the Works of Karl Kraus’, in which he writes, ‘There must have been few experiences so bitter for Kraus as learning that women, the permanent victims of patriarchal barbarism, have incorporated that barbarism and proclaim it even in defending themselves’ (*Notes to Literature*, vol. 2 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1992], p. 45). He is referring to Karl Kraus’s essay ‘Morality and Crime’, in which Kraus, writing about women who were accused of prostitution, states: ‘But even the protocols of the girls – one can see how genuine protocols are – contained every conceivable variation on the statement, “I did not receive any wages of shame”. [...] And the women’s rights activists? Instead of fighting for the natural rights of woman, they are at pains to commit her to the unnatural’ (Karl Kraus, *Werke*, ed. Heinrich Fischer, vol. 11: *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* [Munich: Langen-Müller, 1963], pp. 241–52).
- 14 The phrase ‘identification with the aggressor’, coined by Anna Freud, refers to a specific form of defence mechanism. It describes attempts by children to overcome fear through involuntary imitation. See Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, trans. Cecil Baines (London: Karnac, 1993), chap. 9, ‘Identification with the Aggressor’, pp. 109–21. In his own work, Adorno refers a number of times to this ‘character mask of subordination’. See Adorno, ‘Sociology and Psychology’, trans. Irving N. Wohlfarth, *New Left Review* 47 (1968), pp. 79–97, and ‘Theory of Pseudo-Culture (1959)’, trans. Deborah Cook, *Telos* 95 (spring 1993), pp. 15–38.

Lecture 9

- 1 See *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 179: '[...] the persons' economic character masks are merely personifications of economic relations' (Translation modified).
- 2 See Goethe, *Torquato Tasso*, Act II, scene 1:

TASSO: I have obeyed you, otherwise I would
 Have held aloof instead of drawing closer.
 As amiable as she appears to be –
 I don't know how it is – I rarely could
 Be wholly frank with her, and even if
 Her purpose may well be to please her friends,
 One senses purpose and it makes one cross. (Goethe, *Plays*, ed. Frank G. Ryder [New York: Continuum, 1993], p. 173)

- 3 For want of anything better (Trans.).
- 4 For the original essay, see Adorno, 'Jargon der Eigentlichkeit', *Die Neue Rundschau* no. 74 (1963), pp. 371–95.
- 5 The reference is to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, which Adorno criticized as the basis of a new 'German ideology'. See Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p. 59:

[...] the categories of the jargon are gladly brought forward, as though they were not abstracted from generated and transitory situations but rather belonged to the essence of man, as inalienable possibility. Man is the ideology of dehumanization. Conclusions are drawn from certain categories which remind us of somewhat primal social relationships, where the institutions of exchange do not yet have complete power over the relationships of men. From those categories it is concluded that their core, man, is immediately present among contemporary men, that he is there to realize his archetype. Past forms of socialization, prior to the division of labour, are surreptitiously adopted as if they were eternal. Their reflection falls upon later conditions which have already been victimized by progressive rationalization, and in contrast to those the earlier states seem the more human.

Also p. 153:

If one were to call unideological a kind of thinking which reduces ideology almost to zero, then one would have to say that Heidegger's thinking is unideological. But his operation once again becomes ideology because of his claim that he recovers the meaning of Dasein. This happens after the fashion of today's talk about the loss of ideology – talk which attacks ideology but means the truth. (Translations modified)

- 6 Eugen Varga (1879–1964), author of numerous economic reports for the Comintern, fell out of favour after the Second World War because he opposed the official Soviet line that capitalism was in a 'general

crisis' and held the view that the system's chances of survival were improving.

- 7 The book in question is *Il tempo esaurito* by Enrico Castelli, which Adorno would have read in German as *Die versiegte Zeit: Einführung in eine Phänomenologie unserer Zeit* (Frankfurt: Schauer, 1951).

