

# The Culture Industry, by T. Adorno

a. People / Organizations: <https://monoskop.org/images/f/f0/Adorno-Culture-Industry.pdf>

b. Quotes:

- **"The culture industry is the societal realization of the defeat of reflection; it is the realization of subsumptive reason, the unification of the many under the one."** - J. M. Bernstein (pg. 11)
- "Not that I am the kind of workaholic, who is incapable of doing anything with his time but applying himself industriously to the required task. But, as far as my activities beyond the bounds of my recognised profession are concerned, I take them all, without exception, very seriously. So much so, that I should be horrified by the very idea that they had anything to do with hobbies - preoccupations with which I had become mindlessly infatuated merely in order to kill the time - had I not become hardened by experience to such examples of this now widespread, barbarous mentality. **Making music, listening to music, reading with all my attention, these activities are part and parcel of my life; to call them hobbies would make a mockery of them.**" - Author (pg. 188-189)

c. General Notes:

- Introduction, by J. M. Bernstein (pg. 1)
  - "In reading Adorno, especially his writings on the culture industry, it is important to keep firmly in mind the thought that he is not attempting an objective, sociological analysis of the phenomena in question. Rather, the question of the culture industry is raised from the perspective of its relation to the possibilities for social transformation. **The culture industry is to be understood from the perspective of its potentialities for promoting or blocking 'integral freedom'**. These positive or negative potentialities, however, are not naively or immediately available; and this because the terms through which we might gauge potentialities for change are themselves not naively or immediately available." (pg. 2)
  - **"For Adorno, the Marxist belief that capitalist forces of production when unfettered from capitalist relations of production will generate a free society is illusory. Capital does not possess such immediately emancipatory forces or elements;** the drift of capitalist development, even the underlying or implicit drift of such development, is not towards freedom but towards further integration and domination. Hence, the Marxist history that places capitalism into a naive narrative of the progress of freedom and reason becomes, through its attempt to unify and integrate history, complicit with its object." (pg. 3)
  - **"Not socialism but fascism represented the realization of Western rationality for Adorno since it continued reason's work of domination through integration and unification."** (pg. 4)
    - **"The culture industry, which involves the production of works for reproduction and mass consumption, thereby organizing 'free' time, the remnant domain of freedom under capital in accordance with the same principles of exchange and equivalence that reign in the sphere of production outside leisure, presents culture as the realization of the right of all to the gratification of desire while in reality continuing the negative integration of society.** While Adorno nowhere identifies the culture industry with the political triumph of fascism, he does imply, both directly and indirectly, that the culture industry's effective integration of society marks an equivalent triumph of repressive unification in liberal democratic states to that which was achieved politically under fascism. This analogical interpretation of the culture industry itself requires the terms of reference provided by the idea of 'integral freedom'." (pg. 4)
  - **"...[Adorno's] and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment...charts the self-destruction of Enlightenment. Its central claim is that the very same rationality which provides for humankind's emancipation from the bondage of mythic powers and allows for progressive domination over nature, engenders, through its intrinsic character, a return to myth and new, even more absolute forms of domination. The feature of enlightened reason which accounts for this reversal is its identification of rationality and understanding with the subsumption of the particular under the universal. Subsumptive or instrumental rationality disregards the intrinsic properties of things, those properties that give each thing its sensuous, social and historical particularity, for the sake of the goals and purposes of the subject - originally self-preservation itself. Thus, such a rationality must treat unlike (unequal) things as like (equal), and subsume objects under (the unreflective drives of) subjects. Subsumption, then, is domination in the conceptual realm. The purpose of subsumption is to allow for conceptual and technical mastery.** When subsumptive rationality came to be considered the whole of reason, then the possibility of cognition of the particular in its own right and the ends for the sake of which the path of enlightened rationality was undertaken became occluded. **Without the possibility of judging particulars and rationally considering ends and goals, the reason which was to be the means to satisfying human ends becomes its own end, and thereby turns against the true aims of Enlightenment: freedom and happiness.**" (pg. 4-5)
    - Cf. June 27, 2024 entry - "On Adorno's and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment: the dialectic (or, what really should be called 'irony') is, in the age where man sought to understand the variety and complexity that is Nature - and, through such understanding, assure themselves of their stature with respect to such (i.e., that they are "above" or "apart from" nature (as) human beings, in light of possessing an unmatched intellectual faculty) - nature first demanded human intellect subject itself in form, thereby initiating what appeared to be 'progression' as in fact 'regression'. Man, standing on their doorstep, peering out at Nature, already convinced they're not such (and, therefore, requiring justification for such an assertion), proceeded to classify, formalize, standardize, and rigidify that which they observed. Positivism ensuing, human reason began to stamp (i.e., producing / articulating) Nature with certain concepts in a way which left such readily relatable, predictable, and even vulnerable. And, in the wave of positivism and the 'hard' sciences, logic, art, and industry took shape - there became 'forms' of expression and institution; 'forms' of human being. And, it's here we have our irony: before 'reason' could "stamp" Nature, it first had to become the stamp - i.e., subject itself, therein becoming a 'subject', to its own pursuit (i.e., object). Suffice it to say, domination is a key characteristic. And, how this all becomes social / economic / political is turning our attention to the character of capitalism (and, its institutions), where domination is without a doubt a key feature."
  - **"The economic organization of modern capitalist society provides for this final realization of instrumental reason and self-destruction of Enlightenment. Under capitalism all production is for the market; goods are produced not in order to meet human needs and desires, but for the sake of profit, for the sake of acquiring further capital. While production for exchange rather than use is a feature of most economic forms, what uniquely characterizes capitalist economies is the tendential universality of production for exchange rather than use.** This too is a procedure for making and treating unlike things as identical, for displacing the intrinsic properties of things for the sake of ends (capital accumulation) extrinsic to them. **The domination of use value by exchange value thus realizes and duplicates the tendencies of enlightened reason: as enlightened rationality occludes ends-oriented rationality, so capitalist production occludes production for use; and as enlightened rationality subsumes particulars under universals indifferent and insensitive to sensuous particularity, so capitalist production subsumes the use value of things under exchange value.** Enlightened rationality and capital production preclude reflection; Enlightenment's irresistible progress in the domination of nature and the securing of the means for the possible realization of happiness come, in fact, to entail an irresistible regression." (pg. 5-6)
    - **"Art is the emphatic assertion of what is excluded from Enlightenment's instrumental rationality:** the claim of sensuous particularity and rational ends. Art is the cognition of ends and of sensuous particularity cut off from practice. Pre-modern art hoped to alter reality, while autonomous art is the quintessence of the division between mental and manual labour in a class society." (pg. 6)

- "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* is, as a consequence, a work of fragments and the chapter 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' is 'even more fragmentary' than the other parts of the book. Fragmentary writing is premised upon the refusal of the operations that establish 'rational' connections between statements in theoretical discourse (inference, entailment, deduction) and their linguistic representatives ('therefore', 'because', etc.). For Adorno, these operations are the markers for domination in the conceptual realm. Equally fragmentary writing does not pretend to empirical accuracy (truth as correspondence). Fragmentary writing is modernist, its logical and syntactical dislocations the cognitive equivalent of dissonance in music. Fragmentary writing functions through the multiplication of logically distinct perspectives, each one of which is something of a theoretical caricature. Through the multiplication of diverse perspectives a complex portrait of the phenomenon in question is produced. This procedure stands somewhere between Nietzsche's call for many eyes, many perspectives, and the phenomenological procedure of eidetic variation wherein through the imaginative act of producing deformations of some phenomenon one discovers what is invariant or essential to it. Of course, Adorno is seeking after historical truth, not the ahistorical, rational essence of phenomena. **Historical truth is 'shown' in fragmentary writing, which does not then explicitly aim to demonstrate or to explain. Explaining and demonstrating neutralize the phenomena in question; to explain is to explain away.**" (pg. 8)
  - *\*how convenient it is to shirk one's responsibility to be coherent in one's expressed views.*
- "The 'Culture Industry' chapter opens with the claim that, while sociologically it would appear that with the decline of established religions, the growth of technological and social differentiation, and the dissolution of the last remnants of pre-capitalism that cultural chaos should reign, yet, this is not so. Never has culture been more unified or integrated: 'Culture now impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part.' **Culture has become openly, and defiantly, an industry obeying the same rules of production as any other producer of commodities. Cultural production is an integrated component of the capitalist economy as a whole. Culture is no longer the repository of a reflective comprehension of the present in terms of a redeemed future; the culture industry forsakes the promise of happiness in the name of the degraded utopia of the present.** This is the ironic presentation of the present. Its degradation, since it does not appear as overt oppression or naked domination, can only be captured in conceptual terms as the 'false identity of the general and the particular'. What makes the identity illusory is not that it does not occur, but that the moment of particularity itself is illusory. Hence, the governing leitmotif of the chapter is the reiterated demonstration that what appears as particularity and individuality is not so, and that what might emerge as a point of resistance to the all-embracing unity of the system is immediately integrated and repressed. Since we do not possess an independent account of true particularity and individuality, it is through the contrast between the typical productions of the culture industry and those of autonomous art that the culture industry's false identity of particular and universal is established" (pg. 9)
- "The effectiveness of the culture industry depends not on its parading an ideology, on disguising the true nature of things, but in removing the thought that there is any alternative to the status quo. **'Pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even where it is shown.'** Hence, pleasure is always flight 'from the last remaining thought of resistance'; the liberation promised by amusement 'is freedom from thought and negation'. This is why consideration of the culture industry is embedded in a fragmentary genealogy of reason: the telos of instrumental rationality, the rationality first licensed by the drive for self-preservation, is the silencing of reflection in the name of the illusory universality pervaded by the culture industry. Instrumental rationality in the form of the culture industry thus turns against reason and the reasoning subject. **This silencing of reflection is the substantial irrationality of enlightened reason.**" (pg. 10-11)
  - **"The culture industry is the societal realization of the defeat of reflection; it is the realization of subsumptive reason, the unification of the many under the one."** (pg. 11)
    - "...Adorno shows how the forms of behaviour the culture industry offers to people have the perverse character of making them practice on themselves the 'magic' that is already worked upon them." (pg. 12)
- "Irrationality, Adorno contends, need not be regarded as adopting policies wholly disconnected from individual and collective ego aims. On the contrary, it is cases where rational self-interest as normally understood is pushed to extremes so as to become irrational, the historical fate of reason presented in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that are to be studied." (pg. 13)
  - "Secondary occultism involves a certain lack of seriousness; unlike serious religious belief it trades in a common sense rationality, demands nothing from the believer, certainly nothing as demanding as faith, and often overtly concedes, in its advice, pride of place to its opposite; modern natural science. By screening its fundamental assumptions, taking up a modest posture with respect to natural science, keeping its actual advice pragmatic and psychologically well-grounded, and yet addressing the real anxieties and dislocations of its readers, providing them with strategies and compensations that appear as more than imaginary, astrology permits belief and obedience without demanding readers to overtly sacrifice the claims of rational evidence and reflection. Astrology survives through its distance from seriousness..." (pg. 13)
    - *\*stoicism performs in very much the same manner.*
      - ◆ *\*T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, in the Dialectic of Enlightenment, remarks "Stoicism - which is the bourgeois philosophy - makes it easier for the privileged to look what threatens them in the eye by dwelling on the suffering of others. It affirms the general by elevating private existence, as protection from it, to the status of a principle. The private sphere of the bourgeois is an upper-class cultural asset which has come down in the world" (pg. 76). G. W. F. Hegel, in his Philosophy of History, while accepting the fact that "the philosophy of the time stood related to religion" (pg. 420), says "Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism - although within their common sphere opposed to each other, had the same general purport, viz. rendering the soul absolutely indifferent to everything which the real world had to offer. These philosophies...produced in man a self-reliant immobility" (pg. 407). Hegel continues saying, "Stoicism taught only that the Negative is not - that pain must not be recognized as a veritable existence" (pg. 413).*
- "In the course of his content analysis of the column Adorno seeks to demonstrate how it tends to fulfil a conservative ideology of justifying the status quo by presenting a benign image of society requiring only conformity added by the 'insight' and limited individual effort recommended by the column for personal success." (pg. 14)
- "...the culture industry, blurs the distinction between fact and fiction..." (pg. 14)
  - "Because people feel that empirical life is set within a complicated, mechanical but nonetheless interlinked system whose rationale they fail to comprehend, and suspect as lacking a rationale conformable to their wants and needs, they are prepared to accept an analogous system of delusion which at least provides imaginary solace. Indeed, like the movies, astrology, while dwelling in an empirical world where nothing is valuable in its own right, provides a message that appears metaphysically meaningful, somewhere the spontaneity of life is being restored, while actually reflecting the very same reified conditions which seem to be dispensed with through an appeal to the 'absolute'." (pg. 15)
    - "What allows astrology to be accepted, believed and obeyed, by sceptical, disillusioned people is the way its opaqueness mirrors that of the empirical world, so as to require little, if any, transcendent faith. It survives by overtly cognitively and affectively demanding so little while apparently offering so much. Why refuse such an offer? Adorno typifies the intellectual attitude expressed here as one of 'disoriented agnosticism'. The demand for strict belief *appears* as not required, agnosticism *appears* as legitimate. The reader is never asked to evaluate the claims being made. By bracketing its cognitive status, astrology keeps the reader cognitively disoriented." (pg. 15)
- "Adorno does not intend by this that criticism is inappropriate; on the contrary, culture is 'true only when implicitly critical'; as such, criticism is an integral and essential component of culture." (pg. 16)
  - "Culture, as it is now conceived of, exists because freedom does not. Culture's power, which is co-extensive with its impotence, is its

