PART I

THE LEGACY OF SOCIOLOGY

CHAPTER ONE

Cultural Analysis in Marxist Humanism

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Marxist humanism, in its broadest sense, can be traced back to some of the earliest attempts to combine a Marxist approach to philosophical issues with Hegelian and interpretivist ideas. It involves the attempt to construct a philosophical standpoint that begins from real, conscious human beings and explores the ways in which their self-conscious knowledge enters into the constitution of the world in which they live and act. History is seen as an outcome of those creative human actions through which people both produce a social world and give meaning to it. Glimpsed during the 1890s, this attempt has continued to the present day. Understood as a more specific approach to cultural analysis, however, Marxist humanism has a much shorter history. Systematic cultural analyses from a Marxist humanist standpoint were a specific product of the 1920s and flowered in the 'critical theory' of the Frankfurt School of social theory. It virtually disappeared as a distinct and active strand of cultural theory with the demise of this critical theory and the absorption of its key ideas about culture into very different philosophical and sociological frameworks.

A quite specific framework of cultural analysis was built and elaborated by these writers, though certain of their themes were echoed by a wider group of theorists. Most of their central arguments, however, were later accepted, even though the origin of these ideas is not often recognized.

In view of the criticisms levelled against Marxism, this point is worth emphasizing. The growth of new approaches to culture within cultural studies has been associated with a rejection of what is seen as the crude materialism of mainstream Marxism (e.g., Hall, 1977). These approaches have, paradoxically, drawn much of their inspiration from the work of Gramsci (1929-35), a Marxist who owes much to the same Hegelian tradition that has also shaped the forms of Marxist humanism. Similar points can be made about the work of such postmodernists as Baudrillard (1981), Jameson (1991), and Bauman (1991a). Their works on the contemporary cultural condition are widely seen as pointing social analysis in a new direction, with a greater sensitivity to the plurality and diversity of cultural responses. Jameson, however, presents his work as a cultural complement to the economic logic central to Marxism, reiterating precisely those points made by the writers under consideration here. In the case of Baudrillard and Bauman, the connection is even clearer. The early work of both writers (Baudrillard, 1972; Bauman, 1976) was firmly rooted in the work of the critical theorists who formed the core of Marxist humanism. The growing recognition of the centrality of the media of mass communications has simply enlarged and extended ideas already apparent in that work.

In this chapter, I will focus on the products of the relatively short history of Marxist humanism. The early work of Lukács and at the ways in which his ideas were taken up by Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse will be considered. Some of the contours of their wider acceptance will be discussed, but I will not explore this work in any detail. It is important, nevertheless, to indicate some of the contemporary work that falls firmly within the tradition of Marxist Humanism. I will, therefore, sketch the ways in which the broad philosophical framework of Marxist humanism has persisted, especially in Eastern Europe, where it provided a continuing critical current to the once-dominant Soviet orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy and Western Marxism

At the time of his death, Karl Marx was known principally for his political writings, such as *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1848), and for the broadly materialist interpretation of history that underpinned these writings. Marx had been working on the economic theories that were central to this materialism for many years, but he had managed to publish only a very small part of his voluminous research. Of his projected multi-volume *Economics*, only the first of the volumes on *Capital* had appeared. In the years following his death, others struggled to complete the unpublished works that formed his intellectual legacy, aiming to demonstrate their continuing relevance for understanding contemporary conditions.

Central to this task was Friedrich Engels. Despite undertaking important work of his own before he began working with Marx, Engels can properly be considered 'the first Marxist' (Carver, 1981: 31). He saw his life's work as promoting and popularizing the ideas of Marx by casting them in a systematic and more rigorously 'dialectical' framework. It was in Engels's hands that 'Marxism' came to be systematized as a positivistic science formulating law-like generalizations. His Marxism comprised an economistic view of history that gave little autonomy to cultural phenomena.

Engels's efforts were closely linked to the development of Marxism in Europe. Franz Mehring and Karl Kautsky in Germany and George Plekhanov in Russia were the most important theorists of what came to be known as 'orthodox' Marxism or, by its critics, 'vulgar Marxism'. 'Revisionists' such as Eduard Bernstein and the Fabians, who pioneered the attempt to revise Marxism to take account of the growing monopolization of capitalist production and of imperialist expansion, did not significantly challenge the economic focus and deterministic framework of orthodox Marxism. This economism was also apparent in the more radical attacks levelled against both orthodoxy and Revisionism by Rosa Luxemburg and the Austro-Marxists (Renner, 1904; Hilferding, 1910).

These radical attacks did, however, begin to raise questions about the ability of orthodox Marxism to understand political and cultural factors and about the part played by conscious human action in the development of these elements of the 'superstructural'. Some years earlier, the Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola had rejected the strong deterministic arguments of his compatriots Loria and Ferri. Drawing on Hegel, he stressed that Marxism posits action – praxis – as the crucial link between economic conditions and cultural life, and that 'social psychology' is a crucial element in historical explanation. However, Labriola's influence on other Marxists was limited, and he did not go on to construct a systematic social theory of either politics or culture.

It was only in the 1920s that the economism and determinism of established forms of Marxism were seriously challenged. The philosophical reconsiderations that have come to be known as 'western Marxism' laid the real foundations of Marxist humanism (Anderson, 1976). Karl Korsch and Georg Lukács, in particular, worked through a larger body of philosophy and provided the basis on which the later work of the critical theorists in Frankfurt was built. Writing from within the Marxist tradition, they looked back to the roots of Marxism itself, and particularly to its philosophical roots in Kant and Hegel. They sought to reconstruct Marxism on a new philosophical basis that would take account of the sociological work of Weber and Simmel and the psychological work of Freud. It was this novel mix of ideas that shaped the emerging framework of Marxist humanism.

Born in Hungary, Georg Lukács attended Simmel's lectures in Berlin and became a member of Simmel's private seminar group. A fellow member of this group, Ernst Bloch, took Lukács to Heidelberg to hear Rickert's lectures, and in Heidelberg they both became members of Max Weber's academic circle. Lukács's primary interests lay in aesthetic theory and literature, which he approached from the standpoint of the *Geisteswissenchaften* and he began to read Hegel and the 'Young Hegelians' of the 1840s. An especially important influence on his work, however, was Kierkegaard, whose ideas were concurrently being intensively examined by other important thinkers: while Lukács was drawing out the Hegelian dimension in Kierkegaard's work, Heidegger and Jaspers were using it to forge their existential phenomenology.