Lecture 10

- 1 See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 174:

Just as, in an exchange, each party receives its due but social injustice nevertheless results, the exchange economy's form of reflection, the prevalent rationality, is just, universal, and particularistic, the instrument of privilege within equality. Fascism makes it pay the price. It openly represents the particular interest, thus unmasking reason, which wrongly flaunts its universality, as itself limited. That this turns clever people all at once into dunces convicts reason of its own unreason.

- 2 The source for this could not be found.
- 3 See Adorno, 'Philosophy and Teachers', in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 19–35.
- 4 See Adorno, 'Note on Human Science and Culture', *ibid.*, pp. 37–9.
- 5 See John Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 1: *Experience and Nature*, ed. Jo Ann Boydson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), chap. 8, 'Existence, Ideas and Consciousness', pp. 226–65.
- 6 For example, in the poem 'The Walk into the Countryside' [Der Gang aufs Land], where he writes: 'Come! Into the open, friend! Although the day sheds little light / And here below the sky closes in on us.'
- 7 See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, VIII: 'Absolute Knowing', pp. 479–93.
- 8 See Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (Ware: Wordsworth, 2001).
- 9 See Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *The Monadology*, in *Discourse on Metaphysics and The Monadology*, trans. George R. Montgomery (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2005).
- 10 See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
- 11 See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I: 'Sense-Certainty or the "This" and "Meaning"', pp. 58–66.
- 12 In his 'Introduction to Emile Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy*', Adorno writes:

To him, science meant observing, comparing, classifying; he could only accept science as valid if it took this approach. With considerable strategic

cunning, he was able to derive from this something like a claim to totality for his quite particular method. His theory of social facts as the only basis for sociological knowledge, presented in his central methodological work *The Rules of Sociological Method*, characterizes his programme of positivism: one must keep to the *faits sociaux*, work on them as simply given things, excluding any speculation or mere opinion, especially the speculation which a society entertains about itself. ('Einleitung zu Emile Durkheim, *Soziologie und Philosophie*', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8: *Soziologische Schriften I*, pp. 246f.)

- 13 Francis Bacon (1561–1626) distinguishes between four types of 'idol' (illusion): Idols of the Tribe, Idols of the Cave, Idols of the Marketplace and Idols of the Theatre. See Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 41ff.

Lecture 11

- 1 René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Related Writings*, ed. and trans. Desmond Clarke (London: Penguin, 1999).
- 2 Ibid., p. 16.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 David Hume (1711–76), a representative of the Enlightenment and empiricism, exerted a strong influence on Kant's philosophy. He also had an indirect effect on the modern tendencies of positivism and analytic philosophy.
- 5 See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (London: Routledge, 1991). In his introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Adorno argues against the 'harmonistic tendency' of Parsons:

In recent years, an example of this tendency has been provided by Talcott Parsons's well-known attempt to create a unified science of man. His system of categories subsumes individual and society, psychology and sociology or at least places them in a continuum. The ideal of continuity current since Descartes and Leibniz, especially, has become dubious, though not merely as a result of recent scientific development. In society the ideal conceals the rift between the general and the particular, in which the continuing antagonism expresses itself. The unity of science represses the contradictory nature of its object. [...] the societally posited aspect of the divergence of individual and society and of their respective disciplines. The pedantically organized total scheme, which stretches from the individual and his invariant regularities to complex social structures, has room for everything except for the fact that the individual and society, although not radically different, have historically grown apart. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. G. Adey and D. Frisby [London: Routledge, 1976], pp. 16f.)

- 6 There are no jointly edited or jointly written texts by Parsons and

Hartmann, at least not before 1964. In 1967 Heinz Hartmann edited and introduced the volume *Moderne amerikanische Soziologie: Neuere Beiträge zur soziologischen Theorie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1967) containing two essays by Parsons, 'Einige Grundzüge der allgemeinen Theorie des Handelns' and 'Prinzipien des Aktions-Systems' (with Robert F. Bales). However, two independently written essays by the authors were published in 1950 in the same issue of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, to which Adorno refers in his 1955 essay 'Sociology and Psychology'. In it, he criticizes Parsons's attempt to standardize psychology and social theory in the article 'Psychoanalysis and the Social Structure' (in *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 19 [1950], no. 3, pp. 371ff.). Adorno comments on Hartmann's essay 'The Application of Psychoanalytic Concepts to Social science' (ibid., pp. 385ff.) as follows: 'In an article written in response to Parsons' study, the psychoanalyst Heinz Hartmann, while sharing the desire for a conceptual language common to both disciplines, concedes in tacit opposition to the psychologism that prevails among orthodox Freudians that the social sciences may make valid predictions without having to take individual personality structures into account.'

