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Critical Models *Interventions and Catchwords*

Theodor W. Adorno

*Translated and with a Preface
by Henry W. Pickford*

Columbia University Press New York



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Critique

Something should be said about critique in its connection with politics. Since, however, politics is not a self-enclosed, isolated sphere, as it manifests itself for instance in political institutions, processes, and procedural rules, but rather can be conceived only in its relationship to the societal play of forces making up the substance of everything political and veiled by political surface phenomena, so too the concept of critique cannot be restricted to a narrow political field.

Critique is essential to all democracy. Not only does democracy require the freedom to criticize and need critical impulses. Democracy is nothing less than defined by critique. This can be recalled simply in the historical fact that the conception of the separation of powers, upon which every democracy is based, from Locke and Montesquieu and the American constitution up to today, has its lifeblood in critique. The *system of checks and balances**, the reciprocal overview of the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary, means as much as that each of these powers subjects the others to critique and thereby reduces the despotism that each power, without this critical element, gravitates to. Critique and the prerequisite of democracy, political maturity, belong together. Politically mature is the person who speaks for himself, because he has thought for himself and is not merely repeating someone else; he stands free of any guardian.¹ This is demonstrated in the power to resist established opinions and, one and the same, also to resist existing institutions, to resist

everything that is merely posited, that justifies itself with its existence. Such resistance, as the ability to distinguish between what is known and what is accepted merely by convention or under the constraint of authority, is one with critique, whose concept indeed comes from the Greek *krino*, "to decide." He who equates the modern concept of reason with critique is scarcely exaggerating. The Enlightenment thinker Kant, who wanted to see society emancipated from its self-incurred immaturity and who taught autonomy,² that is, judgment according to one's own insight in contrast to heteronomy, obedience to what is urged by others, named his three major works critiques. This was true not only for the intellectual capacities, whose limits he intended to measure off and whose procedures to construe. The power of Kant, as for instance Kleist vividly sensed, was that of critique in a very concrete sense.³ He criticized the dogmatism of the rationalistic systems that were accepted prior to him: the *Critique of Pure Reason* was more than anything else a blistering critique of Leibniz and Wolf. The influence of Kant's main work was due to its negative results, and one of its most important parts, which dealt with pure thought's transgressions of its own limits, was thoroughly negative.

But critique, cornerstone of reason and bourgeois thinking *tout court*, by no means dominated spirit as much as one would assume from that spirit's self-image. Even the all-destroyer, as Kant was called two hundred years ago, often showed the gestures of one who blamed critique for being improper. His vocabulary shows this in malicious expressions like "subtle reasoning" [*Vernünffteln*], which not only punish reason's exceeding its bounds but also want to bridle its use that, in Kant's own understanding, irresistibly surges past its own limits. Finally Hegel, in whom the movement commencing with Kant culminates, and who in many passages equates thinking altogether with negativity and hence with critique, likewise has the opposite tendency: to bring critique to a halt. Whoever relies on the limited activity of one's own understanding Hegel calls, using a political epithet, *Raisonneur* [carper, arguer] and accuses of vanity because he does not reflect on his own finitude, is incapable of subordinating himself to something higher, the totality.⁴ However, for Hegel this higher thing is the present conditions. Hegel's aversion to critique goes together with his thesis that the real is rational.⁵ According to Hegel's authoritarian directive, that person is truly in control of his reason who does not insist on reason's antithesis to what presently exists, but rather within given reality recognizes his own reason. The individual citizen is supposed to capitulate before reality. The renunciation of critique is twisted into a higher wisdom; the young Marx's phrase about the ruthless critique of everything existing was the

simple reply to this, and even the mature Marx subtitled his main work a "critique."⁶

The substantive import of those passages in Hegel, especially in the book that concentrates his anti-critical tendency, the *Philosophy of Right*, is societal.⁷ One need not be a sociologist to hear in his ridicule of the *Raisonneur* and the starry-eyed reformer the unctuous sermon admonishing the underling to keep still, who out of stupidity—the modification of which obviously does not concern his guardian—objects to the decrees descending upon him from the authorities on high, because said underling is incapable of recognizing that ultimately everything is and happens for the best and that those who are above his station in life also should be his intellectual superiors. Something of the contradiction between the modern emancipation of critical spirit and its simultaneous dampening is characteristic of the entire bourgeois period: from an early period onward the bourgeoisie must have feared that the logic of its own principles could lead beyond its own sphere of interests. Habermas has demonstrated contradictions of this sort in the notion of the public sphere—the most important medium of all politically effective criticism—that on the one hand should concentrate the critical political maturity of society's subjects and, on the other, has become a commodity and works against the critical principle in order to better market itself.⁸