Lukács's aim in his earliest books had been to interpret the symbolic structures through which literary works are produced. In *Soul and Forms* (Lukács, 1910)² he used Simmel's idea of 'form' (Simmel, 1900; see also Simmel, 1908) to analyse literary expression, while in *The Theory of the Novel* (Lukács, 1914–15) he adopted more explicitly Hegelian ideas. To these arguments, however, he added the Marxist view that cultural products of all kinds had to be seen as originating in specific social classes (Arato and Breines, 1979). All cultural production, he argued, occurs within a capitalist division of labour and must be seen as involving a process of 'objectification' that separates the products from their creative human producers. The cultural sphere, then, comes to appear as if it were an objective and impersonal sphere of intellectual forms detached from any subjective human meaning. The task of cultural analysis is to show that cultural products can be understood only if they are related back to the meanings and interests of their producers, understood as class members.

Drama and novels, together with other forms of modern art, Lukács argued, are to be seen as bourgeois productions in which there has been a separation of the cultural forms from the personalities of their producers. He saw the central values of the bourgeoisie, centred on individualism and an ascetic sense of duty, reflected in the 'tragic' vision in literature. The bourgeoisie, however, was a declining social class, and its cultural products show the evidence of its decline. Contemporary social conditions could no longer sustain audiences for the classic bourgeois forms of art. Contemporary audiences seek out mass entertainment, and they find it increasingly difficult to exercise any reflective judgement on the social conditions responsible for their cultural preferences. Lukács clung to the hope that the proletariat might still be a source of creative cultural renewal and historical understanding, but he believed that the class consciousness of the German proletariat, as it currently existed, was inadequate. It had been distorted by bourgeois concerns that resulted from their structural subordination within capitalist production. It was these reflections on class consciousness that led Max Weber famously to commend this 'talented author's' views.

Lukács's early political and economic ideas were not based on a wide reading of Marxist works, and on his return to Hungary he set about remedying this. Together with Arnold Hauser and Karl Mannheim, he formed a study group that aimed to reconcile the approach of the *Geisteswissenchaften* with Marxist economic theory. Lukács wanted to incorporate Marxist views on cultural production into his developing framework of ideas. His engagement with Marxist theory, and his rejection of the particular materialist philosophy that underpinned orthodox Marxism, became the central element in his thought when he began to work on the series of essays that were brought together in his famous work, *History and Class Consciousness* (Lukács, 1923). This book was intended as a provisional and programmatic statement of ideas, rather than a definitive solution to his philosophical concerns, and Lichtheim has correctly remarked that it is a rather uneasy amalgam of neo-Hegelian philosophy with economic and political analyses derived from Luxemburg and Lenin (Lichtheim, 1970: 20).

Karl Korsch, at the same time, was developing similar ideas. An active member of the German Communist party (the KPD) from 1920, Korsch for some years combined membership of the Reichstag with his university work. Korsch was a Leninist in politics, but he rejected the conventional philosophical basis of Leninism. In *Marxism and Philosophy* (Korsch, 1923), he argued that knowledge of the social world was not the mere 'reflection' of an independent, external world but was directly constitutive of that world. There could be no sharp line drawn between an external reality and our consciousness of it. This implied the radical thesis that the forms of consciousness that comprise what was conventionally regarded as the 'superstructure' are directly constitutive of the social relations that comprise the 'base'.

History and Class Consciousness, too, aimed to defend the politics of orthodox Marxism against revisionism and reformism, while challenging its philosophical distortions. Like Korsch, Lukács rejected the naïve representational realism of Engels and Lenin and sought to recapture the Hegelian dimension that had been lost in the building of orthodox Marxism. By stressing the importance of Hegel – and, beyond

him, of Kant – Lukács re-opened the whole question of the relationship between knowledge and the nuomenal world of things-in-themselves.

Culture, Totality, and Reification

These philosophical considerations were put to work in a systematic examination of the ideas of class consciousness and ideology. The orthodox Marxist view of base and superstructure saw all artistic expressions as mere epiphenomena of an economic base. Lukács rejected this, seeking to recognize the autonomy of cultural production and all forms of social consciousness. This was combined with a reconsideration of the role of Marxist parties in forging proletarian class consciousness. His key aim was to develop a new philosophical and theoretical basis for what remained an essentially Leninist view of politics.

The crucial idea in Marxism, Lukács argued, was not the idea of the base and the superstructure, but that of the whole and its parts. The parts have always to be grasped in relation to the whole or *totality* in which they are bound. The idea of the totality is central to the dialectical method of thinking and is the core of what Lukács took from Hegel. According to Hegel, the concepts used by people can provide only a partial perspective on the world, and each partial perspective has to be seen as a 'moment' of a larger truth. Each particular point of view gives a limited and one-sided picture, but the whole contains all of these limited representations of it and so is superior to any of them considered separately. Partiality can be overcome through the constant criticism – or 'negation' – of intellectual ideas, reconstructing them and so moving them closer to an overall picture of the totality.

Lukács agreed that the meaning of all observed facts derives from the whole of which they are mere parts and that each particular fact is an analytically isolated aspect or moment of the whole. The process of relating part to whole is a process of 'mediation' (Mannheim, 1929), a creative act of 'synthesis'. In historical study, 'social being' is the relevant whole and is logically prior to the forms of consciousness and social institutions that form its various parts. A social totality is, moreover, a dynamic totality. It is constantly in process of change and development, and all social facts and events must be seen in relation to the past, the present, and the future of the social totality of which they are parts.

The 'method of totality' does not follow the natural science method followed in positivism and orthodox Marxism. There is, as Dilthey and Rickert argued, a fundamental difference between the natural sciences and the historical sciences. With Weber, Lukács saw values as the bases from which concepts are constructed in the historical sciences. However, he held that all consciousness and knowledge is socially located and that values, therefore, had to be related back to their social origins. From Marx he took the idea of the centrality of class location, and concluded that all knowledge of the social, historical world is constructed from the standpoint of particular class positions. There can be no 'detached' or external form of knowledge.