- 7 Adorno, 'Zum Verhältnis von Soziologie und Psychologie', in *Sociologica I: Aufsätze: Max Horkheimer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Dirks (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955), pp. 11–45; now in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, pp. 42–85. (English version: 'Sociology and Psychology'; see Lecture 8, note 14).
- 8 See Adorno, 'Die revidierte Psychoanalyse', in *Sociologica II: Reden und Vorträge*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1962); now in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, pp. 20–41.
- 9 See Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1999) and *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (London: Routledge, 1999). Adorno criticizes Horney in his essay 'Revised Psychoanalysis':

But what she presents as the unification of the determinants of culture and individual psychology actually perpetuates their separation, while radical psychoanalysis, by focusing on libido as something socialized, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically, reaches the point where the social principle of domination coincides with the psychological principle of drive suppression. The neo-Freudian school, however, brings the two together only after belittling them: domination appears in the form of family discipline, lack of love and other epiphenomena, while drive suppression manifests itself as a fearfulness located in the outer layers of narcissism and in conflicts that take place more in the pre-conscious than the unconscious realm. The more psychoanalysis is sociologized, the blunter its instrument for understanding socially caused conflicts becomes. (Adorno, 'Die revidierte Psychoanalyse', pp. 27f.)

- 10 The social psychologist Erich Fromm (1900–80) worked at the Institute for Social Research from 1930 to 1939. See Erich Fromm,

- ‘Die gesellschaftliche Bedingtheit der psychoanalytischen Therapie’, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, ed. Max Horkheimer, IV/3, pp. 365–97, and *The Fear of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2001).
- 11 The doctor and psychoanalyst Alfred Adler (1870–1937) is considered the founder of individual psychology.
 - 12 See Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).
 - 13 Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002 [1895]).
 - 14 The prominence of the concept of ‘role’ becomes clear with Dahrendorf, for example, who devoted an entire text to it. See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte, Bedeutung und Kritik der Kategorie der sozialen Rolle* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1959).
 - 15 On the concept of role, Adorno writes:

It is no accident that the notion of ‘role’ (a notion which claims to be value-free) is derived from the theatre, where actors are not in fact the identities they play at being. This divergence is merely an expression of underlying social antagonisms. A genuine theory of society ought to be able to move from such immediate observation of phenomena towards an understanding of their deeper social causes: why human beings today are still sworn to the playing of roles. The Marxian concept of character-masks, which not only anticipates but socially deduces the later category, moved towards achieving this. But if the science of society operates with such concepts, yet shrinks back from the theory of which they are components, it ends up in the service of ideology. The concept of role, lifted without analysis from the social façade, helps perpetuate the monstrosity of role-playing itself. (Adorno, ‘Society’, trans. F. Jameson, in *Salmagundi* 10–11 [1969–70], p. 148)

- 16 See Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*. In ‘Einleitung zu Emile Durkheim, *Soziologie und Philosophie*’, Adorno writes:

For him, the ultimate social fact is the *contrainte sociale*, the overwhelming social coercion that is removed from any subjectively understanding empathy. It is not part of subjective self-consciousness, and no subject can simply identify with it. The purported irreducibility of the specifically social suits it well: it helps to make it more and more something that is-in-itself, to make it absolutely independent not only from the one who knows but also from the individuals who are integrated by the collective. (Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, p. 250)

- 17 The journal *L’Année Sociologique* was founded in 1898 by Emile Durkheim.
- 18 Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Italian economist and sociologist. See Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, ed. Arthur Livingston, trans. Andrew Bongiorno and Arthur Livingston (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1963).