- withdrawal from praxis**; this renunciation was forced on culture by history. Because of its impotence before the power of capital, and equally because its promises come increasingly to appear as an insult to those excluded from what is held out, culture is taken over by the very powers it had criticized. **Consumer culture is the degradation of culture.** By forgetting culture's complicity with what it criticizes, conservative cultural critics can see the entanglement of culture and commerce only as a disgraceful corruption caused by a materialist society. Hence, conservative cultural critics call for the return of culture to autonomous purity. Yet, Adorno states, 'all culture shares the guilt of society. It ekes out its existence only by virtue of injustice already perpetrated in the sphere of production.'" (pg. 17)
- **"Adorno perceives dialectical criticism as an uneasy combination of transcendent and immanent critique."** (pg. 18)
    - **"Transcendent critique takes up a position outside society in order to condemn it as a whole.** Such a position corresponds to the definition of ideology as socially necessary appearance. One sees through the appearances by seeing them as products of the interest structure of society and revealing their historical genesis. The validity of such a critique depends upon the epistemological self-righteousness of the critic, allowing him to distinguish between subjective and objective interests, and to separate the real evolutionary trends of society from its apparent history. What is correct in the procedure of transcendent criticism is its appreciation of the totality as reified; but this is also its weakness. Under liberal capitalism revealing the ideological status of cultural products had a significant role, the moment of falsehood and false consciousness could make a difference to social understanding; but as society has grown more one-dimensional '**critical theory must insist on the moment of truth of ideologies against technocratic reason**'. The more one-dimensional society becomes the more critique must pay attention to the internal structure and relatively autonomous logic of cultural objects. This transcendent critique fails to do; its critical position outside society is as fictitious as the most abstract utopias. By its lack of inwardness, sympathy and attention to particulars, transcendent criticism is at one with domination: 'In wishing to wipe away the whole as with a sponge, transcendent critique develop[s] an affinity to barbarism.'" (pg. 18-19)
    - **"Immanent critique, which does take cultural particulars seriously, realizes that it is not ideology in itself which is untrue 'but rather its pretension to correspond to reality'.** As a consequence, the goal of immanent criticism, achieved through careful analysis of the meaning and structure of the object, is to reveal the contradiction between the objective idea offered by the work and its pretension. In the period of liberal capitalism, immanent critique involved the comparison of society's ideological claims about itself, for example, that justice was instantiated, with the social reality of exchange equivalence. In the present epoch, when such claims have been withdrawn, immanent criticism finds its proper home in culture. For immanent criticism, a successful work 'is not one which resolves objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure. Confronted with this kind of work, the verdict "mere ideology" loses its meaning.'" (pg. 19)
      - **"While the moment of negativity in immanent critique is equally the critical moment for Adorno, he denies that immanent criticism is self-sufficient. Its activities are restricted to the efforts of the intellect, and, in discovering the mind's contradictions with itself, it remains locked in a world of reflection.** Immanent critique does nothing to alter the existence to which it bears witness. Immanent critique must, then, step outside the object, it must 'relate the knowledge of society as a totality and of the mind's involvement in it to the claim inherent in the specific content of the object that it apprehended as such'. This means, for example, that dialectical criticism must relate its literary critical encounter with a work to the social determinations that generate, without directly causing, the work's inner contradictions. Only by presenting society with the bill which the object, in itself hermetic, does not redeem, only, again, by bringing in an external perspective, can critique be saved from the temptation of a reversion to idealism, from the temptation of treating the mind and its products as self-sufficient - the original sin of autonomous culture.'" (pg. 19)
  - **"The position of dialectical criticism is a non-position; it can neither immerse itself in the object in the manner of idealizing, redemptive criticism, nor take a stand outside culture by comparing it with a fictitious absolute.** To take up the former stance would amount to acceding to the cult of the mind; while to take up the latter stance would be to reveal hatred of it. 'The dialectical critic of culture must both participate in culture and not participate. Only then does he do justice to his object and to himself.'" (pg. 19-20)
  - Chapter 1 - On The Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening (pg. 29)
    - **"...music represents at once the immediate manifestation of impulse and the locus of its taming"** (pg. 29)
    - **"Responsible art adjusts itself to criteria which approximate judgements:** the harmonious and the inharmonious, the correct and incorrect" (pg. 29)
    - "In one of his essays, Aldous Huxley has raised the question of who, in a place of amusement, is really being amused. With the same justice, it can be asked whom music for entertainment still entertains. Rather, **it seems to complement the reduction of people to silence, the dying out of speech as expression, the inability to communicate at all.** It inhabits the pockets of silence that develop between people moulded by anxiety, work and undemanding docility. Everywhere it takes over, unnoticed, the deadly sad role that fell to it in the time and the specific situation of the silent films. It is perceived purely as background. **If nobody can any longer speak, then certainly nobody can any longer listen.**" (pg. 30)
      - **"...people have learned to deny their attention to what they are hearing even while listening to it"** (pg. 30)
    - "Plato's *Republic* is not the utopia it is called by the official history of philosophy" (pg. 31)
    - **"In the multiplicity of stimulus and expression, its greatness is shown as a force for synthesis. Not only does the musical synthesis preserve the unity of appearance and protect it from falling apart into diffuse culinary moments, but in such unity, in the relation of particular moments to an evolving whole, there is also preserved the image of a social condition in which above those particular moments of happiness would be more than mere appearance.** Until the end of prehistory, the musical balance between partial stimulus and totality, between expression and synthesis, between the surface and the underlying, remains as unstable as the moments of balance between supply and demand in the capitalist economy.'" (pg. 32)
      - **"But what are emancipated from formal law are no longer the productive impulses which rebelled against conventions. Impulse, subjectivity and profanation, the old adversaries of materialistic alienation, now succumb to it.** In capitalist times, the traditional anti-mythological ferments of music conspire against freedom, as whose allies they were once proscribed. The representatives of the opposition to the authoritarian schema become witnesses to the authority of commercial success. The delight in the moment and the gay façade becomes an excuse for absolving the listener from the thought of the whole, whose claim is comprised in proper listening. The listener is converted, along his line of least resistance, into the acquiescent purchaser. No longer do the partial moments serve as a critique of that whole; instead, they suspend the critique which the successful aesthetic totality exerts against the flawed one of society. The unitary synthesis is sacrificed to them; they no longer produce their own in place of the reified one, but show themselves complaisant to it. The isolated moments of enjoyment prove incompatible with the immanent constitution of the work of art, and whatever in the work goes beyond them to an essential perception is sacrificed to them. They are not bad in themselves but in their diversionary function. In the service of success they renounce that insubordinate character which was theirs. They conspire to come to terms with everything which the isolated moment can offer to an isolated individual who long ago ceased to be one. **In isolation, the charms become dulled and furnish models of the familiar.** Whoever devotes himself to them is as malicious as the Greek thinkers once were toward oriental sensuality. **The seductive power of the charm survives only where the forces of denial are strongest: in the dissonance which rejects belief in the illusion of the existing harmony.** The concept of the ascetic is itself dialectical in music. If asceticism once struck down the claims of the aesthetic in a reactionary way, it has today become the sign of an advanced art: not, to be sure, by an archaizing parsimony of means in which deficiency and poverty are manifested, but by the strict exclusion of all culinary delights which seek to be consumed immediately for their own sake, as if in art the sensory were not the bearer of something intellectual which only shows itself in the whole rather than in isolated topical moments. Art records negatively just that possibility of happiness which the only partially