It is easily forgotten in Germany that critique, as a central motif of spirit, is not very popular anywhere in the world. But there is reason to reflect on a specifically German phenomenon in the hostility to critique especially in the political arena. Full-fledged bourgeois emancipation was not successful in Germany, or only in a historical period in which its prerequisite, the liberalism of diffused free enterprise, was already undermined. Likewise the unification into a nation-state—which in many other countries was attained parallel to the strengthening of the bourgeoisie—limped behind history and became a short intermezzo. This may have caused the German trauma of unity and unanimity that scents weakness in that multiplicity whose resultant outcome is democratic will formation. Whoever criticizes violates the taboo of unity, which tends toward totalitarian organization. The critic becomes a divisive influence and, with a totalitarian phrase, a subversive. The denunciation of alleged quarrels in the party was an indispensable propaganda tool for the National Socialists. The unity-trauma has survived Hitler and has possibly even been intensified by the division of Germany following the war Hitler unleashed. It is a banality that democracy was a belated arrival in Germany. There is probably less general awareness, however, that the consequences of this belatedness extended even into the ramifications of

mind. Besides the economic and straightforward societal problems democracy in Germany confronts in order to permeate the sovereign people [*Volk*], not inconsiderable is the additional difficulty that pre-democratic and undemocratic forms of consciousness—in particular those that stem from statism and a thinking that conforms to authority—survive in the midst of a suddenly implanted democracy and prevent people from making it their own. One such vestigial pattern of behavior is the mistrust of critique and the inclination to throttle it under some pretense or other. The fact that Goebbels could degrade the concept of critic into that of criticaster, could maliciously associate it with the concept of the grumbler, and wanted to prohibit the criticism of all art was not only meant to take independent intellectual impulses in hand. The propagandist was calculating in terms of social psychology. He could tap into the general German prejudice against critique that dates back to absolutism. He was expressing the heartfelt convictions of those already being led by the hand.

If one wanted to sketch an anatomy of the German hostility to critique, one would find it unquestionably bound up with the rancor against the intellectual. In public or, in Franz Böhm's expression, non-public opinion, the suspect intellectual is probably equated with the person who criticizes.⁹ It seems plausible that anti-intellectualism derives originally from a submissiveness to officialdom. Again and again the injunction is intoned that critique must be responsible. But that always amounts to meaning that only those are actually justified to criticize who happen to be in a responsible position, just as even anti-intellectualism until quite recently didn't extend to state-employed intellectuals like professors.¹⁰ According to the subject matter of their work, professors would have to be counted among the intellectuals. However, in general, because of their prestige as government officials, they were highly respected in established public opinion as long as conflicts with students didn't convince them of their actual powerlessness. Critique is being departmentalized, as it were. It is being transformed from the human right and human duty of every citizen into a privilege of those who are qualified by virtue of the recognized and protected positions they occupy. Whoever practices critique without having the power to carry through his opinion, and without integrating himself into the official hierarchy, should keep silent—that is the form in which the variation of the cliché about servants' limited powers of understanding returns in the Germany that formally has equal rights. Obviously, people who are institutionally intertwined with present conditions will in general hesitate to criticize them. Even more than administrative-legal conflicts they fear conflicts with the opinions of their own group. By means of the division between responsible cri-

tique, namely, that practiced by those who bear public responsibility, and irresponsible critique, namely, that practiced by those who cannot be held accountable for the consequences, critique is already neutralized. The unspoken abrogation of the right to critique for those who have no position makes the privilege of education, especially the career insulated by official examinations, into the authority defining who may criticize, whereas the truth content of critique alone should be that authority. All this is unspoken and not institutionally anchored but so deeply present in the preconscious of innumerable people that it exercises a kind of social control. In recent years there has been no lack of cases where people outside of the hierarchy—which, incidentally, in the age of celebrities is certainly not limited to officials—practiced critique, for instance, criticizing the juridical practices in a certain city. They were immediately rebuffed as grumblers. It is not enough to answer this by indicating the mechanisms that in Germany create the suspicion that the independent individualist or dissenting person is a fool. The state of affairs is much more grave: through the anti-critical structure of public opinion the dissenter as a type is *really* brought into the situation of the grumbler and takes on the characteristics of a malcontent, to the extent that those characteristics have not already driven him to stubborn critique. Unwavering critical freedom easily slides by its own dynamic into the attitude of Michael Kohlhaas, who not coincidentally was a German.¹¹ One of the most important conditions for changing the structure of public opinion in Germany would be if the facts I've indicated here became generally conscious, for instance, were treated in civics education, and thereby would lose some of their disastrously blind power. Occasionally the relationship of German public opinion to critique virtually seems to be stood on its head. The right to free critique is unilaterally invoked for the good of those who oppose the critical spirit of a democratic society. However, the vigilance that rebels against such misuse requires the strength of public opinion that is still lacking in Germany and that can hardly be produced by mere appeal.