The method of totality that characterizes his Marxism, Lukács argued, is rooted in the class position of the proletariat. It is the standpoint of the proletariat that, uniquely, makes possible an explicit adoption of the method of totality. The synthesis sought by Hegel can be achieved only from a proletarian standpoint; all other standpoints offer only limited or partial points of view. Marxism, therefore, must be seen not as a neutral and detached scientific description of the world, but as an expression of the consciousness of the proletariat. It does not, however, correspond to the actual consciousness of the proletariat as it might exist in any particular place or time. The proletariat as it exists in a particular society may be in a condition of false consciousness and so its members may misunderstand their own position and prospects. What is important for Lukács is the theoretical consciousness of a mature proletariat that has come to a full understanding of its own position in history and of the actions necessary to advance its further historical development. To achieve this state of consciousness, Lukács concluded, proletarian consciousness must be guided by a Communist Party whose leaders have a sure grasp of the real situation faced by the class. Communist intellectuals are able to formulate the revolutionary will of the proletariat in a rational form as they move towards a grasp of the totality. A superior intellectual understanding of the social world is built inside a Communist Party, and so it can truly act as the vanguard of the proletariat.

There is an obvious contradiction in this position, which Lukács failed to resolve. On the one hand, he argued, true science must be informed by the proletarian standpoint. On the other hand, however, he saw this standpoint as non-existent in most real situations, and actual proletarians must be guided by a scientifically informed vanguard of intellectuals. If, however, intellectuals can grasp the totality before members of the proletariat have achieved this consciousness, a justification for their knowledge must be made on grounds closer to those of orthodox 'scientific' Marxism and positivism: and if this is the case, what then differentiates Marxism from any other intellectual position?

Lukács's early work had been concerned with the cultural products of art and literature, but the arguments of History and Class Consciousness were concerned with culture in the broader sense of the practical consciousness and experiences of particular social groups. It is not simply novels and dramas that derive from class standpoints, it is whole ways of life. It was in developing this particular view of culture that Lukács introduced the idea of 'reification'. He used this concept of reification to explore the false consciousness of actual proletarians, and in doing so he virtually reinvented the early Marx's work on alienation. The concept, in fact, had its origins in Marx's analysis of 'commodity fetishism' in Capital, and Lukács effectively reconstructed the Hegelian basis of Marx's mature work. Marx had argued that the personal characteristics of people in a capitalist society are irrelevant to their role in the process of production. Workers are treated as mere quantities of labour power that can be bought or sold in the market and so can be subjected to a process of rationalization, a specialization and fragmentation of work tasks. As a result, relations between people appear simply in the form of the value relations among commodities and money. Their human character and meaning are lost and they are reified, seen as 'things'. This was the insight that never figured in bourgeois economics and that had been lost sight of in orthodox Marxism. Lukács's work aimed to return an awareness of the human character of social products to their producers.

Lukács held that bourgeois thought is necessarily confined to these reified appearances. The particular class standpoint of the bourgeoisie limits its perspective on the world, and does not allow it to penetrate beyond the ways that things appear externally. Bourgeois intellectuals cannot escape their limited standpoint and so bourgeois knowledge necessarily emphasizes the properties of particular isolated and thing-like phenomena. This is shown clearly in the categories and theorems of classical economic theory, Lukács argued, where all social phenomena are reduced to value relations that can be explored through calculation and precise prediction.³ Proletarian thought, as grasped by its vanguard thinkers, can penetrate beyond appearances and so can overcome this reification. Those intellectuals who adopt the proletarian standpoint are able to point the way to a more adequate understanding of contemporary social conditions. True proletarian consciousness has to be seen as the self-knowledge of the commodity, of the specific commodity that is human labour power. When workers understand how they have come to be a commodity and how their emancipation depends on their transcending the knowledge and conditions of bourgeois production, they will have achieved a self-knowledge that will guide them in their revolutionary practice.

Lukács had, then, restored to Marxism many of the ideas set out by Marx in 1844–45, though this became apparent only after Marx's early works were prepared for their first publication in the 1930s. Orthodox Marxists, in the 1920s, saw the incorporation of a Hegelian dimension into Marx's work as dangerous and heretical, and *History and Class Consciousness* caused a fierce storm in Marxist circles. Like Korsch, Lukács had been active in Communist politics, and this made it inevitable that, along with Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy*, his own book would be denounced. Thus, Zinoviev and Bukharin, the leading activists and theorists of the Communist International, criticized it for its abandonment of the scientific principles of Marxism. Lukács toyed with the idea of publishing an answer to his critics, but – however strategically – he left his response unpublished and reverted to a more orthodox position.⁴ Korsch refused to abandon his views and went on to elaborate them further. As a result of this and his expulsion from the KPD, his work (Korsch, 1936) was not widely read in Marxist circles.⁵

Lukács published a more orthodox study of *Lenin* (Lukacs, 1924), and became increasingly committed to the Stalinist political line of those who had denounced him. In 1929, he even recanted his earlier theoretical 'aberrations' and re-stated his commitment to a reflectionist view of truth and his commitment to Soviet orthodoxy and the Soviet regime. Lukács moved to Moscow to work in the Marx archives and, apart from a brief visit to Berlin, he remained there until the end of the Second World War. His work in the Marx archives involved a study of the still unpublished early manuscripts of Marx, and it must have been galling for him to discover their great similarities with his own, now denounced and rejected, work.⁶

Lukács's most creative period ended at precisely the time that other Marxists were beginning to see his Hegel-influenced work as an important contribution to the reconstruction of Marxism. Lukács himself played no part in this and espoused a generally orthodox position. Indeed, Lichtheim has remarked, only a little unfairly, that his work on aesthetics and literary theory during the 1930s (Lukacs, 1937, and various essays later published as Lukacs, 1946) 'are the work of a man who had performed a kind of painless lobotomy upon himself, removed part of his brain and replaced it by slogans from the Moscow propagandists' (Lichtheim, 1970: 83–4).

Lukács returned to Hungary in 1945, and the main works that he published after his return were studies that he had been preparing through the 1930s and 1940s. These were a study of Hegel (Lukács, 1948), and a massive history of German thought since Schelling (Lukács, 1953), in which he criticized Heidegger, Jaspers, and the German sociological tradition in the name of Lenin's representational realism. He also produced a study of modernism (Lukács, 1958), and, in the early 1960s, a two-volume study of aesthetics. These works were attempts to rebuild the approach to aesthetics that he had set out in his very earliest works, but from a more orthodox Marxist basis. His final work, the outcome of his reflections on the implications for Marxism of Marx's early manuscripts and Lenin's philosophical notebooks, was *The Ontology of Social Being*, which was published only after his death (Lukács, 1971a).⁷

Marxist Humanism at Frankfurt -

The core ideas of Marxist humanism as a method of cultural analysis were set out in Lukács's key work. It was developed in its classic form, however, by a group of German academic Marxists who took up Lukács's ideas and enlarged them into a systematic social theory. These were the theorists of the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt.