By referring to people as such, instead of the concrete form of their socialization, Pareto regresses to the older, one might almost say: pre-sociological perspective of the theory of ideology, namely the psychological one. He stops at the partial insight that one must distinguish between ‘what a man thinks and says about himself and what he really is and does’, without meeting the complementary requirement that ‘one should distinguish even more in historical struggles between the slogans and delusions of the parties and their true organism and true interests, between their notions and their reality.’ (Adorno, ‘Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre’, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, pp. 468f.)

- 19 The ‘theory of marginal utility’ or ‘subjective doctrine of value’ refers to a neoclassical economic school (including, among others, Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, William S. Jevons, Karl Menger and Léon Walras), which, in opposition to Marx’s theory of labour value, attributes the workings of the market primarily to the wishes and preferences of the individual consumers. The value of a commodity can be determined based on the relationship between the individual and the commodity. See Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Franz X. Weiss (Vienna: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1924), Section III: *Zur Wertlehre*.
- 20 See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences: An Attempt to Lay a Foundation for the Study of Society and History*, ed. and trans. Ramon J. Betanzos (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).

Lecture 12

- 1 In *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Kant writes:

Aristotle had compiled ten such pure elementary concepts under the name of categories. To these, which were also called predicaments, he later felt compelled to add five post-predicaments, some of which are indeed already found in the former; but this rhapsody could better pass for, and be deserving of praise as, a hint for future inquirers than as an idea worked out according to rules, and so with the greater enlightenment of philosophy it too could be rejected as completely useless. (Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will be Able to Come Forward as Science, with Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Gary Hatfield [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], pp. 74f.)

- 2 Adorno is probably thinking mostly of Henri Bergson’s philosophy of life: ‘So-called inspirations [*Einfälle*] are neither as irrational, nor as rhapsodical, as both Bergson and scientism claim. Unconscious knowledge not entirely subject to mechanisms of control explodes in inspiration and bursts through the wall of conventionalized judgements “fitting reality”’ (Adorno, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*, trans. Willis Domingo [Cambridge: Polity, 2013], p. 46).

- 3 The teaching method of the Pandects involves the formulation of abstract, general legal propositions based on Roman common law.
- 4 Aristotle, *Categories*, chap. 5, and *Metaphysics*, Book IV, chap. 2.
- 5 The economist Henryk Grossmann (1881–1950), who worked at the Institute for Social Research and published his central work, *The Law of Accumulation and Collapse in the Capitalist System*, as the first volume of the series Writings of the Institute for Social Research (ed. Carl Grünberg), discusses the methodology of the Marxian ‘procedure of successive approximation’ [*Annäherungsverfahren*] in the book’s introduction: ‘Every simplistic precondition requires a *subsequent correction* which then takes into account the elements of actual reality that were initially neglected, which gradually brings the whole investigation closer to the complicated, concrete phenomenal world and into agreement with it’ (in *Archiv sozialistischer Literatur*, vol. 6 [Frankfurt: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1967]).
- 6 In the second afterword to the first volume of *Capital*, Marx writes:

I criticized the mystificatory side of Hegelian dialectics nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion. But just when I was working at the first volume of *Capital*, the ill-humoured, arrogant and mediocre epigones who now talk large in educated German circles began to take pleasure in treating Hegel in the same way as the good Moses Mendelssohn treated Spinoza in Lessing’s time, namely as a ‘dead dog’. I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of the mighty thinkers, and even, here and there in the chapter on the theory of value, toyed with the mode of expression peculiar to him. (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 102 [translation modified])

- 7 See Lecture 1, note 4.