- positive anticipation of happiness ruinously confronts today. All 'light' and pleasant art has become illusory and mendacious. What makes its appearance aesthetically in the pleasure categories can no longer give pleasure, and the promise of happiness, once the definition of art, can no longer be found except where the mask has been torn from the countenance of false happiness. Enjoyment still retains a place only in the immediate bodily presence. Where it requires an aesthetic appearance, it is illusory by aesthetic standards and likewise cheats the pleasure-seeker out of itself. **Only where its appearance is lacking is the faith in its possibility maintained.**" (pg. 32-33)
- **"The new phase of the musical consciousness of the masses is defined by displeasure in pleasure"** (pg. 33)
    - *\*we, today, produce a culture of unfulfillment, whose diversionary tactic is 'newness'.*
  - **"The diverse spheres of music must be thought of together.** Their static separation, which certain caretakers of culture have ardently sought - the totalitarian radio was assigned to the task, on the one hand, of providing good entertainment and diversion, and on the other, of fostering the so-called cultural goods, as if there could still be good entertainment and as if the cultural goods were not, by their administration, transformed into evils - the neat parcelling out of music's social field of force is illusionary." (pg. 34)
  - **"The concept of musical fetishism cannot be psychologically derived. That 'values' are consumed and draw feelings to themselves, without their specific qualities being reached by the consciousness of the consumer, is a later expression of their commodity character. For all contemporary musical life is dominated by the commodity form; the last pre-capitalist residues have been eliminated. Music, with all the attributes of the ethereal and sublime which are generously accorded it, serves in America today as an advertisement for commodities which one must acquire in order to be able to hear music."** (pg. 37-38)
    - "What makes its appearance, like an idol, out of such masses of type is the exchange value in which the quantum of possible enjoyment has disappeared. **Marx defines the fetish character of the commodity as the veneration of the thing made by oneself which, as exchange-value, simultaneously alienates itself from producer to consumer - 'human beings.'** 'A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour.' This is the real secret of success. It is the mere reflection of what one pays in the market for the product. The consumer is really worshipping the money that he himself has paid for the ticket to the Toscanini concert. He has literally 'made' the success which he reifies and accepts as an objective criterion, without recognizing himself in it. But he has not 'made' it by liking the concert, but rather by buying the ticket. 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 appearance of immediacy is as strong as the compulsion of exchange value is inexorable. The social compact harmonizes the contradiction. The appearance of immediacy takes possession of the mediated, 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 precisely in its capacity as exchange value deceptively takes over the function of use value. **The specific fetish character of music lies in this quid pro quo.** The feelings which go to the exchange value create the appearance of immediacy at the same time as the absence of a relation to the object belies it. It has its basis in the abstract character of exchange value. Every 'psychological' aspect, every ersatz satisfaction, depends on such social substitution." (pg. 38-39)
      - "The change in the function of music involves the basic conditions of the relation between art and society. **The more inexorably the principle of exchange value destroys use values for human beings, the more deeply does exchange value disguise itself as the object of enjoyment. It has been asked what the cement is which still holds the world of commodities together.** The answer is that this transfer of the use value of consumption goods to their exchange value contributes to a general order in which eventually every pleasure which emancipates itself from exchange values takes on subversive features. **The appearance of exchange value in commodities has taken on a specific cohesive function.**" (pg. 39)
      - "In the commodity fetishists of the new model, in the 'sado masochistic character', in those receptive to today's mass art, the same thing shows itself in many ways. **The masochistic mass culture is the necessary manifestation of almighty production itself.** When the feelings seize on exchange value it is no mystical transubstantiation. It corresponds to the behaviour of the prisoner who loves his cell because he has been left nothing else to love. **The sacrifice of individuality, which accommodates itself to the regularity of the successful, the doing of what everybody does, follows from the basic fact that in broad areas the same thing is offered to everybody by the standardized production of consumption goods.** But the commercial necessity of connecting this identity leads to the manipulation of taste and the official culture's pretence of individualism which necessarily increases in proportion to the liquidation of the individual. Even in the realm of the superstructure, the appearance is not merely the concealment of the essence, but proceeds of necessity from the essence itself. The identical character of the goods which everyone must buy hides itself behind the rigour of the universally compulsory style. The fiction of the relation between supply and demand survives in the fictitiously individual nuances." (pg. 40)
    - "In spite of all talk of new objectivity, the essential function of conformist performances is no longer the performance of the 'pure' work but the presentation of the vulgarized one with a gesture which emphatically but impotently tries to hold the vulgarization at a distance. **Vulgarization and enchantment, hostile sisters, dwell together in the arrangements which have colonized large areas of music. The practice of arrangement extends to the most diverse dimensions. Sometimes it seizes on the time. It blatantly snatches the reified bits and pieces out of their context and sets them up as a pot-pourri. It destroys the multilevel unity of the whole work and brings forward only isolated popular passages.**" (pg. 41)
      - *\*this is the same function of ideology.*
        - **"radical reification produces its own pretence of immediacy and intimacy"** (pg. 42)
        - "But one may suspect that **the darkest secret of arrangement is the compulsion not to leave anything as it is, but to lay hands on anything that crosses one's path, a compulsion that grows greater the less the fundamental characteristics of what exists lend themselves to being meddled with.** The total social grasp confirms its power and mastery by the stamp which is impressed on anything that falls into its machinery. But this affirmation is likewise destructive. **Contemporary listeners would always prefer to destroy what they hold in blind respect, and their pseudo-activity is already prepared and prescribed by the production.** The practice of arrangement comes from salon music. It is the practice of refined entertainment which borrows its pretensions from the niveau of cultural goods, but transforms these into entertainment material of the type of hit songs. Such entertainment, formerly reserved as an accompaniment to people's humming, today spreads over the whole of musical life, which is basically not taken seriously by anyone anymore and in all discussion of culture retreats further and further into the background. **One has the choice of either dutifully going along with the business, if only furtively in front of the loudspeaker on Saturday afternoon, or at once stubbornly and impenitently acknowledging the trash served up for the ostensible or real needs of the masses. The un compelling and superficial nature of the objects of refined entertainment inevitably leads to the inattentiveness of the listeners.** One preserves a good conscience in the matter since one is offering the listeners first-class goods. To the objection that these are already a drug on the market, one is ready with the reply that this is what they wanted, an argument which can be finally invalidated by a diagnosis of the situation of the listeners, but only through insight into the whole process which unites producers and consumers in diabolical harmony." (pg. 43-44)

- "The new fetish is the flawlessly functioning, metallicly brilliant apparatus as such, in which all the cogwheels mesh so perfectly that not the slightest hole remains open for the meaning of the whole. Perfect, immaculate performance in the latest style preserves the work at the price of its definitive reification." (pg. 44)
    - **"In music as elsewhere, the discrepancy between essence and appearance has grown to a point where no appearance is any longer valid, without mediation, as verification of the essence.** The unconscious reactions of the listeners are so heavily veiled and their conscious assessment is so exclusively oriented to the dominant fetish categories that every answer one receives conforms in advance to the surface of that music business which is attacked by the theory being 'verified'." (pg. 45)
  - **"The counterpart to the fetishism of music is a regression of listening.** This does not mean a relapse of the individual listener into an earlier phase of his own development, nor a decline in the collective general level, since the millions who are reached musically for the first time by today's mass communications cannot be compared with the audience of the past. Rather, it is **contemporary listening which has regressed, arrested at the infantile stage. Not only do the listening subjects lose, along with the freedom of choice and responsibility, the capacity for conscious perception of music, which was from time immemorial confined to a narrow group, but they stubbornly reject the possibility of such perception.** They fluctuate between comprehensive forgetting and sudden dives into recognition. They listen atomistically and dissociate what they hear, but precisely in this dissociation they develop certain capacities which accord less with the concepts of traditional aesthetics than with those of football and motoring. **They are not child-like,** as might be expected on the basis of an interpretation of the new type of listener in terms of the introduction to musical life of groups previously unacquainted with music. **But they are childish;** their primitivism is not that of the undeveloped, but that of the forcibly retarded. Whenever they have a chance, they display the pinched hatred of those who really sense the other but exclude it in order to live in peace, and who therefore would like best to root out the nagging possibility. The regression is really from this existent possibility, or more concretely, from the possibility of a different and oppositional music. Regressive, too, is the role which contemporary mass music plays in the psychological household of its victims. They are not merely turned away from more important music, but **they are confirmed in their neurotic stupidity,** quite irrespective of how their musical capacities are related to the specific musical culture of earlier social phases." (pg. 46-47)
    - **"Regressive listening is tied to production by the machinery of distribution, and particularly by advertising.** Regressive listening appears as soon as advertising turns into terror, as soon as nothing is left for the consciousness but to capitulate before the superior power of the advertised stuff and purchase spiritual peace by making the imposed goods literally its own thing. **In regressive listening, advertising takes on a compulsory character."** (pg. 47-48)
      - "They need and demand what has been palmed off on them. They overcome the feeling of impotence that creeps over them in the face of monopolistic production by identifying themselves with the inescapable product." (pg. 48)
        - ◆ **"The fetish character of music produces its own camouflage through the identification of the listener with the fetish. This identification initially gives the hit songs power over their victims. It fulfils itself in the subsequent forgetting and remembering."** (pg. 48)
      - "Deconcentration is the perceptual activity which prepares the way for the forgetting and sudden recognition of mass music. If the standardized products, hopelessly like one another except for conspicuous bits such as hit lines, do not permit concentrated listening without becoming unbearable to the listeners, the latter are in any case no longer capable of concentrated listening. **They cannot stand the strain of concentrated listening and surrender themselves resignedly to what befalls them, with which they can come to terms only if they do not listen to it too closely.**" (pg. 49)
    - **"There is actually a neurotic mechanism of stupidity in listening, too; the arrogantly ignorant rejection of everything unfamiliar is its sure sign. Regressive listeners behave like children.** Again and again and with stubborn malice, they demand the one dish they have once been served." (pg. 51)
  - "The ambivalence of the retarded listeners has its most extreme expression in the fact that individuals, not yet fully reified, want to extricate themselves from the mechanism of music reification to which they have been handed over, but that their revolts against fetishism only entangle them more deeply in it. Whenever they attempt to break away from the passive status of compulsory consumers and 'activate' them-selves, they succumb to pseudo-activity. Types rise up from the masses of the retarded who differentiate themselves by pseudo-activity and nevertheless make the regression more strikingly visible." (pg. 52)
  - "Masochism in hearing is not only defined by self-surrender and pseudo-pleasure through identification with power. Underlying it is the knowledge that the security of shelter under the ruling conditions is a provisional one, that it is only a respite, and that eventually everything must collapse. Even in self-surrender one is not good in his own eyes; in his enjoyment one feels that he is simultaneously betraying the possible and being betrayed by the existent. **Regressive listening is always ready to degenerate into rage.**" (pg. 55-56)
    - "The regressive listeners are in fact destructive" (pg. 56)
  - "However it may be with films, **today's mass music shows little of such progress in disenchantment. Nothing survives in it more steadfastly than the illusion, nothing is more illusory than its reality.** The infantile play has scarcely more than the name in common with the productivity of children. Otherwise, bourgeois sport would not want to differentiate itself so strictly from play. Its bestial seriousness consists in the fact that instead of remaining faithful to the dream of freedom by getting away from purposiveness, the treatment of play as a duty puts it among useful purposes and thereby wipes out the trace of freedom in it. This is particularly valid for contemporary mass music. It is only play as a repetition of prescribed models, and the playful release from responsibility which is thereby achieved does not reduce at all the time devoted to duty except by transferring the responsibility to the models, the following of which one makes into a duty for himself. In this lies the inherent pretence of the dominant music sport." (pg. 57)
  - "As little as regressive listening is a symptom of progress in consciousness of freedom, it could suddenly turn around if art, in unity with the society, should ever leave the road of the always-identical." (pg. 59)
  - **"In music, too, collective powers are liquidating an individuality past saving, but against them only individuals are capable of consciously representing the aims of collectivity."** (pg. 60)
- Chapter 2 - The Schema of Mass Culture (pg. 61)
  - **"The commercial character of culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear.** Aesthetic semblance (Schein) turns into the sheen which commercial advertising lends to the commodities which absorb it in turn. But that moment of independence which philosophy specifically grasped under the idea of aesthetic semblance is lost in the process. On all sides the borderline between culture and empirical reality becomes more and more indistinct. Thorough efforts in this direction have long been underway." (pg. 61)
    - "The tremor lives off the excess power 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 transfiguration against which all sober objectivity gestures. 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 is woven." (pg. 63)