The Institute was formed in 1923 with an institutional existence quite separate from the Department of Sociology (then headed by Franz Oppenheimer) and the other academic departments of the university.8 Formed with funding from Felix Weil, the son of a wealthy merchant, its aim was to carry out and promote radical social research. Weil, a committed Marxist who had helped to finance the publication of Lukács's History and Class Consciousness, promoted the Institute in order to further Marxist research on socialism and the labour movement. Karl Korsch, then at Jena but soon to be enmeshed in the controversies surrounding his and Lukács's work, actively supported the Institute's research. Under its first Director, Carl Grüneberg, this interdisciplinary group of Marxist scholars had a distinctly Austro-Marxist focus: Grüneberg had studied at Vienna under both Hilferding and Renner. Its members and work in the early years included Henryck Grossman on the economics of monopoly and finance capital,9 Karl Wittfogel on Chinese society, Franz Borkenau on feudal and bourgeois world-views, and Friedrich Pollock on the Soviet planned economy. Members of the Institute of Social Research worked closely with Ryazanov's editing of the Marx archives in Moscow.

Grüneberg's retirement in 1929 precipitated a shift in focus for the Institute, which became both more philosophical and more concerned with cultural issues. The

intellectual centre of gravity at the Institute began to shift from Austro-Marxism to Marxist humanism. The new director, Max Horkheimer, initiated this change of direction. He recruited Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and Franz Neumann to the Institute, and worked closely with Theodor Adorno, then a member of the Philosophy Department. Others associated with the Institute in this period included Leo Lõwenthal and Walter Benjamin, both of whom were working on literary theory.

Horkheimer's ideas were firmly rooted in Austro-Marxism, but his association with Adorno led him to take a greater interest in cultural issues. Adorno's principal interests were in aesthetic theory and the analysis of music, and he had furthered his studies of musical theory and practice in Vienna, where he studied under Schönberg's pupil, Alban Berg. Adorno wrote a number of philosophical pieces while in Vienna, but on his return to Frankfurt in 1926 he applied himself to completing a habilitation thesis on the irrational and the unconscious in Freud's Introductory Lectures (Freud, 1915-17).¹⁰ Influenced by Horkheimer, Adorno began to draw on Marxist ideas, seeing irrationalism as an ideological expression of bourgeois thought that took its most extreme form in fascism. His use of Marxism did not impress his examiners, however, and he did not secure an academic position. He began to spend more time in Berlin, where both he and Horkheimer were members of an intellectual circle that included Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, and many of the artistic avant garde. The intellectual focus for the circle's discussions at this time was Lukács's History and Class Consciousness, and Ernst Bloch provided a direct link back to Simmel's discussion group that had stimulated Lukács's explorations into cultural forms. Adorno worked with Benjamin on a reconsideration of Kantian ideas, and in 1931, when his philosophical expertise could no longer be denied, he joined the Philosophy Department – but not the Institute – at Frankfurt.

A prominent member of the Institute from 1930 to 1939 was Erich Fromm, who had studied for his doctorate under Alfred Weber in the 1920s and had then moved into psychoanalysis. Fromm sought to integrate psychoanalysis with Marxism, He became the leading researcher in the newly established Psychoanalytical Institute at Frankfurt, where he began work on a number of general psychoanalytic studies (published after he left the Institute) and collaborated with the Institute of Social Research on a study of German workers (Fromm, 1939). Another member in the 1930s, Herbert Marcuse, used Lukács's ideas in his aesthetic theory, but he broadened the base of his philosophy when he became a teaching assistant to Heidegger. He had also begun to study Hegel, and when Marx's early manuscripts appeared in the year before he joined the Institute, Marcuse saw them as providing the key for his own work (Marcuse, 1941).

Following the Nazi consolidation of power, state control over intellectual life grew, and many Jewish intellectuals were forced out of the universities and into exile. Karl Mannheim, Norbert Elias, and Hans Gerth of the Sociology Department left Frankfurt for Britain and the United States. The Institute of Social Research – its staff both Jewish and Marxist – was closed down and its property seized. Members of the Institute moved to Switzerland in 1933 and its intellectual activities were then transferred to Columbia University in New York and, a little later, to California. It was

during this period of exile that Adorno became a full member of the Institute. He joined Horkheimer to produce a series of 'philosophical fragments' that were later published as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944), which Horkheimer then popularized in a book of his own (Horkheimer, 1947). Adorno, meanwhile, brought together much of his work on music for publication as a book (Adorno, 1949). Horkheimer returned to Frankfurt in 1950 to re-establish the Institute and to become Rector of the University, and he secured a Chair in the Philosophy Department for Adorno in 1953. Marcuse, who had left the Institute in 1942 to take up some work for the US government, chose to remain in the United States when Horkheimer failed to support his return to an academic post at Frankfurt.

Horkheimer did little to develop his own ideas following his return to Frankfurt, and he taught only on the history of philosophy. While Adorno chose to concentrate much of his attention on aesthetics, he did continue to develop his wider philosophy (Adorno, 1951; 1955; 1966) and his sociology of culture, and he became heavily involved in methodological debates on the character of empirical research in sociology. The bulk of the Institute's work at this time was contract research of an uninspiring kind, and Adorno withdrew from empirical research after the mid-1950s.

I will look at the ideas of the Frankfurt Marxist humanists in the following sections. I will look, first, at their views on knowledge and its relation to the social position of the knowing subject. Then their accounts of rationality and technological domination and of the culture industry will be explored. Finally, the investigations into socialization and social control, which were central to the more general concept of culture that they were developing, will be discussed.

Standpoints, Knowledge, and Critique

Hegel's view of knowledge was the fundamental point of reference for virtually all philosophical debate in Germany, and its influence led many sociologists to see their main, or exclusive, concern as being the construction of a sociology of culture (Weber, 1920–21). These issues were hotly debated in the Philosophy and Sociology Departments at Frankfurt University, and the ideas of Horkheimer and Adorno developed, in particular, in relation to the arguments of Max Scheler and Karl Mannheim. These writers thought it essential to see how sociology could escape the inherently partial and relative character of all socially bound knowledge, and they explored this in what they called a sociology of knowledge.