Lecture 13

- 1 Lecture 13 was particularly marred by technical problems with the tape machine, resulting in loss of text. The transcription frequently contains the note ‘Tape stopped’ in the margin. It was therefore necessary to cut a few small short passages, as they would have interrupted the reading flow considerably while remaining incomprehensible due to their fragmentary character. These passages are marked ‘[...]’.
- 2 Adorno is presumably thinking of the French proverb ‘C’est en forgeant qu’on devient forgeron’, which Hegel does not quote. In paragraph 10 of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* – not in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – Hegel writes: ‘the investigation of cognition cannot take place in any other way than *cognitively*; in the case of this so-called tool, the “investigation” of it means nothing but the cognition of it. But to want to have cognition *before* we have any is as absurd as the wise resolve of Scholasticus to learn to swim *before he ventured into the water*’ (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, with the Zusätze*,

- trans. Théodore F. Geraets, Wallis Arthur Suchting and Henry Siltan Harris [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991], p. 34).
- 3 The term ‘content analysis’ was used to describe the quantitatively oriented analysis of mass media. In the 1920s, the foundations for this were laid by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Harold D. Lasswell (1902–78). Lasswell developed content analysis in the context of analysing enemy propaganda in the First World War; see Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1927). On applying the methods of empirical social research to intellectual constructs, as espoused by Lasswell, see Adorno’s article ‘Empirische Sozialforschung’, specifically the section ‘Empirisch-soziologische Analyse geistiger Produkte (content analysis)’, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 9.2: *Soziologische Schriften II*, pp. 355f.
 - 4 ‘The most dangerous form of stupidity is a sharp intellect’ (*The Book of Friends*, in *The Whole Difference: Selected Writings of Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, ed. J. D. McClatchy [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008], p. 148).
 - 5 Here, and in the subsequent discussion, the English ‘material’ is a translation of *Stoff*, not *Material*; although the latter, with its connection to the ideas of historical progress and artistic necessity, is one of Adorno’s key concepts in the context of new music and composition, the English word is nonetheless the most suited to convey the meaning of *Stoff*, which is more quantitative and less living or historically textured, rather akin to ‘data’ (Trans.). The only correspondence in Weber to the concept of spirit-collecting [*Geisthuberei*] in contrast to material-collecting [*Stoffhuberei*] is in a discussion of ‘material-collectors’ and ‘meaning-collectors’ [*Sinnhuber*] in the field of sociology: ‘The first category are hungrily agape for facts and can only be satisfied with documents, voluminous statistics and surveys; they have no feeling for the refinement of new ideas. The second category are connoisseurs who ruin their taste for facts by feeding on constantly redistilled essences of thought’ (Weber, ‘The “Objectivity” of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Polity’, in *Collected Methodological Writings*, p. 138). In his copy of Weber’s book, next to the reference to the connoisseurs ‘feeding’ [the original formulation uses the word *Gourmandise*], Adorno added the note: ‘ghastly home cooking’ [*scheußliche Hausmannskost*].
 - 6 See Otto Veit, *Die Flucht vor der Freiheit* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1947).

Notes of Lecture 14

- 1 The notes of lectures 14 and 15 were dated incorrectly, in reverse order. They have therefore been integrated into the full text in the correct order so as to maintain the connection to the discussion of ‘system’ in lecture 13. See also Editors’ Foreword.
- 2 See Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 2: *Plato and the*

Platonists, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

- 3 Johann Eduard Erdmann (1805–92) was a student of Hegel. See Johann Eduard Erdmann, *Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Darstellung der Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (Leipzig: Eduard Frantzen's Buchhandlung, 1834).
- 4 See Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Part IV, pp. 24f.
- 5 See Spinoza, *Ethics*, chaps 7–9.
- 6 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 563ff.
- 7 In *Negative Dialectics* (pp. 21f.), Adorno writes:

The philosophical system was antinomical from the outset. Its rudiments entwined with its own impossibility; it was precisely in the early history of the modern systems that each was condemned to annihilation at the hands of the next. To prevail as a system, the ratio eliminated virtually all qualitative definitions it referred to, thus coming into an irreconcilable conflict with the objectivity it violated by pretending to grasp it. The ratio came to be removed from objectivity – the farther removed, the more completely objectivity was subjected to its axioms, and finally to the one axiom of identity. The pedantries of all systems, down to the architectonic complexities of Kant – and even of Hegel, despite the latter's programme – are the marks of an a priori inescapable failure, noted with incomparable honesty in the fractures of the Kantian system [...] Great philosophy was accompanied by a paranoid zeal to tolerate nothing else, and to pursue everything else with all the cunning of reason, while the other kept retreating farther and farther from the pursuit. The slightest remnant of non-identity sufficed to deny an identity conceived as total.