Indicative of the concealed relationship of public opinion to critique is the attitude of its organs that actually lay claim to a tradition of freedom. Many newspapers that by no means wish to be thought reactionary assiduously cultivate a tone that in America, where analogies are not lacking, one calls *pontifical**. They speak as though they stood above the controversies, assume a posture of sage experience that would befit the epithet "old-maidish." Their supercilious remove usually only benefits the defense of the official state of affairs. At most the powers are solemnly encouraged not to let themselves be swayed from their good intentions. The language of such newspapers sounds like that of govern-

mental announcements, even where nothing is being announced about any government. Behind the pontifical posture stands the authoritarian one: both in those who assume it and in the consumers who are being cleverly targeted. Identification with power prevails in Germany now just as it did before; in this lurks the dangerous potential of identifying oneself with power politics inwardly and outwardly. The caution exercised in reforming institutions, where the reform is demanded by critical consciousness and to a considerable degree is acknowledged by the executive powers, is based on the fear of the voting masses; this fear easily renders critique without consequence. It also indicates how widespread the anti-critical spirit is in those whose interest should lie in critique.

Critique's lack of consequence in Germany has a specific model, presumably of military origin: the tendency to protect at any cost subordinates who are charged with misbehavior or offense. In military hierarchies the oppressive element of such an esprit de corps may be found everywhere; however, if I am not mistaken, then it is specifically German that this military behavior pattern also thoroughly dominates the civil, especially the specifically political spheres. One cannot shake the feeling that in answer to every public critique the higher authorities, who stand above the person being criticized and who ultimately bear the responsibility, first and foremost, irrespective of the facts of the case, defend the criticized person and strike outward. This mechanism, which sociology really should study thoroughly, is so ingrained that it automatically threatens political criticism with a fate similar to that granted the soldier who dared to complain about his superior during the Wilhelminian era. The rancor toward the institution of defense commissioner is symbolic for this entire sphere.

Perhaps the damaged German relationship to critique is most comprehensible in its lack of consequence. If Germany deserves the title "land of unlimited presumabilities" that Ulrich Sonnemann formulated, then this too is related.¹² It may be simply a phrase that someone has been swept away by the pressure of public opinion; however, worse than the phrase is when no public opinion forms to exert that kind of pressure, or, when no consequences are drawn if it does happen. A topic for political science would be research studies comparing the consequences of public opinion, unofficial critique in the old democracies of England, France, America with the consequences in Germany. I do not dare to anticipate the result of such a study, but I can imagine it. If the *Spiegel* affair is held out as the one exception, then it should be kept in mind that in that case the protesting newspapers, bearers of public opinion, showed their rare verve not out of any solidarity with the freedom to criticize and its prerequisite, unimpeded information, but rather because they saw themselves

threatened in their own concrete interests, *news value**, the market value of information.¹³ I am not underestimating attempts at effective public critique in Germany. They include the fall of a radical right-wing minister of culture in one federal state. However, since that solidarity between students and professors does not exist anywhere now the way it did then in Göttingen, it is doubtful whether something similar could happen again today.¹⁴ It looks to me as though the spirit of public critique, after it was monopolized by political groups and thereby became publicly compromised, has suffered severe setbacks; I hope I am mistaken.

Essentially German, although once again not so completely as one who has not had the opportunity to observe similar phenomena in other countries might easily suppose, is an anti-critical schema from philosophy—precisely the philosophy that besmirched the *Raisonneur*—that has sunk into blather: the appeal to the positive. One continually finds the word *critique*, if it is tolerated at all, accompanied by the word *constructive*. The insinuation is that only someone can practice critique who can propose something better than what is being criticized; Lessing derided this two hundred years ago in aesthetics.¹⁵ By making the positive a condition for it, critique is tamed from the very beginning and loses its vehemence. In Gottfried Keller there is a passage where he calls the demand for something edifying a "gingerbread word." He roughly argues that much would already be gained if the mustiness were cleared away where something that has gone bad blocks the light and fresh air.¹⁶ In fact, it is by no means always possible to add to critique the immediate practical recommendation of something better, although in many cases critique can proceed by way of confronting realities with the norms to which those realities appeal: following the norms would already be better. The word *positive*, which not only Karl Kraus decades ago but also a hardly radical writer like Erich Kästner polemicized against, has in the meantime in Germany been made into a magic charm.¹⁷ It automatically snaps into place. Its dubiousness can be seen in the fact that in the present situation the higher form, toward which society should move according to progressive thought, can no longer be read out of reality as a concrete tendency. If one wanted for that reason to renounce the critique of society, then one would only reinforce society in precisely the dubiousness that obstructs its transition to a higher form. The objective obstruction of what is better does not abstractly affect the larger whole. In every individual phenomenon one criticizes, one swiftly runs up against that limitation. Again and again the demand for positive proposals proves unfulfillable, and for that reason critique is all the more comfortably defamed. Perhaps the observation suffices here that from a social-psychological perspective the craving for the positive is a screen-image of the destruc-

tive instinct working under a thin veil.¹⁸ Those talking most about the positive are in agreement with destructive power. The collective compulsion for a positivity that allows its immediate translation into practice has in the meantime gripped precisely those people who believe they stand in the starkest opposition to society. This is not the least way in which their actionism fits so smoothly into society's prevailing trend. This should be opposed by the idea, in a variation of a famous proposition of Spinoza, that the false, once determinately known and precisely expressed, is already an index of what is right and better.¹⁹