- "We no longer even approach the much vaunted aesthetic image-consciousness. **Any achievement of imagination, any expectation that imagination might of its own accord gather together the discrete elements of the real into its truth, is repudiated as an improper presumption. Imagination is replaced by a mechanically relentless control mechanism which determines whether the latest imago to be distributed really represents an exact, accurate and reliable reflection of the relevant item of reality.** The only remnant of aesthetic semblance here is the empty abstract semblance of a difference between culture as such and practice as such, the division of labour as it were between different departments of production." (pg. 63-64)
  - **"With the liquidation of its opposition to empirical reality art assumes a parasitic character.** Inasmuch as it now appears itself as reality, which is supposed to stand in for the reality out there, it tends to relate back to culture as its own object. The monopolistic hold on culture, which forbids anything that cannot be grasped, necessarily refers us back to what has already been produced in the past and institutes self-reflection. This is the source of that glaring and yet ineliminable contradiction between the presentation, elegant technical finish and modish procedures on the one hand, and the old-fashioned traditionally individual and culturally derived decayed contents on the other, the contradiction that is revealed in the standardization of what is individual." (pg. 65)
    - "The mass culture which is so true to the facts absorbs the truth content and expends itself in the material but all it has left as material is itself. Hence all those musicals and biopics and all the biographies about artists etc. Self-reflection is provoked by the techniques of the sound film which can only introduce song into the action in a realistic manner by turning singers into the heroes who first lose and subsequently regain their voices. But the true source of self-reflection lies in the fact that decisive aspects of reality today elude representation through the aesthetic image. Monopoly scorns art. The sensuous individuation of the work, to which mass culture must continue to lay claim precisely if it is to be able to perform its complementary function profitably in a standardized society, contradicts the abstractness and self-sameness to which the world has shrunk." (pg. 65)
- "But mass culture expressly claims to be close to reality only to betray this claim immediately by redirecting it to conflicts in the sphere of consumption where all psychology belongs today from the social point of view. The conflict which was once located in the realm of the superfluous now appears itself as a luxury: fashionable misfortune is its own consolation. **In its mirror mass culture is always the fairest in all the land.**" (pg. 66-67)
- **"All mass culture is fundamentally adaptation"** (pg. 67)
  - "Mass culture is unadorned make-up" (Pg. 78)
  - "Mass culture is incompatible with its own objectivity. It constantly refers back to materials whose essence resists such an objective presentation. At the same time it demonstrates its connection with the prevailing practice from the first by borrowing industrial methods through which it produces objectivity as style. The relationship between objectivity and the object itself is not an objective one: it is determined and disrupted by calculation. The perfection of the technical 'how', of trick and presentation, combined with the indispensable fatuity of the 'what', is the ultimate expression of this." (pg. 79)
  - "The information communicated by mass culture constantly winks at us" (pg. 83)
- **"Lack of conflict within the work of art ensures that it can no longer endure any conflict with the life outside itself because life banishes all conflicts into the deepest hidden places of suffering and keeps them out of sight with pitiless force.** Aesthetic truth was bound to the expression of the untruth of bourgeois society. Art really only exists as long as it is impossible by virtue of the order which it transcends. That is why the existence of all the great forms of art is paradoxical, and more than all the others that of the novel, the bourgeois art form par excellence which the film has now appropriated for itself. Today with the most extreme increase of real tension the possibility of the work of art itself has become utterly questionable. Monopoly is the executor: eliminating tension, it abolishes art along with conflict. Only in this consummated conflictlessness does art wholly become one moment of material production and thus turn completely into the lie to which it has always contributed its part in the past. Yet at the same time it here approaches more closely to the truth than those remnants of traditional art that still continue to flourish, to the extent that all preservation of individual conflict in the work of art, and generally even the introduction of social conflict as well, only serves as a romantic deception. It transfigures the world into one in which conflict is still possible rather than revealing it as one in which the omnipotent power of production is beginning ever more obviously to repress such a possibility. It is a delicate question whether the liquidation of aesthetic intrication and development represents the liquidation of every last trace of resistance or rather the medium of its secret omnipresence." (pg. 77-78)
- **"Responsible art sees itself confronted with a paradoxical choice:** either it develops purposive forms so unrelentingly in their purposiveness that they come into open conflict with all external purposes when pursued to the bitter end, or it abandons itself so unreservedly to describing the existent without paying the slightest attention to special aesthetic considerations that its very refusal to intervene in the aesthetic formation of the object actually reveals itself as a purer law of form free of any decorative ingredients. Mass culture is not to be reproached for contradiction, any more than for its objective or non-objective character, but rather on account of the reconciliation which bars it from unfolding the contradiction into its truth. Its objectivity is not that which belongs to the immanent necessity of all the moments in a work but is merely the reflection of an objective style of life and perception. Its non-objective character on the other hand does not declare war upon the world of business but merely exploits its worn out expressive schemata - the myth of personification and platitudes about 'humanity' as a crude material resource. The objective practices are designed from the first to serve the promptness and precision of the information which is conveyed to the captive consumer. Reduced as it is to the pursuit of cultural goods, the spirit demands that these goods themselves are not genuinely experienced." (pg. 81)
- **"All genuine experience of art is devalued into a matter of evaluation. The consumer is encouraged to recognize what is offered to him: the cultural object in question is represented as the finished product it has become which now asks to be identified.** This universal informational character sets the seal upon the radical alienation between the consumer and the inescapable proximity of the product. He finds himself dependent upon information when his own experience proves inadequate and the apparatus trains him to appear well-informed on pain of losing prestige among other people and to renounce the more arduous process of real experience. If mass culture has already become one great exhibition, then everyone who stumbles into it feels as lonely as a stranger on an exhibition site. This is where information leaps in: the endless exhibition is also the endless bureau of information which forces itself upon the hapless visitor and regales him with leaflets, guides and radio recommendations, sparing each individual from the disgrace of appearing as stupid as everyone else. **Mass culture is a system of signals that signals itself.** The millions who belong to the underclasses formerly excluded from the enjoyment of cultural goods but now ensnared provide a welcome pretext for this new orientation towards information. But this grandiose system of elucidation, transmission and rapid familiarization in the sudden shock of imposition destroys everything that the ideology of cultural products claims to promote so widely." (pg. 81-82)
- "Mass culture allows precisely this reserve army of outsiders to participate: **mass culture is an organized mania for connecting everything with everything else, a totality of public secrets.** Everyone who is informed has his share in the secret, just as under National Socialism the privilege of esoteric blood-brotherhood was actually offered to everyone. But the tendency towards extortion in which both curiosity and indiscretion find their fulfilment is a part of that violence which the fascist is always ready to employ against the underprivileged." (pg. 83)
- **"To be informed about something implies an enforced solidarity with what has already been judged. We agree with the majority about it, yet simultaneously we wish to deprive them of it and take possession of it ourselves.** With the gesture for which one is always prepared and which exercises a dictatorial power from the joke to the social research project, namely that of 'But we know that already', one doesn't merely ingratiate oneself with the system personally, one also simultaneously disparages anyone who tries to persuade us of inconvenient facts which are devalued

- instantly since we know them ourselves already. **Curiosity is the enemy of the new which is not permitted to exist anyway.** It lives off the claim that there cannot be anything new and that what presents itself as new is already predisposed to subsumption on the part of the well-informed. The passionate intensity with which curiosity comes on the scene squanders in the process of reproduction and appropriation the very power which might have contributed to the experience or the creation of something really new. The blindness of this passion renders the data towards which it is directed indifferent and irrelevant. However useful it might be from a practical point of view to have as much information as possible at one's disposal, there still prevails the iron law that the information in question shall never touch the essential, shall never degenerate into thought. This is ensured by the restriction of information to what the monopoly has supplied, to commodities, or to those people whose function in the business world has turned them into commodities. But as if this were not enough, there is a taboo against inaccurate information, a charge that can be invoked against any thought. **The curiosity for information cannot be separated from the opinionated mentality of those who know it all. Today the curious individual becomes a nihilist. Anything that cannot be recognized, subsumed and verified he rejects as idiocy or ideology, as subjective in the derogatory sense.** But what he already knows and can identify becomes valueless in the process, mere repetition, so much wasted time and money. This aporia of mass culture and the science affiliated to it reduces its victims to its own kind of praxis, namely a blunted perseverance. But this hopeless figure of curiosity is wholly determined by the monopoly. The attitude of the well-informed derives from that of the buyer who knows his way about the market. To this extent it is directly related to the advertising business." (pg. 84-85)
- **"Advertising becomes information when there is no longer anything to choose from, when the recognition of brand names has taken the place of choice, when at the same time the totality forces everyone who wishes to survive into consciously going along with the process. This is what happens under monopolistic mass culture.** We can distinguish three stages in the developing domination of needs: advertising, information and command. As a form of omnipresent familiarization mass culture dissolves these stages into one another." (pg. 85)
    - **"The curiosity which transforms the world into objects is not objective: it is not concerned with what is known but with the fact of knowing it, with having, with knowledge as a possession. This is precisely how the objects of information are organized today.** Their indifferent character predestines their being and they are incapable of transcending the abstract fact of possession through any immanent quality of their own. **As facts they are arranged in such a way that they can be grasped as quickly and easily as possible. Wrenched from all context, detached from thought, they are made instantly accessible to an infantile grasp.** They may never be broadened out in any way but like favourite dishes they must obey the rule of identity if they are not to be rejected as false or alien. **They must always be accurate but never true. Thus they tend towards deceit and the journalist's canard and the feeble invented anecdotes of the radio reporter are merely an explosion of the untruth which already lies within the blindness of the facts themselves.** The curious individual who falls victim here, the raving autograph-chaser at the film studio, the child under fascism who suffers under the new-fangled disease of compulsive reading, is simply the citizen who has come to consciousness of himself, the person who has learnt how to come to terms with reality and whose apparent insanity merely confirms the objective insanity which men have finally succeeded in catching up with." (pg. 85-86)
  - **"Mass culture has finally rewritten the whole of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in accordance with the principle of the competition.** The sensuous moment of art transforms itself under the eyes of mass culture into the measurement, comparison and assessment of physical phenomena." (pg. 87)
    - **"The sporting events from which the schema of mass culture borrows so many of its features** and which represent one of its favourite themes have divested themselves of all meaning. They are nothing but what they are. So it is that **'sportification' has played its part in the dissolution of aesthetic semblance.** Sport is the imageless counterpart to practical life. And aesthetic images increasingly participate in this imagelessness the more they turn into a form of sport themselves. Indeed one might perceive in this an anticipation of a kind of play which in a classless society might do away with semblance along with the principle of utility whose complement it is. But if in fact the principles of the classless society do mature under the conditions of monopoly capitalism, they certainly do not do so in such a way that they only need liberating from the fetters of domination before being realized. Monopoly does not merely abuse these principles but actually inhabits them. They contain future possibilities mediated by the unbearable opposition which is still burned into the traces of freedom. **Sport itself is not play but ritual in which the subjected celebrate their subjection.** They parody freedom in their readiness for service, a service which the individual forcibly exacts from his own body for a second time. In the freedom which he exercises over his body the individual confirms what he is by inflicting upon this slave the same injustice he has already endured at the violent hands of society. The passion for sport, in which the masters of mass culture sense the real mass basis of their dictatorial power, is grounded in this fact. One can play the master by inflicting the original pain upon oneself and others again symbolically through a kind of compulsive repetition. While the act of repetition schools obedience, it absorbs the fateful damage in the perpetual potential for anxiety, and so it continues. At the same time the border line between acting and suffering, between internal and external force, is eliminated in the symbolic performance. This is the school for that integration which finally succeeded politically transforming the powerless into a band of applauding hooligans. One is allowed to inflict pain according to the rules, one is maltreated according to the rules and the rule checks strength in order to vindicate weakness as strength: the screen heroes enjoy being tortured on film. **The rules of the game resemble those of the market, equal chances and fair play for all, but only as the struggle of all against all. Thus it is that sport permits competition, now reduced to a form of brutality, to survive in a world in which competition has actually been eliminated.** While sport does indeed express competition as a form of immediate activity, it also expressly thematizes a historical tendency which has done away with competition proper. From being a kind of deception or trick practised upon others it has become a coup. But the record achievements in which sport culminates already proclaim the undisguised law of the strongest which arises so naturally from the competitive domain precisely because it has always dominated that domain so relentlessly. In the triumph of this practical spirit, far as it is from the acquisitive pursuit of the necessities of life, **sport becomes a pseudo-praxis in which those who are practically active are no longer capable of helping themselves but now turn themselves once again into the objects they have already become.** In its naked literalness, in the brutish seriousness which hardens every gesture of play into an automatic reflex, sport becomes the colourless reflection of a hardened callous life. Sport only preserves the joy of movement, the thought of bodily liberation, the suspension of practical ends in a completely external distorted form. Yet perhaps because the violence which sport inflicts upon people might help them towards understanding how they could one day finally put an end to violence itself, mass culture takes sport into custody. Even if the sportsman might possibly be able to develop certain virtues like solidarity, readiness to help others or even enthusiasm which could prove valuable in critical political moments, nothing of this kind is to be found in the spectator. Here a crude contemplative curiosity replaces the last traces of spontaneity. But **mass culture is not interested in turning its consumers into sportsmen as such but only into howling devotees of the stadium.** In so far as mass culture reflects the totality of life as a complete system of open or covert sportive competitive struggles, it enthrones sport as life itself and even eliminates the tension between sport on the Sunday day off and the wretchedness of the working week, a tension in which the better part of sport used to consist. This is what it achieves with the final liquidation of aesthetic semblance. Mass culture even neutralizes this pseudo-praxis into the image-quality which is simultaneously renounced in the sportification of the product. **Under monopoly conditions the more life forces anyone who wishes to survive into deceit, trickery and insinuation and the less the individual can depend any longer upon a stable profession for his living, upon the continuity of labour, then all the greater becomes the might of sport in mass culture and the outside world in general. Mass culture is a kind of training for life when things have gone wrong.**" (pg. 89-91)
    - **"It is not so much that misery is concealed in the medium of film for example, indeed it is often enough depicted with some relish, but that the**