A little further on (pp. 22f.):

Idealism – most explicitly Fichte – gives unconscious sway to the ideology that the not-I, *l'autrui*, and finally all that reminds us of nature is inferior, so the unity of the self-preserving thought may devour it without misgivings. This justifies the principle of the thought as much as it increases the appetite. The system is the belly turned mind, and rage is the mark of each and every idealism. It disfigures even Kant's humanism and refutes the aura of higher and nobler things in which he knew how to garb it. The view of man in the middle is akin to misanthropy: leave nothing unchallenged. The august inexorability of the moral law was this kind of rationalized rage at non-identity; nor did the liberalistic Hegel do better with the superiority of his bad conscience, dressing down those who refused homage to the speculative concept, the hypostasis of the mind.

- 8 'I distrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity' (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], p. 159).

- 9 See also Schopenhauer's polemic against Fichte and Hegel, 'On University Philosophy', in Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Sabine Roehr and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 125–76.
- 10 See the chapter 'Der Kampf gegen das System' in Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modeströmungen unserer Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), pp. 142–55. See also Adorno's review of Rickert's *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsätze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20.1: *Vermischte Schriften I*, pp. 244–50).
- 11 In his works, Ludwig Thoma (1867–1921) described everyday Bavarian life and the political events of his time. In *The Little Relatives* he presents the figure of Josef Bonholzer, a superintendent from Dornstein, who remarks about a marital matter: 'It's all fine. The main thing is for a fella to know his category' (Ludwig Thoma, 'Die Kleinen Verwandten', in *Dichter und Freier* [Munich: Piper, 1956], p. 47).

Notes of Lecture 15

- 1 See Weber, 'The "Objectivity" of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Polity'.
- 2 John Locke (1632–1704) developed the theory of spirit as 'tabula rasa' in the second book of his study 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding'.
- 3 'Benjamin, the dialectician of the imagination, which he defined as "extrapolation at its most minute", sought, like Hegel, "to observe the thing as it is, in and for itself"; that is, he refused to accept as ineluctable the threshold between consciousness and the thing-in-itself' (Adorno, 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', in *Prisms*, p. 240).
- 4 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 694:

Until now, however, the concept of philosophy has only been a scholastic concept, namely that of a system of cognition that is sought only as a science without having as its end anything more than the systematic unity of this knowledge, thus the logical perfection of cognition. But there is also a cosmopolitan concept (*conceptus cosmicus*) that has always grounded this term [...].

- 5 This is the unpublished 'Child Study'. For a report on the study, see Else Frenkel-Brunswik, 'A Study of Prejudice in Children', *Human Relations*, vol. 1 (1947–8), pp. 295–306. The correspondences of Adorno and Horkheimer also contain information about the study. See Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Briefwechsel 1927–1969*, vol. II: 1938–1944, ed. Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 625–32.

Notes of Lecture 16

- 1 Regarding Schelsky's social-theoretical assumptions, see the collection *Auf der Suche nach der Wirklichkeit*, which contains republications of a number of the essays Adorno engaged with.
- 2 Mannheim, in his 1929 text *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936, p. 102), had already formulated the thesis that modern society both produces increasing rationalizations in partial areas and, at the same time, displays irrational traits as a whole:

Rationalized as our life may seem to have become, all the rationalizations that have taken place so far are merely partial since the most important realms of our social life are even now anchored in the irrational. Our economic life, although extensively rationalized on the technical side, and in some limited connections calculable, does not, as a whole, constitute a planned economy. In spite of all tendencies towards trustification and organization, free competition still plays a decisive role.

Adorno is probably referring to a text Mannheim wrote in exile and published in 1935, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 58:

Increasing industrialization, to be sure, by necessity only fosters functional rationality, i.e. the organization of the activity of the members of society with reference to objective ends. It does not to the same extent promote 'substantial rationality', i.e. the capacity to act intelligently in a given situation on the basis of one's own insight into the interrelations of events.