Scheler, who moved to Frankfurt shortly before his death in 1928, argued that a transcendental realm of objective truth lay behind the historical relativity of actual values and ideas, and he saw his task as defining this objectivity in the face of cultural relativism. Mannheim, on the other hand, rejected any view that postulated movement towards absolute truth: there simply was no sphere of absolute truth. He did, however, try to steer a course that also rejected any radical relativism while, at the same time,

recognizing what he called the 'relational' or perspective-boundcharacter of knowledge (Mannheim, 1925; 1929). Mannheim focused on the role of intellectuals in the production of knowledge. In doing so, he was drawing on the cultural sociology of Alfred Weber and the Marxism of Lukács, as both writers had sought to distinguish the knowledge produced by intellectuals from the everyday knowledge of other social actors. Intellectuals had the necessary education and training to engage in social research, and the universities could give them a base of relative autonomy from practical interests and concerns that allowed them to detach themselves from practical struggles and work towards a knowledge of the larger context within which people are bound. They can produce a knowledge that is, necessarily, 'relational', but which is not merely 'relative' to a given social location (see Scott, 1998).

Both Horkheimer and Adorno shared this assumption that the production of knowledge that escapes the limited perspectives of everyday knowledge, however partially, is a task that can be pursued only by an intellectual minority working under appropriate social conditions. Horkheimer (1935) took a similar position to Mannheim, holding that all truth must be recognized as limited and tentative. Social scientists, he argued, are engaged in a critical reconstruction of the knowledge and ideas of particular historical groups. This is a practical, progressive movement towards a view of the social whole from within which these particular ideas originate. This view of the whole remains, nevertheless, a tentative product of particular individuals and groups. While it is superior to the unreflective partial perspectives from which it is built, it is still a partial view. At the same time, however, the social whole is constantly changing. Change occurs through the practical activities of the individuals and groups that compose it, which are informed by their particular ideas. The partial knowledge possessed by social groups informs their actions, which bring about social change in the totality that shapes their knowledge. Social scientists who achieve a critical reconstruction of the whole are aiming at a moving and constantly changing target. Horkheimer, therefore, agrees with Mannheim that any 'synthesis' of partial perspectives must be a 'dynamic' synthesis that is constantly moving towards a better and more adequate knowledge of the whole, but can never be fixed as a definitive statement of absolute truth.

Adorno agreed that historically objectified knowledge is perspectival in character, and he adds that the plurality of such knowledge in any society highlights the contradictory character of social reality itself. The aim of historical understanding, Adorno argued, is to grasp the contradictory character of the world by disclosing the structural elements that organize it and showing how each perspective or standpoint 'negates' all others. These contradictions cannot be overcome or unified in the kind of 'synthesis' sought by Hegel. They exist within complex social wholes that have no overall, essential unity. Cultural analysis involves an identification of the elements or parts of the whole and an imaginative recombination of them in such a way as to disclose their contradictions, oppositions, non-identities, and negations. These contradictions cannot simply be thought away, but must be retained as integral to the character of the whole.¹¹ The model for such an analysis is Marx's analysis of commodity exchange, which identified the forces and the relations of production as the parts and recombined them into a model of a mode of production in which their

contradictions explained the observable pattern of market relations and predicted the future course of economic change.

These ideas were explored in Horkheimer's discussion of class consciousness, and of proletarian consciousness in particular. He saw the German proletariat as marked by a sharp division between an employed fraction and the submerged and deprived fraction of the unemployed. This class division fragmented the labour movement and undermined its chances for political unity. The employed section of the working class in Germany, for example, had allied with the reformist tendencies in the SPD and other moderate parties, while the unemployed, with no capacity for political organization or class consciousness, were naïve and uncritical supporters of the KPD.

Horkheimer saw Marxist intellectuals as able to generate a critical reconstruction of the partial perspectives found in the fraction of the working class, but he was more pessimistic about actual proletarian consciousness than Lenin and Lukács. The proletariat had become subject to ever-stronger ideological forces of domination that strengthened its false consciousness. Its objective conditions push it towards truth, but ideology limits and restricts it. Parties become agents of this ideology and so cannot be regarded as reliable sources of revolutionary change. A properly progressive and critical theory, therefore, has to be developed by intellectuals with an autonomous base, independent of both party and state. It can be produced by a small circle of intellectuals, united by their common commitment to developing a theory that will contribute to the elimination of exploitation and oppression. Horkheimer saw intellectuals such as himself developing their ideas through dialogue and debate with the most 'advanced' sections of the working class. The theoretical consciousness that corresponds to the proletarian standpoint, then, can be developed only *outside* the proletariat and taken to them from this autonomous, external base. The intellectuals of the Institute of Social Research were able, in principle, to use their ideas, to bring the two sections of the German proletariat into a political unity in which their differences are recognized and understood but are subordinated to their common opposition to the bourgeoisie.

To understand the role of Marxist intellectuals, Horkheimer drew a distinction between their 'critical theory' and the bourgeois forms of 'traditional theory' (Horkheimer, 1937). Traditional forms of theorizing, such as positivistic science, obscure the practical interests that organize them, hiding them behind a mask of objectivity and absolute impartiality. In representing particular interests as if they were universal, they are ideological. By contrast, critical theorizing, in demonstrating the partiality of all perspectives, exposes and articulates the links between knowledge and interests. It shows the limitations inherent in traditional theorizing by showing how its results can be placed within a larger practical context. What gives critical theory its progressive character is its orientation towards the emancipation of people from all forms of domination - from domination by market relations and from the political relations of totalitarian control that have become such a marked feature of contemporary capitalism. Unlike Lukács, Horkheimer does not see the adoption of this emancipatory interest as requiring that intellectuals actually take the standpoint of the proletariat. Critical theory, he argued, must retain its independent commitment to the achievement of a rational form of society that will achieve full human potential. Liberation from class relations is one, albeit central, aspect of this process of emancipation.

Marcuse most explicitly forged links between a critical theory and the heritage of Hegel's idea of negative, critical thinking (Marcuse, 1941; see also Marcuse, 1936 and 1937). Marcuse argued that Marxism was the true inheritor of the critical tendencies of the early works of Hegel, of his so-called Jena system of philosophy. He drew specific parallels between the treatment of the early works of both writers. These early works were, in each case, unpublished when written. Only in the 1920s and 1930s had scholars discovered this work and made it available: Hegel's earliest works were first published in 1923 and in 1931–32, while Marx's early manuscripts were published in 1932. Marcuse saw himself and the other Frankfurt theorists as recovering the critical Hegelian dimension in Marx's thought that had been denied by orthodox and revisionist Marxism.