- viewer is taught to behave everywhere as if there really were no such thing." (pg. 91)
- "If indeed the advances of technology largely determine the fate of society, then the technicized forms of modern consciousness are also heralds of that fate. They transform culture into a total lie, but this untruth confesses the truth about the socio-economic base with which it has now become identical. The neon signs which hang over our cities and outshine the natural light of the night with their own are comets presaging the natural disaster of society, its frozen death. Yet they do not come from the sky. They are controlled from earth. **It depends upon human beings themselves whether they will extinguish these lights and awake from a nightmare which only threatens to become actual as long as men believe in it.**" (pg. 96)
  - Chapter 3 - The Culture Industry Reconsidered (pg. 98)
    - **"The culture industry fuses the old and familiar into a new quality.** In all its branches, products which are tailored for consumption by masses, and which to a great extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to plan. The individual branches are similar in structure or at least fit into each other, ordering themselves into a system almost without a gap. This is made possible by contemporary technical capabilities as well as by economic and administrative concentration. **The culture industry intentionally integrates its consumers from above.** To the detriment of both it forces together the spheres of high and low art, separated for thousands of years. The seriousness of high art is destroyed in speculation about its efficacy; the seriousness of the lower perishes with the civilizational constraints imposed on the rebellious resistance inherent within it as long as social control was not yet total. Thus, although the culture industry undeniably speculates on the conscious and unconscious state of the millions towards which it is directed, **the masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object.** The very word mass-media, specially honed for the culture industry, already shifts the accent onto harmless terrain. Neither is it a question of primary concern for the masses, nor of the techniques of communication as such, but of the spirit which sufflates them, their master's voice. The culture industry misuses its concern for the masses in order to duplicate, reinforce and strengthen their mentality, which it presumes is given and unchangeable. How this mentality might be changed is excluded throughout. **The masses are not the measure but the ideology of the culture industry,** even though the culture industry itself could scarcely exist without adapting to the masses." (pg. 98-99)
      - "The cultural commodities of the industry are governed, as Brecht and Suhrkamp expressed it thirty years ago, by the principle of their realization as value, and not by their own specific content and harmonious formation. **The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms.**" (pg. 99)
    - "What parades as progress in the culture industry, as the incessantly new which it offers up, remains the disguise for an eternal sameness; everywhere the changes mask a skeleton which has changed just as little as the profit motive itself since the time it first gained its predominance over culture." (pg. 100)
      - "Thus, **the expression 'industry'** is not to be taken too literally. It **refers to the standardization of the thing itself** - such as that of the Western, familiar to every movie-goer - **and to the rationalization of distribution techniques, but not strictly to the production process.**" (pg. 100)
    - "The most ambitious defence of the culture industry today celebrates its spirit, which might be safely called ideology, as an ordering factor. **In a supposedly chaotic world it provides human beings with something like standards for orientation, and that alone seems worthy of approval.** However, what its defenders imagine is preserved by the culture industry is in fact all the more thoroughly destroyed by it." (pg. 103)
      - **"The appeal to order alone, without concrete specificity, is futile; the appeal to the dissemination of norms, without these ever proving themselves in reality or before consciousness, is equally futile.** The idea of an objectively binding order, huckstered to people because it is so lacking for them, has no claims if it does not prove itself internally and in confrontation with human beings. But this is precisely what no product of the culture industry would engage in. **The concepts of order which it hammers into human beings are always those of the status quo. They remain unquestioned, unanalysed and undialectically pre-supposed,** even if they no longer have any substance for those who accept them. In contrast to the Kantian, **the categorical imperative of the culture industry no longer has anything in common with freedom. It proclaims: you shall conform, without instruction as to what; conform to that which exists anyway, and to that which everyone thinks anyway as a reflex of its power and omnipresence. The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness.** The order that springs from it is never confronted with what it claims to be or with the real interests of human beings. **Order, however, is not good in itself. It would be so only as a good order.** The fact that the culture industry is oblivious to this and extols order in abstracto, bears witness to the impotence and untruth of the messages it conveys. While it claims to lead the perplexed, it deludes them with false conflicts which they are to exchange for their own. It solves conflicts for them only in appearance, in a way that they can hardly be solved in their real lives. In the products of the culture industry human beings get into trouble only so that they can be rescued unharmed, usually by representatives of a benevolent collective; and then in empty harmony, they are reconciled with the general, whose demands they had experienced at the outset as irreconcilable with their interests. For this purpose the culture industry has developed formulas which even reach into such non-conceptual areas as light musical entertainment. Here too one gets into a 'jam', into rhythmic problems, which can be instantly disentangled by the triumph of the basic beat." (pg. 104-105)
        - *\*it manufactures off of the ego-weakness of its members*
    - **"In so far as the culture industry arouses a feeling of well-being that the world is precisely in that order suggested by the culture industry, the substitute gratification which it prepares for human beings cheats them out of the same happiness which it deceitfully projects. The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment,** in which, as Horkheimer and I have noted, **enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves.** These, however, would be the precondition for a democratic society which needs adults who have come of age in order to sustain itself and develop. If the masses have been unjustly reviled from above as masses, the culture industry is not among the least responsible for making them into masses and then despising them, while obstructing the emancipation for which human beings are as ripe as the productive forces of the epoch permit." (pg. 106)
  - Chapter 4 - Culture and Administration (pg. 107)
    - **"Whoever speaks of culture speaks of administration as well,** whether this is his intention or not" (pg. 107)
    - "As Eduard Steuermann once formulated it, the more that is done for culture, the worse it fares. This paradox could be developed as follows: culture suffers damage when it is planned and administrated; when it is left to itself, however, everything cultural threatens not only to lose its possibility of effect, but its very existence as well. It is neither possible to accept uncritically the concept of culture, long permeated by ideas of departmentalization, nor to continue to shake one's head conservatively about what is being done to culture in the age of integral organization." (pg. 108)
    - "The dialectic of culture and administration nowhere expresses the sacrosanct irrationality of culture so clearly as in the continually growing alienation of administration from culture - both in terms of its objective categories and its personal composition. (And culture, of course, seems most thoroughly irrational to those who have had the smallest experience of it.) For that which is administrated, administration is an external affair by which it is subsumed rather than comprehended. This is precisely the essence of administrated rationality itself, which does nothing but order and cover over. In the chapter on amphiboly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant - in opposition to Leibniz - denied rationality the ability of cognition of 'the interior of things'. Aporia prevails between the absolute purpose of the cultural and the absolute rationality of administration, which is nothing but the rationality of scientific ratio. What is called cultural with good reason must recollectively assimilate whatever has been left along the way in the process of the progressive control of nature, reflected in increasing rationality and ever more rational forms of control. **Culture is the perennial claim of the**



- particular over the general, as long as the latter remains unreconciled to the former." (pg. 112-113)
- **"The demand made by administration upon culture is essentially heteronomous:** culture - no matter what form it takes - is to be measured by norms not inherent to it and which have nothing to do with the quality of the object, but rather with some type of abstract standards imposed from without, while at the same time the administrative instance - according to its own prescriptions and nature - must for the most part refuse to become involved in questions of immanent quality which regard the truth of the thing itself or its objective bases in general. Such expansion of administrative competence into a region, the idea of which contradicts every kind of average generality inherent to the concept of administrative norms, is itself irrational, alien to the immanent ratio of the object - for example, to the quality of a work of art - and a matter of coincidence as far as culture is concerned. The self-consciousness of this antinomy and the consequences thereof are the first demands which would have to be made upon an administrative praxis which is mature and enlightened in the Kantian sense." (pg. 113)
  - "Despite all this there has been an essential change in the relation between culture and organized power. **Culture - as that which goes beyond the system of self-preservation of the species - involves an irrevocably critical impulse towards the status quo and all institutions thereof.** This is by no means merely a tendency embodied in many cultural structures, but rather a **protest against integration which always violently opposes that which is qualitatively different;** in a certain sense this criticism is directed against the idea of levelling unification itself. The fact that anything at all thrives which is different and which is not to be turned into cash illuminates the prevailing praxis in all its dubiousness. It is not only through its manifest practical intentions, but rather through its mere existence - indeed, precisely through its impractical nature - that art manifests a polemic, secretly practical character. This, however, cannot be reconciled through the insertion of culture as a category - 'cultural activities' - into the totality of prevailing practice as has been done under current conditions with total smoothness. At one time the line of demarcation between reality and culture was neither so sharp nor so deep as it now is." (pg. 116)
  - "the equalization of the tensions felt today between culture and its objective conditions threatens culture with spiritual death by freezing. **In its relation to reality there is a dialectic of non-simultaneity.** Only where the development towards the administered world and social modernity had not yet asserted itself so successfully - in France and Austria, for example - did the aesthetically modern, the avant-garde, thrive. When reality, however, dwells upon the current standard, a tendentious levelling of consciousness takes place. The more easily consciousness adjusts to integral reality, the more it is discouraged from going beyond that which is there once and for all." (pg. 121)
  - **...the rationality of the sciences is itself similar to that of administration.** The same situation exists wherever team work, collective effort, and wide-range investigation are necessary, such as in empirical social research. This field has not only modelled its own training after the example of administrative categories; without administration, it would sink into chaos - above all, into that which is coincidentally particular and irresponsible. Even art could not possibly oppose all this *en bloc*. A field such as architecture, which, by virtue of its foundation in practical needs, is today better off than the autonomous artistic genres, was never conceivable without administration. The film, above all, because of the scope of costs which can be met only through investment, is dependent upon a type of planning analogous to that of public administration." (pg. 121)
    - **"Administration, however, is not simply imposed upon the supposedly productive human being from without. It multiplies within this person himself."** (pg. 122)
      - "Whoever possesses a flair for such tendencies can expect to encounter disguised administrative categories even in the most advanced avant-garde artistic products - indeed, even in the most finely-nuanced emotions of the individual, in his voice and gestures. Attention must be directed toward aesthetic tendencies in the direction of integral construction; this can be verified at many junctures. **Such tendencies envision a type of planning from above, the analogy of which to administration is not to be ignored.** Such structures might well be totally predetermined." (pg. 122)
        - \*I don't see how this is any different from Heidegger's 'They' or Sartre's 'Inauthenticity'.
      - "According to Max Weber's thesis administration, by its very nature, by and large excludes **individual arbitrariness in favour of an objectively regulated process;** in the same manner the individual action of the idea in art of this type is frowned upon." (pg. 122)
        - ◆ "Within certain boundaries, administration - through rational ordering processes - actually prevents negative coincidence, blind control over others, nepotism and favouritism." (pg. 122)
  - "The negation of the concept of the cultural is itself under preparation. **The major factor therein is the dismissal of such concepts as autonomy, spontaneity and criticism: autonomy, because the subject, rather than making conscious decisions, both has and wishes to subjugate itself to whatever has been pre-ordained. The reason for this is that the spirit, which according to traditional cultural concepts should be its own law-giver, at every instant now experiences its own impotence in relation to the overwhelming demands of mere being. Spontaneity diminishes because total planning takes precedence over the individual impulse, predetermining this impulse in turn, reducing it to the level of illusion, and no longer tolerating that play of forces which was expected to give rise to a free totality. And finally, criticism is dying out because the critical spirit is as disturbing as sand in a machine to that smoothly-running operation which is becoming more and more the model of the cultural. This critical spirit now seems antiquated, irresponsible and unworthy, much like 'armchair' thinking.** The relationship between generations has been reversed ludicrously; youth seeks its validation in the principle of reality while the older generation digresses into the intelligible world." (pg. 123)
    - "A further particularly clear phenomenon to which the label of the Muses is attached has its place in administrated culture; this is the attempt - effective in terms of mass psychology - to save the spontaneity which is threatened by administration or, as they refer to it in those circles, through 'correct understanding': **every attempt of pedagogy to lay claim to the spiritual is an expression of this desire. The visible result is regression, blind complacency on the part of the subject encouraged to be spontaneous.** It is no accident that the jargon of authenticity is spoken everywhere in these spheres..." (pg. 124-125)
      - **"The jargon of authenticity, however, united the heterogeneous under one roof.** Linguistic components from an individual sphere - from theological tradition, existential philosophy, the youth movement, the military or from Expressionism - are institutionally absorbed and then, to a certain extent, returned to the private sphere, placed back in the possession of the individual person, who can then speak with ease, freedom and joy about mission and encounter, about authentic pronouncement and concern, as though he himself were pleased." (pg. 125)
  - "Nonetheless, what is demonstrated by such models is to be attributed to administration, in regard to which one might console oneself by means of a philosophically disreputable concept of inwardness or with pure culture which is guaranteed genuine. Those who use such words are the first to attack everything unregimented in a rage. In truth, culture itself is expected to pay the bill. Even when culture is viewed as something removed from reality, it is in no way isolated from reality, but rather involved instructions for actual realization, no matter how distant and mediated this might be. If culture is totally deprived of this impulse, it becomes invalid. Within culture administration only repeats the offences committed by culture itself in that it ever degraded itself to an element of representation, to a field of activity, and, finally, to a sector of mass action, of propaganda and of tourism. **If culture is defined as the de-barbarization of man, elevating him beyond the state of simple nature, without actually perpetuating this state through violent suppression, then culture is a total failure. It has not been able to take root in man as long as he has lacked the prerequisites for an existence marked by human dignity. It is no coincidence that he is still capable of barbarous outbursts because of suppressed rancour about his fate, about his deeply-felt lack of freedom. The fact that he welcomes the trash of the culture industry with outstretched arms - half aware that it is trash - is another aspect of the same state of affairs, the seeming harmlessness of which is probably restricted to the surface.** Culture long ago evolved into its own contradiction, the congealed content of educational privilege; for that reason it now takes its place within the material production process as