- 3 In his text *The Dominance of the Associations*, Theodor Eschenburg explains how the interplay of the state, parties, associations and state human resource policy developed from the days of the German Empire to the early Federal Republic. See Theodor Eschenburg, *Herrschaft der Verbände* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1955).

Lecture 17

- 1 Here the first few sentences of the transcript seem to be missing.
- 2 See Weber, *Economy and Society*, chap. 3, 'The Types of Legitimate Domination', pp. 212–301, and chaps 10–16, pp. 941–1372.
- 3 'In public opinion, bureaucracy has inherited what one used to say about the so-called unproductive, parasitic professions, the go-betweens and middlemen: bureaucracy is the scapegoat of the administered world' (Adorno, 'Individuum und Organisation', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, p. 446).
- 4 Hans Magnus Enzensberger (b. 1929) introduces the term as follows:

The consciousness industry is really a product of the last hundred years. It has developed at such a pace, and assumed such varied forms, that it has outgrown our understanding and our control. [...] It has become the key industry of the twentieth century. [...] There are four conditions which are necessary to existence; briefly, they are as follows: 1. Enlightenment, in the broadest sense [...] 2. Politically, the consciousness industry presupposes the proclamation of human rights (not their realization) [...] 3. Economically, the consciousness industry cannot come of age unless a measure of primary accumulation has been achieved. [...] 4. The economic process of industrialization provides the last preconditions, namely the economic ones [...]. (Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'The Industrialization of the Mind', in *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics and the Media*, ed. Michael Roloff [New York: Seabury Press, 1974], pp. 4ff. [translation modified])

5 See Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, pp. 219ff.

6 In the appendix to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno writes:

The tremor lives off the excess which technology as a whole, along with the capital that stands behind it, exercises over every individual thing. This is what transcendence is in mass culture. The poetic mystery of the product, in which it is more than itself, consists in the fact that it participates in the infinite nature of production and the reverential awe inspired by objectivity fits in smoothly with the schema of advertising. It is precisely this stress upon the mere fact of being which is supposed to be so great and strong that no subjective intention can alter it in any way – and this stress corresponds to the true impotence of art in relation to society today – that conceals the idealization against which all sobriety gesticulates. Reality becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication. This is how the technological veil and the myth of the positive are woven together. (Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Schema of Mass Culture', in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein [London: Routledge, 1991], p. 63 [translation modified])

7 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 13:

Reified consciousness provides a substitute for the sensual immediacy of which it deprives people in a sphere that is not its abode. While the artwork's sensual appeal seemingly brings it close to the consumer, it is alienated from him by being a commodity that he possesses and the loss of which he must constantly fear. The false relation to art is akin to anxiety over possession. The fetishistic idea of the artwork as property that can be possessed and destroyed by reflection has its exact correlative in the idea of exploitable property within the psychological economy of the self.

And later on: 'Reified consciousness, which presupposes and confirms the inevitability and immutability of what exists, is – as the heritage of the ancient spell – the new form of the myth of the ever-same' (Ibid., p. 230).

- 8 Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) expands on this idea in his work *On Thinking and Speaking* (1795):

5. No thinking, not even the purest, can occur except with the help of the general forms of our sensibility; only in them can we grasp and, as it were, hold on to it. 6. The sensual identification of the units to which certain portions of thinking are combined in order to be contrasted as parts with other parts of a larger whole, contrasted as objects with the subject, is, in the broader sense of the word, language. 7. Language therefore begins directly and immediately with the first act of reflection [...]. (Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über Denken und Sprechen*, in *Werke in fünf Bänden*, ed. Andreas Flitner and Klaus Giel, vol. 5 [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981], p. 97)

Adorno describes this connection in the essay ‘On the Question: “What is German?”’: ‘Because I attribute just as much weight to language as a constituent of thought as Wilhelm von Humboldt did in the German tradition, I insist upon a discipline in my language, as also in my own thought, that hackneyed discourse only all too happily avoids’ (Adorno, *Critical Models*, p. 213).

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