Resignation

We older representatives of what the name "Frankfurt School" has come to designate have recently and eagerly been accused of resignation. We had indeed developed elements of a critical theory of society, the accusation runs, but we were not ready to draw the practical consequences from it. And so, we neither provided actionist programs nor did we even support actions by those who felt inspired by critical theory. I will not address the question of whether that can be demanded from theoretical thinkers, who are relatively sensitive and by no means shockproof instruments. The purpose that has fallen to them in a society based on the division of labor may be questionable; they themselves may be deformed by it. But they are also formed by it; of course, they could not by sheer will abolish what they have become. I do not want to deny the element of subjective weakness that clings to the narrowed focus on theory. I think the objective side is more important. The objection, effortlessly rattled off, runs along these lines: the person who at this hour doubts the possibility of radical change in society and who therefore neither participates in spectacular, violent actions nor recommends them has resigned. What he has in mind he thinks cannot be realized; actually he doesn't even want to realize it. By leaving the conditions untouched, he condones them without admitting it.

Distance from praxis is disreputable to everyone. Whoever doesn't want to really knuckle down and get his hands dirty, is suspect, as though

the aversion were not legitimate and only distorted by privilege. The distrust of whoever distrusts praxis extends from those on the opposite side who repeat the old slogan "enough talking already" all the way to the objective spirit of advertising that propagates the image—they call it a "guiding image"—of the active, practical person, be he an industrial leader or an athlete. One should join in. Whoever only thinks, removes himself, is considered weak, cowardly, virtually a traitor. The hostile cliché of the intellectual works its way deeply into that oppositional group, without them having noticed it, and who in turn are slandered as "intellectuals."

Thinking actionists answer: among the things to be changed include precisely the present conditions of the separation of theory and praxis. Praxis is needed, they say, precisely in order to do away with the domination by practical people and the practical ideal. But then this is quickly transformed into a prohibition on thinking. A minimum is sufficient to turn the resistance to repression repressively against those who, as little as they wish to glorify their individual being, nonetheless do not renounce what they have become. The much invoked unity of theory and praxis has the tendency of slipping into the predominance of praxis. Many movements defame theory itself as a form of oppression, as though praxis were not much more directly related to oppression. In Marx the doctrine of this unity was inspired by the real possibility of action, which even at that time was not actualized.¹ Today what is emerging is more the direct contrary. One clings to action for the sake of the impossibility of action. Admittedly, already in Marx there lies concealed a wound. He may have presented the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach so authoritatively because he knew he wasn't entirely sure about it. In his youth he had demanded the "ruthless criticism of everything existing."² Now he was mocking criticism. But his famous witticism against the young Hegelians, the phrase "critical critique," was a dud, went up in smoke as nothing but a tautology.³ The forced primacy of praxis irrationally stopped the critique that Marx himself practiced. In Russia and in the orthodoxy of other countries the malicious derision of critical critique became an instrument so that the existing conditions could establish themselves so terrifyingly. The only thing praxis still meant was: increased production of the means of production; critique was not tolerated anymore except for the criticism that people were not yet working hard enough. So easily does the subordination of theory to praxis invert into service rendered to renewed oppression.

The repressive intolerance to the thought that is not immediately accompanied by instructions for action is founded on anxiety. Untrammelled thought and the posture that will not let it be bargained away

must be feared because of what one deeply knows but cannot openly admit: that the thought is right. An age-old bourgeois mechanism with which the eighteenth century enlightenment thinkers were quite familiar operates once again, but unchanged: the suffering caused by a negative situation—this time by obstructed reality—becomes rage leveled at the person who expresses it. Thought, enlightenment conscious of itself, threatens to disenchant the pseudo-reality within which actionism moves, in the words of Habermas.⁴ The actionism is tolerated only because it is considered pseudo-reality. Pseudo-reality is conjoined with, as its subjective attitude, pseudo-activity: action that overdoes and aggravates itself for the sake of its own *publicity**, without admitting to itself to what extent it serves as a substitute satisfaction, elevating itself into an end in itself. People locked in desperately want to get out. In such situations one doesn't think anymore, or does so only under fictive premises. Within absolutized praxis only reaction is possible and therefore false. Only thinking could find an exit, and moreover a thinking whose results are not stipulated, as is so often the case in discussions in which it is already settled who should be right, discussions that therefore do not advance the cause but rather inevitably degenerate into tactics. If the doors are barricaded, then thought more than ever should not stop short. It should analyze the reasons and subsequently draw the conclusions. It is up to thought not to accept the situation as final. The situation can be changed, if at all, by undiminished insight. The leap into praxis does not cure thought of resignation as long as it is paid for with the secret knowledge that that really isn't the right way to go.