This emphasis on critical theory continued into the 1950s and 1960s. Adorno, working mainly on aesthetics and philosophy rather than the sociology of culture, engaged in a series of debates and discussions on methodology. Faced with the challenge posed by the growth of non-Marxist sociology in the post-war period, Adorno and others at the Institute attempted to clarify the distinctive character of critical theory and its relationship to 'bourgeois' sociology. With other members of the Institute he produced a series of papers on methodology (Adorno, 1957; 1962b), a collectively authored textbook (Horkheimer et al., 1956), and a series of introductory lectures (Adorno, 1968). The context for much that he wrote was the so-called 'positivist dispute'. This was a debate around the nature of social science method in which Adorno defended the idea of critical theory in the face of the claim by Popper and some interpreters of Weber that sociology was doomed unless it rigorously and systematically followed the methodology of the natural sciences. Adorno pointed to the distorting and destructive consequences of this 'positivism' and stressed, once again, the importance of negativity for critical thinking.

Substantively, however, Adorno's social theory had much in common with orthodox sociology and with the classical German sociology of Simmel and Weber. He sought to integrate these ideas with contemporary American work, while also showing that their conclusions had to be grounded in the framework that only critical theory could provide. Orthodox sociology, like orthodox economics, remained too closely bound to superficial appearances, failing to see them as the expressions of deep-seated contradictions that had their basis, ultimately, in the relations and forces of production. 'Society', like the parallel concept of the 'economy', reified realities that have their foundations in the sphere of production. Critical theory, then, was not a simple alternative to conventional sociology but an extension and deepening of it that approached more closely the character of the social whole.

Technology, Organization, and Domination

The substantive work carried out by the key members of the Frankfurt Institute during the period of exile was organized around a fundamental insight: that the

economic analyses undertaken by Marx and Marxists had to be complemented by a cultural analysis that gave appropriate autonomy to the cultural sphere. The most general formulation of this argument was Adorno and Horkheimer's jointly produced *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944). They documented a process of rationalization, which they saw in Weberian terms as an expansion of the deliberate and systematic technical orientation towards and control over the natural world, other people, and our own selves. This rationalization was spreading through all areas of social life. They found the origins of this in the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment had begun a process of liberation from myth and fear through its ongoing 'disenchantment' and demythologization. It continually undermined the claims of religion, custom, and tradition in favour of promoting a rational, instrumental knowledge of the world through the systematic accumulation of rational, scientific knowledge. It was the product of a self-conscious group of intellectuals committed to rational social change, and the major early achievements of this 'Enlightenment project' were the rational organizational structures of capitalism and industrialism. Contemporary society, Adorno and Horkheimer argued, had taken this rationalization to a particularly high level, producing an increased centralization of economic and political power and a growth in state intervention in the economy.

This trend was apparent in all capitalist societies, but it had reached its most extreme form in German fascism during the 1930s and 1940s. Views differed within the Institute as to whether this marked a new and more stable form of society. According to Neumann (1942), National Socialism was a combination of monopoly capitalism and a command economy in which all subordinate classes were fragmented and all intermediate groups had been destroyed. The proletariat had been transformed into a dependent and subordinate 'mass' that was tied directly into the state through its autocratic bureaucratic structures. As it remained a form of capitalism, however, Neumann argued that fascism would eventually be undermined by its internal contradictions. For Pollock (1941), on the other hand, state intervention marked the emergence of a new phase of 'state capitalism'. The authoritarian or totalitarian form of state capitalism found in fascism was marked by the dominance of a new ruling group of industrial and state managers. State capitalism had resolved the economic contradictions of private capitalism and had achieved a non-socialist form of political stability.

There was, however, a common recognition that the expansion of human powers of technical control had, at the same time, undermined human autonomy by subjecting people to ever-stronger relations of power. This was most apparent in the fetishism of commodities, through which human social relations of exchange had been transformed into abstract monetary relations among things. Such domination was spreading through all areas of life. All aspects of modern life tend to become commodified or administered, and human beings become subject to ever more intensive forms of domination. Whole areas of social life, outside the economy and the political system, were subject to this same process of rationalization. The principles and mechanisms of 'society' were assimilated to those of the political economy,

and the political and economic systems themselves acquire greater power over more purely 'social' and cultural processes. The power relations of the economy and the state had an objectivity and impersonality that made them appear to be necessary and inescapable. Acceptance of these reified constraints made the idea of human freedom appear to be a merely utopian fantasy.

This was the 'dialectic' of the Enlightenment. In promising human liberation through rational knowledge, it had, in fact, produced systems and principles that denied and undermined real freedom. The Enlightenment project was contradictory in its consequences, producing a social whole that combined rational technique with the distortion of human creativity and autonomy: 'With the extension of the bourgeois commodity economy, the dark horizon of myth is illumined by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose cold rays the seed of the new barbarism grows to fruition' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944: 32).

The Frankfurt Marxist humanists, then, saw capitalism as having developed into a system that was capable of sustaining growth and full employment and that was less likely to be undermined by its internal economic contradictions. Even Marcuse was pessimistic about the likelihood of spontaneous change in the short or medium term. Through the capitalist consolidation of instrumental rationality, he argued, technocratic forms of consciousness were coming to prevail. People believed that their actions were governed by technical necessity – by 'laws' – but this was simply a reification: power relations appeared as relations between things that are subject to objective and impersonal laws. Under these circumstances, there is little likelihood that people will develop any critical consciousness of their own subjection (Marcuse, 1964a).

The Culture Industry

Horkheimer and, especially, Adorno saw music as central to contemporary and historical cultures, and they felt that an analysis of the state of musical production and consumption would say a great deal about wider social conditions. Lukács, it will be recalled, saw literature in much the same way, and there are many parallels in their concerns. Adorno's earliest works in this area drew on his own experiences in studying and composing music. He saw music, like all forms of art, as social production that originates in particular social classes. In capitalist societies, the prevailing musical forms were bourgeois products, and Adorno, using ideas from Schönberg, extended this simple Marxian insight.

It was Schönberg's view that music is a rational, intellectual articulation of objective cultural truths; it is not a mere expression of subjective emotions. Musical intellect is exercised through its specific forms of expression, and musical creativity involves the use of the 'grammatical' forms of a particular musical language in innovative ways. The musical forms of a society change over time, and Schönberg, in his own compositions, sought to go beyond the long-established classical forms and to develop and work within new, atonal forms. Adorno suggested that the classical

forms – principally tonal composition and the sonata form – had arisen with the bourgeoisie and that their decline was linked to the transformation of this class.