- an administrated supplement to it." (pg. 125-126)
- **"The antinomy of planning and culture results in the dialectical idea of absorbing that which is spontaneous and not planned into planning, of creative space for these factors and of a strengthening of their possibilities.** This idea does not dispense with the basis of social justice. The possibility of decentralization, particularly in view of the state of the forces of technical production as they now approach Utopian dimensions, is favourable to it. Planning of the non-planned within a specific sector - that of education - was emphatically advocated by Helmut Becker; there are other fields which offer analogous situations. In spite of this seeming plausibility, however, the feeling of untruth cannot be overcome totally: namely, the feeling that the non-planned is degraded to a costume of itself and, consequently, that the freedom involved becomes a fiction." (pg. 127)
  - "While the total social constitution formally guarantees equal rights, it nonetheless continues to conserve the educational privilege, granting the possibility of differentiated and progressive spiritual experience to only a few." (pg. 128)
  - "A cultural policy which has rid itself of social naiveté must see through this complex without fear of the mass of majorities. **Through cultural policy alone it is hardly possible to eradicate the contradiction between democratic order and the actual consciousness of those who are kept in a continuing state of minority by social conditions. But democracy through representation,** to which even the experts in the administration of cultural matters owe their legitimation, nonetheless permits a certain balance; it **makes possible the hindrance of manoeuvres which serve barbarism through the corruption of the idea of objective quality by means of callous appeal to the common will.** Walter Benjamin's thought on critics whose task it is to uphold the interest of the public against the public itself can be applied to cultural policy as well. **To serve this purpose is the duty of the expert.** The longing for individuals who might work beyond the realm of expertise usually characterizes only regression or the desire for technicians of communication, with whom - simply because they are lacking any real understanding of matters - one can get along better and who dwell all the more conformingly within their own policy. **There is no pure immediacy of culture: wherever it permits itself to be consumed arbitrarily by a public as consumer goods, it manipulates people. The subject becomes the subject of culture only through the mediation of objective discipline; the advocate thereof - in the administrated world, at any rate - is the expert.** To be sure, it might be possible to find experts whose authority really is founded upon the authority of the thing itself, rather than in the power of suggestion or personal prestige. It would take an expert to decide who the experts are - and this leads into a vicious circle. The relation between administration and expert is not only a matter of necessity, but it is a virtue as well. It opens a perspective for the protection of cultural matters from the realm of control by the market, which today unhesitatingly mutilates culture. The spirit in its autonomous form is no less alienated from the manipulated and by now firmly-fixed needs of consumers than it is from administration. The authoritarian establishment of the independence of the latter allows it - through the co-optation of those to whom these matters are not alien - to make certain corrections in the dictates of these needs. This would scarcely be possible if the sphere of culture were left totally at the mercy of the mechanics of supply and demand, to say nothing of the power of direct command by totalitarian rulers. The most questionable aspect of the administrated world - this very independence of the executive instances - conceals the potential of something better; the institutions are strengthened to such a degree that they - even if they and their function is transparent to themselves - are able to break through the principle of merely existing for something else - of adjustment to the deceptive wishes of a plebiscite. These wishes, were they to be fulfilled, would irrevocably repress everything cultural by bringing it forth from its presumed state of isolation. If the administrated world is to be understood as one from which all hiding places are fast disappearing, it should still be possible for this world to compensate for this and, by virtue of the powers of men of insight, to create centres of freedom as they are eradicated by the blind and unconscious process of mere social selection. That irrationality expressed in the independence of administration in its relation to society is the refuge of the inhibited development of culture itself. It is only through deviation from prevalent rationality that culture displays its ratio. Such hopes, however, are rooted in a state of consciousness on the part of administrators which is by no means simply to be taken for granted: it would depend upon their critical independence from the power and the spirit of a consumer society identical with the administrated world itself." (pg. 129-130)
    - "Therefore, the spontaneous consciousness, not yet totally in the grips of reification, is still in a position to alter the function of the institution within which this consciousness expresses itself. **For the present, within liberal-democratic order, the individual still has sufficient freedom within the institution and with its help to make a modest contribution to its correction. Whoever makes critically and unflinchingly conscious use of the means of administration and its institutions is still in a position to realize something which would be different from merely administrated culture.** The minimal differences from the ever-constant which are open to him define for him - no matter how hopelessly - the difference concerning the totality; it is, however, in the difference itself - in divergence - that hope is concentrated." (pg. 131)
  - Chapter 5 - Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda (pg. 132)
    - **"The overwhelming majority of all agitators' statements are directed ad hominem.** They are obviously **based on psychological calculations rather than on the intention to gain followers through the rational statement of rational aims.** The term 'rabble-rouser', though objectionable because of its inherent contempt of the masses as such, is adequate in so far as it expresses the atmosphere of irrational emotional aggressiveness purposely promoted by our would-be Hitlers. If it is an impudence to call people rabble', **it is precisely the aim of the agitator to transform the very same people into 'rabble', that is, crowds bent on violent action without any sensible political aim, and to create the atmosphere of the pogrom.**" (pg. 132-133)
      - "Second, **the agitators' approach is truly systematical and follows a rigidly set pattern of clear-cut 'devices'.** This does not merely pertain to the ultimate unity of the political purpose: the abolition of democracy through mass support against the democratic principle, but even more so to the intrinsic nature of the content and presentation of propaganda itself...Moreover, the speeches themselves are so monotonous that one meets with endless repetitions as soon as one is acquainted with the very limited number of stock devices. As a matter of fact, **constant reiteration and scarcity of ideas are indispensable ingredients of the entire technique.**" (pg. 133)
    - "While the mechanical rigidity of the pattern is obvious and itself the expression of certain psychological aspects of fascist mentality, one cannot help feeling that propaganda material of the fascist brand forms a structural unit with a total common conception, be it conscious or unconscious, which determines every word that is said. This structural unit seems to refer to the implicit political conception as well as to the psychological essence. So far, only the detached and in a way isolated nature of each device has been given scientific attention; the psychoanalytic connotations of the devices have been stressed and elaborated. Now that the elements have been cleared up sufficiently, the time has come to focus attention on the psychological system as such - and it may not be entirely accidental that the term summons the association of paranoia - which comprises and begets these elements. This seems to be the more appropriate since otherwise the psychoanalytical interpretation of the individual devices will remain somewhat haphazard and arbitrary." (pg. 133)
      - **"The straightforward comparison of modern mass formations with biological phenomena can hardly be regarded as valid** since the members of contemporary masses are at least *prima facie* individuals, the children of a liberal, competitive and individualistic society, and conditioned to maintain themselves as independent, self-sustaining units; they are continuously admonished to be 'rugged' and warned against surrender." (pg. 135)
    - **"the primitively narcissistic aspect of identification as an act of devouring, of making the beloved object part of oneself, may provide us with a clue to the fact that the modern leader image sometimes seems to be the enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself,** rather than the image of the father whose role during the later phases of the subject's infancy may well have decreased in present day society. All these facets call for further clarification." (pg. 140)