Pseudo-activity is generally the attempt to rescue enclaves of immediacy in the midst of a thoroughly mediated and rigidified society. Such attempts are rationalized by saying that the small change is one step in the long path toward the transformation of the whole. The disastrous model of pseudo-activity is the "*do-it-yourself*"* [*Mach es selber*]: activities that do what has long been done better by the means of industrial production only in order to inspire in the unfree individuals, paralyzed in their spontaneity, the assurance that everything depends on them. The nonsense of do-it-yourself in the production of material goods, even in the carrying out of many repairs, is patently obvious. Admittedly the nonsense is not total. With the reduction of so-called *services** [*Dienstleistungen*], sometimes measures carried out by the private person that are superfluous considering the available technology nonetheless fulfill a quasi-rational purpose. The do-it-yourself approach in politics is not completely of the same caliber. The society that impenetrably confronts people is nonetheless these very people. The trust in the limited action of small groups recalls the spontaneity that withers beneath the encrusted

totality and without which this totality cannot become something different. The administered world has the tendency to strangle all spontaneity, or at least to channel it into pseudo-activities. At least this does not function as smoothly as the agents of the administered world would hope. However, spontaneity should not be absolutized, just as little as it should be split off from the objective situation or idolized the way the administered world itself is. Otherwise the axe in the house that never saves the carpenter will smash in the nearest door, and the riot squad will be at the ready.⁵ Even political undertakings can sink into pseudo-activities, into theater. It is no coincidence that the ideals of immediate action, even the propaganda of the act, have been resurrected after the willing integration of formerly progressive organizations that now in all countries of the earth are developing the characteristic traits of what they once opposed. Yet this does not invalidate the critique of anarchism. Its return is that of a ghost. The impatience with theory that manifests itself in its return does not advance thought beyond itself. By forgetting thought, the impatience falls back below it.

This is made easier for the individual by his capitulation to the collective with which he identifies himself. He is spared from recognizing his powerlessness; the few become the many in their own eyes. This act, not unwavering thought, is resignative. No transparent relationship obtains between the interests of the ego and the collective it surrenders itself to. The ego must abolish itself so that it may be blessed with the grace of being chosen by the collective. Tacitly a hardly Kantian categorical imperative has erected itself: you must sign. The sense of a new security is purchased with the sacrifice of autonomous thinking. The consolation that thinking improves in the context of collective action is deceptive: thinking, as a mere instrument of activist actions, atrophies like all instrumental reason. At this time no higher form of society is concretely visible: for that reason whatever acts as though it were in easy reach has something regressive about it. But according to Freud, whoever regresses has not reached his instinctual aim. Objectively regression is renunciation, even when it thinks itself the opposite and innocently propagates the pleasure principle.⁶

By contrast the uncompromisingly critical thinker, who neither signs over his consciousness nor lets himself be terrorized into action, is in truth the one who does not give in. Thinking is not the intellectual reproduction of what already exists anyway. As long as it doesn't break off, thinking has a secure hold on possibility. Its insatiable aspect, its aversion to being quickly and easily satisfied, refuses the foolish wisdom of resignation. The utopian moment in thinking is stronger the less it—this too a form of relapse—objectifies itself into a utopia and hence sabotages its

realization. Open thinking points beyond itself. For its part a comportment, a form of praxis, it is more akin to transformative praxis than a comportment that is compliant for the sake of praxis. Prior to all particular content, thinking is actually the force of resistance, from which it has been alienated only with great effort. Such an emphatic concept of thinking admittedly is not secured, not by the existing conditions, nor by ends yet to be achieved, nor by any kind of battalions. Whatever has once been thought can be suppressed, forgotten, can vanish. But it cannot be denied that something of it survives. For thinking has the element of the universal. What once was thought cogently must be thought elsewhere, by others: this confidence accompanies even the most solitary and powerless thought. Whoever thinks is not enraged in all his critique: thinking has sublimated the rage. Because the thinking person does not need to inflict rage upon himself, he does not wish to inflict it on others. The happiness that dawns in the eye of the thinking person is the happiness of humanity. The universal tendency of oppression is opposed to thought as such. Thought is happiness, even where it defines unhappiness: by enunciating it. By this alone happiness reaches into the universal unhappiness. Whoever does not let it atrophy has not resigned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26. See note 12 above.