This analysis of music carried forward the argument of the early Lukács that the specifically bourgeois literary forms were those of narrative realism and characterization found in the novel and modern drama. Adorno added that there were parallel bourgeois forms in pictorial art – most notably linear perspective and representationalism. In all areas of culture, Adorno argued, the established bourgeois forms were disintegrating, and avant garde artists were exploring the possibilities this opened-up for artistic expression. In music, the progressive avant garde comprised Schönberg, Berg, Webern, and Mahler; in literature it included Kafka and the 'stream of consciousness' literature of Joyce, Proust, and Woolf; while in art it included Picasso, Braque, and Kandinsky. Their forms of artistic expression, Adorno claimed, embodied a critical intent and so could grasp the truth of the subject's condition under contemporary conditions.

These progressive features in art music contrasted sharply with the cultural trends that Horkheimer and Adorno identified in popular music, where the rationalization of social life had especially marked consequences. These consequences they diagnosed in their exploration of what they called the 'culture industry'. The cultural sphere is one in which escape from domination should be possible, but it is increasingly subject to the same process of rationalization as all other spheres of social life. Instead of offering an escape from rational domination, cultural activity was itself becoming an industrialized process of production that drew people ever more deeply into the rationalized system and gave them only a false idea of escape and freedom. Artistic culture was more and more difficult to sustain as an autonomous activity, as cultural productions were becoming available to people only in commodity form.

In the stage of liberal capitalism, the producers and consumers of popular culture had retained a degree of autonomy over their own cultural activities. In the monopoly stage of capitalism, however, this is no longer the case. Popular culture, as it developed within monopoly capitalism, is the product of a culture industry that produces cultural items as commodities. Both leisure and consumption are organized along capitalist lines: they are locked together with work and production into a single system dominated by the instrumental rationality of capitalist production. Cultural development is not shaped by performers and their audiences, but by the finance capitalists and managers who run the various branches of the culture industry. They are integral elements within the larger capitalist system. The directors of the cultural monopolies are fused with company directors and owners in steel, petroleum, electricity, chemicals, and banking as part of a single system of finance capital. Within this complex, the cultural controllers are a relatively weak and subordinate part, and the system as a whole is dominated by banking and big business considerations (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944: 122).

Thus, cultural items in modern capitalism are not supplied to meet the spontaneous wishes of a public but on the basis of what the culture industry itself wants to supply to the market. The passive masses are not active producers of the culture that they consume.¹³ The differentiation of cultural commodities is organized around a

classification and labelling of consumers, with market research and advertising being geared to ensuring that the consumers do actually buy them. Rationalized market processes have ensured that the rise of the culture industry results in a cultural uniformity. Cultural commodities are shaped by a standardizing, commercial logic, rather than by purely aesthetic considerations. Films, radio, magazines, and other cultural forms are homogeneous, standardized, and uniform in all important respects. The products of the culture industry are produced to standard formulas that reflect the need to package them and to sell them in calculable ways. Mass-produced soap operas, songs, films, and so on, as items of 'entertainment', are embedded in a system of advertising that integrates mass cultural meanings with other commodities such as cars, cigarettes, and food. One implication of this, Horkheimer and Adorno argue, is that the boundaries between cultural representations and everyday life break down: 'Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944: 126). The aim of film producers, for example, is to ensure that people see the world outside the cinema as continuous with the film. It is what Baudrillard (1981) would see as 'hyperreal'.

Cultural products are geared to amusement and entertainment, but their claims to make people happy rest on the fulfilment of false pleasures rather than real ones. This analysis tends to conflate scientific description and aesthetic judgement, and Adorno's distaste for all popular culture is apparent in the tone and language of his writing. For Adorno, a standardized and mass-produced culture is, inevitably, an inauthentic and second-rate one that bears no comparison with 'true' artistic achievement. The culture of the masses accords only with their alienated needs (Adorno, n.d.; see also Adorno, 1984).

One of Adorno's earliest applications of his ideas was a study of jazz (Adorno, 1937) in which he attempted to decompose and reconstruct this particular musical form. In improvising, he argued, a jazz soloist appears to be departing from the established pattern but is, in fact, conforming to a larger structure. The soloist follows rules that are specific to the musical form of jazz. Adorno, however, was no aficionado of jazz, as is apparent in his view that syncopation – anticipating the beat – is akin to premature ejaculation and so signifies not musical power but musical impotence. Such negative aesthetic judgements on popular music remained an important part of Adorno's cultural analysis throughout his life.

Taking up some of the ideas from his discussion of jazz, Adorno sought to draw a sharp distinction between the factors influencing the development of serious, art music and the popular music produced by the culture industry. Popular music, he argues, is characterized by standardization and pseudo-individualization. The basic structural elements of popular songs are standardized and interchangeable, but they are differentiated in minor and peripheral ways in order to enhance their market appeal. This reflects trends in the mass production of all commodities. Henry Ford had famously said of the first Ford cars that purchasers could have any colour they liked, so long as it was black. By contrast, present-day Ford cars are built from standard components and to standard specifications but are differentiated by body colour, internal fabrics, fascia design, wheel trims, and so on. Such variation gives the consumer the illusion of real choice. Similarly, argues Adorno, the standardized

12-bar and 16-bar structures and song forms of popular music are obscured by minor variations in vocal styling, instrumentation, recording effects, and so on.

Even art music is not immune to these cultural trends. Adorno would, no doubt, see the recent trend of packaging certain forms of classical music for radio performance and CD compilation ('Beethoven's Greatest Hits') as a further sign of commodification, but he recognized a deeper impact of rationalization on serious music. He had initially seen Schönberg's music as expressing the modern condition and posing a challenge to it, as standing in the same relation to the bourgeois musical forms of classicism as his own philosophy stood in relation to bourgeois philosophy. In his later work, however, he saw Schönberg's chromaticism as overly rationalized and as destroying the possibility of individual expressivity (Adorno, 1962a).

The cultivation of individual expression through serious music – something that Adorno tried to pursue in his own compositions – should be a form of critique, a search for truth that poses a political challenge to rationalization and to the culture industry that it has spawned. What is apparent here, in Adorno's emphasis on 'truth', is his cognitive or intellectualist view of artistic expression. He saw music, like philosophy, as an attempt at a cognitive or intellectual understanding of the world, albeit in non-verbal form. There is no recognition of any cathartic or emotional role for music that is not tied to ideological distortion and its orientation to rationalized domination. Emotionality in music is a manifestation of alienation and a denial of its progressive, critical role in social life.