- **"The essential role of narcissism in regard to the identifications which are at play in the formation of fascist groups, is recognised in Freud's theory of idealization.** 'We see that the object is being treated in the same way as our own ego, so that when we are in love a considerable amount of narcissistic libido overflows on the object. It is even obvious, in many forms of love choice, that the object serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of the perfections which we have striven to reach for our own ego, and which we should now like to procure in this roundabout way as a means of satisfying our narcissism'. It is precisely this idealization of himself which the fascist leader tries to promote in his followers, and which is helped by the Führer ideology. The people he has to reckon with generally undergo the characteristic modern conflict between a strongly developed rational, self-preserving ego agency and the continuous failure to satisfy their own ego demands. This conflict results in strong narcissistic impulses which can be absorbed and satisfied only through idealization as the partial transfer of the narcissistic libido to the object. This, again, falls in line with the semblance of the leader image to an enlargement of the subject: by making the leader his ideal he loves himself, as it were, but gets rid of the stains of frustration and discontent which mar his picture of his own empirical self. This pattern of identification through idealization, the caricature of true conscious solidarity, is, however, a collective one. It is effective in vast numbers of people with similar characterological dispositions and libidinal leanings. The fascist community of the people corresponds exactly to Freud's definition of a group as being 'a number of individuals who have substituted one and the same object for their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego'. The leader image, in turn, borrows as it were its primal father-like omnipotence from collective strength." (pg. 140-141)
- **"One of the most conspicuous features of the agitator's speeches [is] namely the absence of a positive programme and of anything they might 'give', as well as the paradoxical prevalence of threat and denial..."** (pg. 141)
  - *\*Musk and Trump have exactly this trait when they engage in public speaking. They work to build a platform of fear while omitting any concrete plan or expectation on how to address such. Not 'giving' anything plays on the separateness / division of people - i.e., the masses' natural inability to purport a cohesive and coherent collective understanding - to where the people proceed with tugging at the spool in search of a remedy (i.e., engage in individual wishful-thinking or action) without properly accounting for how their actions or judgements stand against others in the similar circumstance (i.e., they ignore meaningful differences which must be internalized before establishing common ground). So, what results is an unraveled state of affairs where the collective are left unable to reconcile their own differences. And, it's this outcome which fascist leaders strive for through non-sensical ambiguity.*
- **"one of the basic devices of personalized fascist propaganda is the concept of the 'great little man', a person who suggests both omnipotence and the idea that he is just one of the folks, a plain, red-blooded American, untainted by material or spiritual wealth.** Psychological ambivalence helps to work a social miracle. **The leader image gratifies the follower's twofold wish to submit to authority and to be the authority himself.** This fits into a world in which irrational control is exercised though it has lost its inner conviction through universal enlightenment. The people who obey the dictators also sense the latter are superfluous. They reconcile this contradiction through the assumption that they are themselves the ruthless oppressor. All the agitators' standard devices are designed along the line of Freud's expose of what became later the basic structure of fascist demagoguery, the technique of personalization, and the idea of the great little man." (pg. 142)
  - **"The fascists, down to the last small-time demagogue, continuously emphasize ritualistic ceremonies and hierarchical differentiations.** The less hierarchy within the set-up of a highly rationalized and quantified industrial society is warranted, the more artificial hierarchies with no objective raison d'être are built up and rigidly imposed by fascists for purely psycho-technical reasons. It may be added, however, that this is not the only libidinous source involved. Thus, hierarchical structures are in complete keeping with the wishes of the sado-masochistic character." (pg. 143)
- **"...the agitators' standard 'unity trick'...emphasize[s] their being different from the outsider but play down such differences within their own group and tend to level out distinctive qualities among themselves with the exception of the hierarchical one.** 'We are all in the same boat'; nobody should be better off - the snob, the intellectual, the pleasure seeker are always attacked. **The undercurrent of malicious egalitarianism, of the brotherhood of all-compromising humiliation, is a component of fascist propaganda and fascism itself.**" (pg. 146)
  - **"The leaders are generally oral character types, with a compulsion to speak incessantly and to befool the others. The famous spell they exercise over their followers seems largely to depend on their orality: language itself, devoid of its rational significance, functions in a magical way and furthers those archaic regressions which reduce individuals to members of crowds.** Since this very quality of uninhibited but largely associative speech presupposes at least a temporary lack of ego control, it may well indicate weakness rather than strength. The fascist agitators' boasting of strength is indeed frequently accompanied by hints at such weakness, particularly when begging for monetary contributions - hints which, to be sure, are skillfully merged with the idea of strength itself. In order successfully to meet the unconscious dispositions of his audience, the agitator so to speak simply turns his own unconscious outward. His particular character syndrome makes it possible for him to do exactly this, and experience has taught him consciously to exploit this faculty, to make rational use of his irrationality, similarly to the actor, or a certain type of journalist who knows how to sell their innervations and sensitivity. Without knowing it, he is thus able to speak and act in accord with the psychological theory for the simple reason that the psychological theory is true. All he has to do in order to make the psychology of his audience click, is shrewdly to exploit his own psychology." (pg. 148)
- **"As we know, fascist agitation has by now come to be a profession, as it were, a livelihood.** It had plenty of time to test the effectiveness of its various appeals and, through what might be called natural selection, only the most catchy ones have survived. **Their effectiveness is itself a function of the psychology of the consumers.** Through a process of 'freezing', which can be observed throughout the techniques employed in modern mass culture, the surviving appeals have been standardized, similarly to the advertising slogans which proved to be most valuable in the promotion of business. This standardization, in turn, falls in line with the stereotypical thinking, that is to say, with the 'stereopathy' of those susceptible to this propaganda and their infantile wish for endless, unaltered repetition." (pg. 148)
- **"First, the objective aims of fascism are largely irrational in so far as they contradict the material interest of great numbers of those whom they try to embrace,** notwithstanding the pre-war boom of the first years of the Hitler regime. The continuous danger of war inherent in fascism spells destruction and the masses are at least preconsciously aware of it. Thus, fascism does not altogether speak the untruth when it refers to its own irrational powers, however faked the mythology which ideologically rationalizes the irrational may be. **Since it would be impossible for fascism to win the masses through rational arguments, its propaganda must necessarily be deflected from discursive thinking; it must be oriented psychologically, and has to mobilize irrational, unconscious, regressive processes.** This task is facilitated by the frame of mind of all those strata of the population who suffer from senseless frustrations and therefore develop a stunted, irrational mentality. **It may well be the secret of fascist propaganda that it simply takes men for what they are: the true children of today's standardized mass culture, largely robbed of autonomy and spontaneity, instead of setting goals the realization of which would transcend the psychological status quo no less than the social one.** Fascist propaganda has only to reproduce the existent mentality for its own purposes; it need not induce a change - and the compulsive repetition which is one of its foremost characteristics will be at one with the necessity for this continuous reproduction. It relies absolutely on the total structure as well as on each particular trait of the authoritarian character which is itself the product of an internalization of the irrational aspects of modern society. Under the prevailing conditions, the irrationality of fascist propaganda becomes rational in the sense of instinctual economy. For if the status quo is taken for granted and petrified, a much greater effort is needed to see through it than to adjust to it and to obtain at least some gratification through identification with the existent - the focal point of fascist propaganda. This may explain why ultra-reactionary mass movements use the 'psychology of the masses' to a much

- greater extent than do movements which show more faith in the masses. However, there is no doubt that **even the most progressive political movement can deteriorate to the level of the "psychology of the crowd" and its manipulation, if its own rational content is shattered through the reversion to blind power.**" (pg. 149-150)
- **"The so-called psychology of fascism is largely engendered by manipulation. Rationally calculated techniques bring about what is naively regarded as the 'natural' irrationality of masses.** This insight may help us to solve the problem of whether fascism as a mass phenomenon can be explained at all in psychological terms. While there certainly exists potential susceptibility for fascism among the masses, it is equally certain that the manipulation of the unconscious, the kind of suggestion explained by Freud in genetic terms, is indispensable for actualization of this potential. This, however, corroborates the assumption that **fascism as such is not a psychological issue and that any attempt to understand its roots and its historical role in psychological terms still remains on the level of ideologies** such as the one of 'irrational forces' promoted by fascism itself. Although the fascist agitator doubtlessly takes up certain tendencies within those he addresses, he does so as the mandatory of powerful economic and political interests. **Psychological dispositions do not actually cause fascism; rather, fascism defines a psychological area which can be successfully exploited by the forces which promote it for entirely non-psychological reasons of self-interest.** What happens when masses are caught by fascist propaganda is not a spontaneous primary expression of instincts and urges but a quasi-scientific revitalization of their psychology - the artificial regression described by Freud in his discussion of organized groups. The psychology of the masses has been taken over by their leaders and transformed into a means for their domination. It does not express itself directly through mass movements. This phenomenon is not entirely new but was foreshadowed throughout the counter-revolutionary movements of history. Far from being the source of fascism, psychology has become one element among others in a superimposed system the very totality of which is necessitated by the potential mass of resistance - the masses' own rationality." (pg. 150-151)
    - **"It is not accidental that the nineteenth century was the great era of psychological thought. In a thoroughly reified society, in which there are virtually no direct relationships between men, and in which each person has been reduced to a social atom, to a mere function of collectivity, the psychological processes, though they still persist in each individual, have ceased to appear as the determining forces of the social process. Thus, the psychology of the individual has lost what Hegel would have called substance.** It is perhaps the greatest merit of Freud's book that though he restricted himself to the field of individual psychology and wisely abstained from introducing sociological factors from outside, he nevertheless reached the turning point where psychology abdicates. The psychological 'impoverishment' of the subject that 'surrendered itself to the object' which 'it has substituted for its most important constituent'; that is, the super-ego, anticipates almost with clairvoyance the post-psychological de-individualized social atoms which form the fascist collectivities." (pg. 152)
  - Chapter 6 - How To Look At Television (pg. 158)
    - "The increasing strength of modern mass culture is further enhanced by changes in the sociological structure of the audience. **The old cultured elite does not exist anymore;** the modern intelligentsia only partially corresponds to it. At the same time, huge strata of the population formerly unacquainted with art have become cultural 'consumers'. Modern audiences, although less capable of the artistic sublimation bred by tradition, have become shrewder in their demands for perfection of technique and for reliability of information, as well as in their desire for 'services'; and they have become more convinced of the consumers' potential power over the producer, no matter whether this power is actually wielded." (pg. 161)
    - "Mass culture, if not sophisticated, must at least be up to date - that is to say, realistic, or posing as realistic - in order to meet the expectations of a supposedly disillusioned, alert, and hard-boiled audience." (pg. 162)
    - **"The more inarticulate and diffuse the audience of modern mass media seems to be, the more mass media tend to achieve their 'integration'.** The ideals of conformity and conventionalism were inherent in popular novels from the very beginning. Now, however, **these ideals have been translated into rather clear-cut prescriptions of what to do and what not to do. The outcome of conflicts is pre-established, and all conflicts are mere sham. Society is always the winner, and the individual is only a puppet manipulated through social rules.** True, conflicts of the nineteenth-century type - such as women running away from their husbands, the drabness of provincial life, and daily chores - occur frequently in today's magazine stories. However, with a regularity which challenges quantitative treatment, these conflicts are decided in favour of the very same conditions from which these women want to break away. The stories teach their readers that one has to be 'realistic', that one has to give up romantic ideas, that one has to adjust oneself at any price, and that nothing more can be expected of any individual. The perennial middle-class conflict between individuality and society has been reduced to a dim memory, and the message is invariably that of identification with the status quo." (pg. 164)
    - **"Mass media are not simply the sum total of the actions they portray or of the messages that radiate from these actions. Mass media also consist of various layers of meanings superimposed on one another, all of which contribute to the effect."** (pg. 164)
      - "When we speak of the multilayered structure of television shows, we are thinking of various superimposed layers of different degrees of manifestness or hiddenness that are utilized by mass culture as a technological means of 'handling' the audience." (pg. 166)
  - Chapter 7 - Transparencies on Film (pg. 178)
    - "The reactionary nature of any real aesthetic today is inseparable from this commodity character. **Tending to reinforce, affirmatively, the phenomenal surface of society, realism dismisses any attempt to penetrate that surface as a romantic endeavour.**" (pg. 182)
    - "That, among its functions, film provides models for collective behaviour is not just an additional imposition of ideology. Such collectivity, rather, inheres in the innermost elements of film. **The movements which the film presents are mimetic impulses which, prior to all content and meaning, incite the viewers and listeners to fall into step as if in a parade.** In this respect, film resembles music just as, in the early days of radio, music resembled film strips." (pg. 182)
      - **"The conformity to the consumer, on the contrary, which likes to masquerade as humanitarianism, is nothing but the economic technique of consumer exploitation."** (pg. 185)
      - "...the culture industry changes this reified consciousness all the more, that is, for its own purposes: **it actually prevents that consciousness from changing on its own, as it secretly and, deep down, unadmittedly desires. The consumers are made to remain what they are: consumers. That is why the culture industry is not the art of the consumer but rather the projection of the will of those in control onto their victims.** The automatic self-reproduction of the status quo in its established forms is itself an expression of domination." (pg. 185)
  - Chapter 8 - Free Time (pg. 187)
    - **"Free time is shackled to its opposite.** Indeed the oppositional relation in which it stands imbues free time with certain essential characteristics. What is more, and far more importantly, **free time depends on the totality of social conditions, which continues to hold people under its spell. Neither in their work nor in their consciousness do people dispose of genuine freedom over themselves.**" (pg. 187)
    - "Organized freedom is compulsory" (pg. 190)
    - "Hence the ease with which the free time is integrated; **people are unaware of how utterly unfree they are, even where they feel most at liberty,** because the rule of such unfreedom has been abstracted from them." (pg. 191)
    - "The act of dozing in the sun marks the culmination of a crucial element of free time under present conditions - boredom." (pg. 191)
      - **"At an early age Schopenhauer formulated a theory of boredom. True to his metaphysical pessimism he teaches that people either suffer from the unfulfilled desires of their blind will, or become bored as soon as these desires are satisfied. The theory well describes what becomes of people's free time under the sort of conditions of heteronomy,** and which in new German tends to be termed Fremdbestimmtheit