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

Critique

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

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

3. Allusion to Heinrich von Kleist's (idiosyncratic) reading of Kant in March 1801, the solipsistic and relativistic consequences of which "so profoundly, so painfully shocked" him, as he reported in a letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge (22 March 1801). Friedrich Nietzsche quotes the letter as evidence of the power philosophy can have in "Schopenhauer as Educator," in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 140–141.

4. Compare Hegel's definition of "argufying" [*Räsonieren*] as "freedom from all content [of thought], and a sense of vanity toward it. From it is demanded [by Hegel's method] the effort to relinquish this freedom and, instead of being the arbitrarily moving principle of the content, to sink this freedom in the content and let it move by its own nature, that is, by the self as its own, and to observe this movement" (G. W. F. Hegel, "Preface," *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977], 35–36; translation modified). Original: Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes, Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 3:56.

5. Allusion to Hegel's famous dictum,

Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich;
und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig.
[What is rational is actual;
and what is actual is rational.]

It appears in the preface to the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Hegel, *Werke*, 7:24) and is returned to in the introduction (§6) of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (*Werke*, 8:47ff.). English: G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20.

6. Allusion to Marx's letter to Arnold Ruge, part of public correspondence between them and Bakunin and Feuerbach, published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (1844): "If we have no business with the construction of the future or with organizing it for all time there can still be no doubt about the task confronting us at present: I mean the ruthless critique of everything existing, ruthless in that it will shrink neither from its own discoveries nor from conflict with the powers that be" (Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton [London: Penguin Books, 1992], 207). Marx's late work *Capital* bears the subtitle "Critique of Political Economy."

7. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821); English: G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*.

8. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1962); English: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

9. Cf. Franz Böhm in his preface to *Gruppenexperiment*, the published results of a study undertaken by the Institute for Social Research exploring ideologies of various population groups in postwar Germany:

What is it then that produces the shock when reading the present investigation?
I would like to think that it is a double aspect.

First of all the overly clear perception that alongside the so-called "public opinion," which expresses itself in elections, referenda, public speeches, news-

paper articles, radio broadcasts, the platforms of political parties and groups, parliamentary discussions, political meetings, there is also a *non-public opinion*, whose contents can diverge very considerably from the contents of the actual public opinion, whose statements however circulate alongside the statements of the public opinion like the monetary units of a *second currency*—indeed they have perhaps a more fixed and stable rate than the values of actual public opinion, which we flaunt according to propriety in public, especially for the audience abroad, and of which we imagine they represent our own and only currency, as though they expressed what we really mean to say, although after all they are only formal expressions we use when we are wearing our Sunday clothes. Yes, it almost appears as though what circulates about us as public opinion represents the sum of those (mutually contradictory) opinions that we wish people would believe are our true opinions, whereas non-public opinion is about the sum of those (likewise mutually contradictory) opinions that we actually have.

Second, the likewise overly clear perception of what the non-public opinion actually looks like. So that is what many of us actually think!

In other words: the one shock results from the perception that we have *two currencies of opinion*, each encompassing a whole bundle of diverse opinions. And the other shock overcomes us when we look at the values comprising the unofficial opinion.

(Franz Böhm, "Geleitwort," in *Gruppenexperiment: Ein Studienbericht, bearbeitet von Friedrich Pollock*, vol. 2 of *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie* [Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955], here excerpted from pp. xi–xii)

Cf. also Franz Böhm, "Das Vorurteil als Element totaler Herrschaft," in vol. 17 of *Vorträge gehalten anlässlich der Hessischen Hochschulwochen für staatswissenschaftliche Fortbildung* (Bad Homburg vor der Höhe: Verlag Dr. Max Gehlen, 1957), 149–167.

10. In Germany all universities are public institutions and all professors are state employees.

11. Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Michael Kohlhaas* (1810), in which the eponymous hero, "one of the most virtuous and also most terrifying men of his time," is led by an unredressed grievance and his sense of justice eventually to lead a rebellion against the state.

12. Reference to a collection of essays by Ulrich Sonnemann, *Das Land der unbegrenzten Zumutbarkeiten: Deutsche Reflexionen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963; Frankfurt: Syndikat Autoren- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985). "Zumutbarkeit," of juridical provenance, is the quality of something being able to be reasonably expected or presumed of someone (for instance, a higher tax bracket for a higher income). This semantic field trades on the difference between what may reasonably be presumed (*zumutbar*) and what is an unreasonable imposition (*Zumutung*). Through a series of sardonic analyses of contemporary politics and culture, Sonnemann traces the expansion of "presumability" as the cipher of Germans' unbroken obedience to authority. He defines it as:

A category, according to which the interpersonal relations in Germany are organized . . . a Something that first opens up the space for unreasonable im-

sitions. . . . Where it dominates people, the extent of unreasonable impositions cannot be fixed precisely. Indeed the concrete measurements of what can and cannot be reasonably expected never bear their law in themselves; rather, as a true law of inertia, they always follow only the unconscious contingency of the given power relations at the time, these one puts up with like calves put up with the feed trough and the slaughterhouse, and thus these presumabilities [*Zumutbarkeiten*], these purely ontic though still preferably metaphysically disguised traffic rules of the German event [a swipe at Heidegger], are admittedly also with good reason, in the most desperate fashion, *unlimited*: in the absence of anything that is not already based on them and hence whose dimensions are determined by them, what can set them a limit? The presumable is thus above all something expandable; indeed, as a characteristically customary *substitution* for that positive publicity of intra- and interpersonal relations, based on respect and self-respect and upon which in turn the life and the history of free people and their societies are based, the presumable is from the very beginning a negative definition of the perpetually self-renewing fundamental relation in which the German stands to his fellow human beings, and indeed, as will be shown, *to himself*. (15–16)

13. The “*Spiegel* affair” refers to events in 1962 surrounding the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* and the conservative minister of defense (and potential chancellor candidate) Franz Josef Strauss. An article drew on leaked classified NATO documents in describing the probable aftermath (ten to fifteen million dead) of a Soviet nuclear attack and an allied counterattack in Germany. The article further documented Germany’s defenses as being only “conditionally prepared” and publicized a major disagreement about strategy among the allied powers, Strauss wanting to equip the German army with tactical nuclear weapons and the Americans emphasizing conventional forces. In order to find evidence of the military leak, Strauss bypassed the constitution and ordered an illegal search of *Der Spiegel*’s offices and the arrest of its editor Rudolf Augstein and the article’s author Conrad Ahlers on charges of treason. Protests and demonstrations erupted as the entire West German media condemned the antidemocratic shutdown of a free press and likened it to Nazi practices. This in turn led to a party split in the governing coalition; several ministers and eventually Strauss himself were forced to resign.

14. Franz Leonard Schlüter was named by the regional coalition government to the post of minister of culture in Lower Saxony in May 1955. Schlüter, a frustrated patriot (judged by the Nazis unfit for military service because of his Jewish mother) who had failed his doctoral exams and been under investigation for improper conduct as head of the criminal police in Göttingen after the war, had been a vociferous member of the nationalist “German Party of the Right” (*Deutsche Rechtspartei*) before joining the right wing of liberal Free Democrat Party (FDP) in 1951. At that time he also founded a Göttingen publishing house that printed several works by former Nazi ideologues and functionaries as well as by professors who were forbidden to lecture by denazification strictures. In protest to Schlüter’s appointment, the rector of Göttingen university, Prof. Dr. Emil Woermann, and the entire university senate resigned. The Göttingen Student Union, broadly supported by the professors, initiated large-scale student strikes and demonstrations. On 9 June 1955, fifteen days

after assuming the post of minister of culture, Schlüter submitted his resignation and a month later resigned also from the FDP leadership. On the third anniversary of his “fall,” Schlüter’s publishing house brought out under an anonymous author a three-hundred page book (*Die große Hetze: Der niedersächsische Ministersturz, Ein Tatsachenbericht zum Fall Schlüter* [Göttingen: Göttinger Verlagsanstalt, 1958]) recounting in detail the compromised writings published during the Nazi regime by Woermann and other prominent Göttingen professors.

15. Cf. Lessing’s text “The Reviewer Need Not be Able to Do Better Than With Which he Finds Fault”; “Der Rezensent braucht nicht besser machen zu können, was er tadelt” in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker (Leipzig: Göschen’sche Verlagshandlung, 1900), 15:62–65.

16. See Gottfried Keller, *Der Grüne Heinrich*, Erste Fassung, ed. Thomas Böning and Gerhard Kaiser, vol. 2 of *Sämtliche Werke* (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985):

There is a saying that one must know not just how to tear down but also how to build up, which is used everywhere by good-natured and superficial people when a probing, searching activity or discipline uncomfortably blocks their way. This saying is appropriate where one refuses or negates what one has not personally experienced or thought through; otherwise it is utter nonsense, for one does not always tear down in order to build up again; on the contrary, one pulls down actually deliberately in order to free up some space for the light and fresh air of the world that take their places on their own wherever an obstruction has been removed. When one faces things and deals honestly with them and oneself, there isn’t anything negative; rather everything is positive, to use this gingerbread expression, and true philosophy knows no other nihilism than the sin against spirit, that is, insisting on self-righteous nonsense for a selfish or vain purpose. (679–680)

17. Cf. Karl Kraus act 1, scene 25, and act 4, scene 29, of *Letzte Tage der Menschheit*; English: *The Last Days of Mankind*, trans. Alexander Gode and Sue Ellen Wright (New York, 1974). Cf. Erich Kästner’s short essay, “Eine kleine Sonntagspredigt” [A small Sunday sermon: On the sense and nature of satire] (1947) defending and in part explaining satire in language Adorno would approve of:

[The satirist] is tormented by the need to call things by their rightful name. His method is: exaggerated presentation of negative facts with more or less artistic means for a more or less non-artistic end. And moreover only with regard to man and his organizations, from monogamy to international government. . . .