(external determination). In its cynicism Schopenhauer's arrogant remark that mankind is the factory product of nature also captures something of what the totality of the commodity character actually makes man into. Angry cynicism still does more honour to human beings than solemn protestations about man's irreducible essence. However, one should not hypostatize Schopenhauer's doctrine as something of universal validity or even as an insight into the primal character of the human species. **Boredom is a function of life which is lived under the compulsion to work, and under the strict division of labour. It need not be so. Whenever behaviour in spare time is truly autonomous, determined by free people for themselves, boredom rarely figures; it need not figure in activities which cater merely for the desire for pleasure, any more than it does in those free time activities which are reasonable and meaningful in themselves.** Even fooling about need not be crass, and can be enjoyed as a blessed release from the throes of self-control. **If people were able to make their own decisions about themselves and their lives, if they were not caught up in the realm of the eversame, they would not have to be bored. Boredom is the reflection of objective dullness.** As such it is in a similar position to political apathy. **The most compelling reason for apathy is the by no means unjustified feeling of the masses that political participation within the sphere society grants them, and this holds true for all political systems in the world today, can alter their actual existence only minimally.** Failing to discern the relevance of politics to their own interests, they retreat from all political activity. **The well-founded or indeed neurotic feeling of powerlessness is intimately bound up with boredom: boredom is objective desperation.** It is also, however, symptomatic of the deformations perpetrated upon man by the social totality, the most important of which is surely **the defamation and atrophy of the imagination** (Phantasie). **Imagination is suspected of being only sexual curiosity and longing for the forbidden** by the spirit (Geist) of a science which is no longer spirit. **Those who want to adapt must learn increasingly to curb their imagination. For the most part the very development of the imagination is crippled by the experience of early childhood. The lack of imagination which is cultivated and inculcated by society renders people helpless in their free time. The impertinent question of what people should do with the vast amount of free time now at their disposal - as if it was a question of alms and not human rights - is based upon this very unimaginativeness. The reason why people can actually do so little with their free time is that the truncation of their imagination deprives them of the faculty which made the state of freedom pleasurable in the first place. People have been refused freedom, and its value belittled, for such a long time that now people no longer like it. They need the shallow entertainment, by means of which cultural conservatism patronizes and humiliates them, in order to summon up the strength for work, which is required of them under the arrangement of society which cultural conservatism defends. This is one good reason why people have remained chained to their work, and to a system which trains them for work, long after that system has ceased to require their labour.**" (pg. 191-193)

- "...it is an economy made from stubborn self-interest, an economy which flies in the face of the fact that it is only the exchange of specialized skills which keeps the whole mechanism going in the first place." (pg. 194)
  - "'Do it yourself', this contemporary type of spare time behaviour fits however into a much more far-reaching context. More than thirty years ago I described such behaviour as 'pseudo-activity'. Since then pseudo-activity has spread alarmingly, even (and especially) amongst those people who regard themselves as anti-establishment. Generally speaking there is good reason to assume that **all forms of pseudo-activity contain a pent-up need to change the petrified relations of society. Pseudo-activity is misguided spontaneity.** Misguided, but not accidentally so; **because people do have a dim suspicion of how hard it would be to throw off the yoke that weighs upon them. They prefer to be distracted by spurious and illusory activities, by institutionalized vicarious satisfactions, than to face up to the awareness of how little access they have to the possibility of change today.** Pseudo-activities are fictions and parodies of the same productivity which society on the one hand incessantly calls for, but on the other holds in check and, as far as the individual is concerned, does not really desire at all. **Productive free time is only possible for people who have outgrown their tutelage, not for those who under conditions of heteronomy, have become heteronomous for themselves.**" (pg. 194)
  - "Free time then does not merely stand in opposition to labour. In a system where full employment itself has become the ideal, **free time is nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labour.**" (pg. 194)
- Chapter 9 - Resignation (pg. 198)
  - "**Distance from praxis is disreputable in the eyes of everyone. Anyone who does not take immediate action and who is not willing to get his hands dirty is the subject of suspicion;** it is felt that his antipathy toward such action was not legitimate, and further that his view has even been distorted by the privileges he enjoys. Distrust of those who distrust praxis extends from those on the opposite side, who repeat the old slogan, 'We've had enough of talking' all the way to the objective spirit of advertising, which propagates the picture - it's called *Leitbild* or 'image as motif' - of the actively involved human being, no matter whether his activity lies in the realm of economics or athletics. **One should take part. Whoever restricts himself to thinking but does not get involved is weak, cowardly and virtually a traitor. This hostile cliché on the intellectual** is to be encountered with deep roots within that branch of the opposition that is in turn reviled as intellectual without any awareness thereof on their part. Thinking activists answer; among the things to be changed is that very separation of theory and praxis. Praxis is essential if we are ever to be liberated from the domination of practical people and practical ideals. The trouble with this view is that it results in the prohibition of thinking. Very little is needed to turn the resistance against repression repressively against those who - little as they might wish to glorify their state of being - do not desert the standpoint that they have come to occupy. The often-evoked unity of theory and praxis has a tendency to give way to the predominance of praxis. Numerous views define theory itself as a form of repression - as though praxis did not stand in a far more direct relationship to repression. For Marx, the dogma of this unity was animated by the immanent possibility of action which even then was not to be realized. Today it is rather the opposite situation that prevails. **One clings to action because of the impossibility of action.**" (pg. 199)
  - "**Repressive intolerance toward a thought not immediately accompanied by instructions for action is founded in fear. Unmanipulated thought and the position that allows nothing to be deduced from this thought must be feared because that which cannot be admitted is perfectly clear: this thought is right.** An aged bourgeois mechanism with which the men of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century were very familiar displays itself anew but unchanged: suffering caused by a negative condition - in this case by obstructed reality - turns into anger toward the person who expresses it. Thought, enlightenment conscious of itself, threatens to disenchant pseudo-reality within which, according to Habermas' formulation, activism moves. This **activism is tolerated only because it is viewed as pseudo-activity. Pseudo-activity is allied with pseudo-reality in the design of a subjective position; an activity that overplays itself and fires itself up for the sake of its own publicity without admitting to what degree it serves as a substitute for satisfaction, thus elevating itself to an end in itself.** All those behind bars are despondent in their desire to be released. In such situations one no longer thinks or thinks only in fictive postulates. Within absolutized praxis, only reaction is possible and for this reason the reaction is false. Only thinking could offer an escape, and then only that thinking, the results of which are not prescribed - as is so frequently the case in those discussions in which it is predetermined who is right and which therefore do not advance the cause - but rather degenerate without fail into tactics. When the doors are barricaded, it is doubly important that thought not be interrupted. **It is rather the task of thought to analyse the reasons behind this situation and to draw the consequences from these reasons. It is the responsibility of thought not to accept the situation as finite. If there is any chance of changing the situation, it is only through undiminished insight.** The leap into praxis will not cure thought from resignation as long as it is paid for with the secret knowledge that this course is simply not the right one. **Generally speaking, pseudo-activity is the attempt to preserve enclaves of immediacy in the midst of a thoroughly mediated and obdurate society. This process is rationalized through the acceptance of any small change as one step on the long way toward total change.** The unfortunate model for pseudo-activity is the 'do-it-yourself' syndrome - activities that do that which has long been done better through the means of industrial production and which arouse in unfree individuals, hampered in their spontaneity, the confident feeling that they are of central concern. **The nonsense of the 'do-it-yourself' approach to the production of material goods**

and in the making of many repairs is equally obvious. However, it is not total. In view of the reduction of so-called services - sometimes superfluous in terms of technical standards - measures taken by a private person fulfil a semi-rational purpose. In politics, however, the 'do-it-yourself' attitude is not of quite the same character. The society that confronts human beings in such an impenetrable manner is these humans themselves. Confidence in the limited action of small groups is reminiscent of the spontaneity which atrophies beneath the encrusted totality and without which this totality cannot be transformed into something different. **The administered world has a tendency to strangle all spontaneity or at least to channel it into pseudo-activity.** This, however, is not achieved so totally without difficulty as the agents of the administered world would like to imagine. Nonetheless, spontaneity is not to be absolutized - just as little as it is to be separated from the objective situation and idolized in the same manner as is the administered world itself. Otherwise the axe will break down the next door in the house - a process which never spares the carpenter - and the riot squad will appear on the spot. Political acts of violence can also sink to the level of pseudo-activity, resulting in mere theatre. It is hardly a wonder that the ideal of direct action and propaganda glorifying the deed have been resurrected, upon the heels of the willing integration of formerly progressive organizations that, in all lands of the earth, manifest the character of that against which they were once directed. This process, however, has not weakened the criticism of anarchism, the return of which is the return of a ghost. **The impatience toward theory manifested in this return does nothing to advance thought beyond itself. Theory falls behind the thought which it forgets. For the individual, life is made easier through capitulation to the collective with which he identifies. He is spared the cognition of his impotence;** within the circle of their own company, the few become many. **It is this act - not unconfused thinking - which is resignation.** No transparent relation prevails between the interests of the ego and the collective to which it assigns itself. **The ego must abrogate itself, if it is to share in the predestination of the collective.** Explicitly a remnant of the Kantian categorical imperative manifests itself: your signature is required. **The feeling of a new security is purchased with the sacrifice of autonomous thinking. The consolation that thought within the context of collective action is an improvement proves deceptive: thinking, employed only as the instrument of action, is blunted in the same manner as all instrumental reason. At the present moment, no higher form of society is concretely visible: for that reason, anything that seems in easy reach is regressive.** According to Freud, however, whoever regresses has not achieved the goal of his drives. Objectively viewed, reformation is renunciation, even if it considers itself the opposite and innocently propagates the pleasure principle." (pg. 200-202)

- **"In contrast, the uncompromisingly critical thinker, who neither superscribes his conscience nor permits himself to be terrorized into action, is in truth the one who does not give up. Furthermore, thinking is not the spiritual reproduction of that which exists. As long as thinking is not interrupted, it has a firm grasp upon possibility. Its insatiable quality, the resistance against petty satiety, rejects the foolish wisdom of resignation.** The Utopian impulse in thinking is all the stronger, the less it objectifies itself as Utopia - a further form of regression - whereby it sabotages its own realization. **Open thinking points beyond itself.** For its part, such thinking takes a position as a figuration of praxis which is more closely related to a praxis truly involved in change than in a position of mere obedience for the sake of praxis. Beyond all specialized and particular content, **thinking is actually and above all the force of resistance, alienated from resistance only with great effort.** This emphatic concept of thinking is by no means secure; no security is granted it by existing conditions nor by the ends yet to be attained nor by any type of organized force. Whatever was once thought, however, can be suppressed; it can be forgotten and can even vanish. But it cannot be denied that something of it survives. **For thinking has the momentum of the general.** What has been cogently thought must be thought in some other place and by other people. This confidence accompanies even the loneliest and most impotent thought. **Whoever thinks is without anger in all criticism: thinking sublimates anger.** Because the thinking person does not have to inflict anger upon himself, he furthermore has no desire to inflict it upon others. **The happiness visible to the eye of a thinker is the happiness of mankind. The universal tendency toward suppression goes against thought as such.** Such thought is happiness, even where unhappiness prevails; **thought achieves happiness in the expression of unhappiness.** Whoever refuses to permit this thought to be taken from him has not resigned." (pg. 202-203)

d. Further Readings:

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