He hardly understands why people get angry at him. He of course wants people to get angry at *themselves*! He wants them to be ashamed of themselves. To be more clever. More rational. For he believes, at least in his happier moments, that Socrates and all the subsequent moralists and enlightenment thinkers could be right: namely, that man can improve through reasoned insight.

(“Eine kleine Sonntagspredigt,” in *Gesammelte Schriften für Erwachsene* [Zurich: Atrium Verlag, 1969], 7:117–120, here p. 119)

In the article he quotes in part a poem he wrote years earlier, addressed to querulous readers: "And Where is the Positive, Mr. Kästner?" The poem, "Und wo bleibt das Positive, Herr Kästner?" is originally from the collection *Ein man gibt Auskunft* (1930), now in *Gesammelte Schriften für Erwachsene*, 1:218–219.

18. The "destructive instinct" [*Destruktionstrieb*] together with the "aggressive instinct" [*Aggressionstrieb*] are expressions used by the later Freud to define more clearly the biological and psychological dimensions of the "death instinct" (which he introduced in the speculative *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920) such as it is directed at the external world. See Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (1923) in vol. 19 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1975).

19. Presumably a reference to Spinoza's proposition "*omnis determinatio est negatio*" (*Epistula* 59) refracted through Hegel's theory of the "speculative proposition." Hegel claimed that Spinoza's proposition, while "of infinite importance," resulted in mere abstract juxtaposition of determination and negation, whereas reality contains the negation as potential and hence implies a subsumption [*Aufhebung*] of the determination and its negation at the level of a reflected category. In this way "determinate negation" [*bestimmte Negation*] drives thought and being forward to their ultimate, fully mediated identity. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I and II, Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 5:121–122; 6:195–198. English: Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 111–114 and 536–540 respectively.

Resignation

1. Radio version: "In Marx the doctrine of the unity of theory and praxis was inspired by the possibility of action, which even at that time was not actualized but yet was felt to exist."

2. Allusion to Marx's letter to Arnold Ruge, part of the public correspondence between them and Bakunin and Feuerbach, published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (1844): "If we have no business with the construction of the future or with organizing it for all time there can still be no doubt about the task confronting us at present: I mean the *ruthless critique of everything existing*, ruthless in that it will shrink neither from its own discoveries nor from conflict with the powers that be" (Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton [London: Penguin Books, 1992], 207).

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

4. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder: Sechs Thesen über Taktik, Ziele, und Situationsanalysen der oppositionellen Jugend," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, p. 8. In English, cf. Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).

5. Cf. act 3, scene 1, of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* (1804):

A man with eyesight clear and sense alert,
Who trusts in God and his own supple strength,
Will find some way to slip the noose of danger.
Mountain-born was never scared of mountains.
(Having finished his work he puts the tools away.)
There now! That gate should serve another twelvemonth.
An axe in the house will save a joiner's labor.
(Reaches for his hat.)

(Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*, trans. and ed. William F. Mainland [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972], 64–65 [ll. 1508–1513])

6. "Instinctual aim" [*Triebziel*] in Freud refers to the activity a sexual drive tends toward in order to release an inner biological or psychological tension. Whereas Freud developed the idea in terms of various stages of infant sexuality closely bound to specific organic sources of instinctual aims in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (1905), in the later *Trieb- und Triebsschicksale* (1915) he considers more sublimated cases in which the aim can be modified through the influence of object-choice, anaclysis, substitution by the instincts of self-preservation, etc. In *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* Freud came to see regression [*Regression*] as operative when the libido reverts to an earlier stage in the child's psychosexual development or, as presumably Adorno here implies, to a more primitive, less differentiated form of psychosexual organization, which Freud also often called "fixation."

A relatively constant concept in Freud's economical model of the psyche, the "pleasure principle" [*Lustprinzip*] denotes the strategy of directing psychological activities toward the goal of obtaining pleasure and avoiding its opposite. Several problems arise, such as the pleasure afforded from maintaining a constant tension of psychic energy (the "constancy principle") versus the tendency toward a complete dissipation of energy (the "death drive") and that of the complicity between the pleasure principle and the reality principle for the sake of guaranteeing satisfactions at the expense of the pleasure principle's fundamental (utopian) role in fantasy, dream, and wish-fulfillment, to which Adorno apparently is referring. Cf. Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920); English: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), 18:7–64.

Appendix 1: Discussion of Professor Adorno's Lecture "The Meaning of Working Through the Past"

1. Cf. §143 of G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I, Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 8:281–284. English: *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences, with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).

2. Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1946); reprinted by various publishers. Eng-