In the sphere of popular culture and all that comes within the orbit of the culture industry, genuine artistic expression is extinguished and individuals are subjected ever more deeply to oppression and alienation. Their oppression takes a cultural form, as ideological domination. This undermines their ability to act as autonomous subjects by manipulating their desires and channelling them around the false needs whose pursuit sustains the capitalist system. Culture, then, becomes central to the reproduction of capitalism through encouraging the consumption of commodities and through forming a standardized mass consciousness.

Adorno's aesthetic rejection of popular cultural products and his view of the masses as oriented by false needs did not lead him to see consumers as mere dupes of the culture industry. They are its victims, but they are victimized by a lack of choice rather than by a false consciousness: 'The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944: 167)

Just as popular music adopts standardized forms that inhibit thought and restrict people to false pleasures, so other aspects of popular culture move in the same direction. Film stunts the imagination because movies are so designed that the need to follow the plot rules out any sustained thought. Writing in the 1940s, when television was in its early stages, Horkheimer and Adorno saw it as bound to intensify this process. These cultural trends reinforce social authority by eliminating alternative viewpoints. Immediate wishes linked to consumption and emotional desires are easily fulfilled and channelled into safe forms of expression, and any drive to challenge or to alter things is defused. Potential opposition is defused and depoliticized.

Herbert Marcuse explored the specifically political dimensions of these cultural changes. This was most powerfully expressed in his One Dimensional Man (Marcuse, 1964b), where he traced the new forms of alienation and need repression generated in the contemporary 'totalitarian' form of organized capitalism prevailing in both the United States and the Soviet Union (Marcuse, 1958). The capitalist system, he argued, had developed to the point at which basic human needs could be satisfied and new 'false needs' created. False needs are those that are imposed on individuals as a means for their repression - and Marcuse instances the need to consume commodities in the ways that they are presented in advertisements. In such a situation, people become oriented to the needs generated by the forms of cultural production of the mass media, and so their needs come to be determined by external powers over which they have no control. Although individuals may identify with these needs regarding them as their own true needs - they are, in fact, products of ideological domination: they are repressive needs, from which individuals must be liberated. The cultural sphere is marked by 'desublimation', by a destruction of the truths previously found in the sublimations of a truly artistic culture. Commodification of cultural products ensures that people lose the ability to think critically about their own society and are socialized into the 'Happy Consciousness' (Marcuse, 1964b: 79) of the new conformism: the existing world is seen as a rational world that delivers the desired goods and is, therefore, to be welcomed.

This conformist orientation and the lack of any critical potential are seen by Marcuse as indicative of the 'one-dimensional thought' that characterizes contemporary capitalism. Rationalization consists not simply of the application of rational knowledge, but also of the extension of a systematically rational pattern of mind and behaviour. Positive, technical knowledge is ideological, a source of domination. In these circumstances, no effective challenge to economic, political, and cultural domination can be mounted from within contemporary capitalism itself. The primary challenge must come from those outside the system, from the subordinate masses of the Third World and the marginalized, poor, and excluded sections of the western proletariat who have not been incorporated into the happy consciousness of their affluent and conformist compatriots.

Authoritarianism, Socialization, and Culture

The rationalization of economics, politics, and culture was seen as producing social stability by defusing the critical consciousness of those who live in contemporary capitalist societies. An important theme in the writings of the Frankfurt School, therefore, was the exploration of the psychological processes that complemented the social processes of rationalization and homogenization. It is through their socialization into its culture that people come to identify with the system that oppresses them, and Institute members turned to psychoanalytical ideas for insights into this.

Much work on developing this integration of Freud with Marx was done by Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. Fromm produced many ideas that contributed to the

Institute's analysis of authoritarianism, but his main investigations into the links between the early Marx and Freudian psychoanalysis (Fromm, 1942; see also Fromm, 1961) date from after he left the Institute in 1939. Marcuse's early explorations into pleasure and motivation (Marcuse, 1938) were also important, but his main engagement with Freud dates from the 1950s. It was Adorno, however, who was principally responsible for the Freudian dimension to the Institute's work in the 1940s.

The Institute sponsored a number of investigations into the psychological sources of authoritarianism and support for fascism during the early years of its exile, with fieldwork carried out in France and Switzerland. Fromm's research on German working-class consciousness (Fromm, 1939)¹⁴ was one of a series of studies that he supervised at the Institute during the 1930s. The focus of this work (Horkheimer and others, 1936) was the link between authority relations within families and structures of domination in the wider society. The initial publication was a rather poorly integrated combination of theory and empirical data, but it set the agenda for the continuing work. Its basic assumption was that the bourgeois family form - a family form found in the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie as well as in the bourgeoisie itself – generates a submissiveness that is central to the stability of organized capitalism in its totalitarian form. This authoritarian character type embodies both the capitalist spirit of acquisitiveness and the anal personality attributes studied by Freud. It is worth noting the emphasis, once again, on the 'forms' of social life that Lukács and the Frankfurt School have consistently regarded as the major insight that their work derived from the sociology of Simmel and Weber. It is through the artistic forms that artistic creativity is able to express itself, or can be denied, and the family form plays a similar part in relation to the expression of domestic and political individuality.

During the Second World War, some broader research into anti-Semitism was undertaken, some of this jointly with Robert MacIver at Columbia University. A number of specialist publications were produced, including an account of the famous 'f-scale' of authoritarian (or fascistic) personality attributes, and the core ideas were eventually presented in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950). This work set out the underlying character traits expressed in fascist, anti-Semitic, and other authoritarian forms. Underpinning these arguments were specific psychological arguments that connected the emphasis on authoritarianism, the analysis of the culture industry, and the biological basis of human action.

Marcuse's argument shared many of the concerns of the 'culture and personality' approach, but he re-emphasized the Freudian recognition of the importance of biology and, in particular, of instinctual drives. In his *Eros and Civilization* (1956), Marcuse built on this psychoanalytical perspective to explore the deeper bases of social stability. Freud had argued that repression is a necessary consequence of technical civilization, but Marcuse took issue with this. He argued that the link between civilization and repression is such that repression always takes historically specific forms. He drew the conclusion that there could be non-repressive forms of civilization: technology has the potential to liberate people from the class-specific forms of repression that mark contemporary capitalist societies.

Freud had seen the instincts as destructive unless they are channelled and controlled by culture. Left to their own devices, the instincts operate according to the 'pleasure principle' as largely unconscious driving forces through which people orient themselves towards their world. The rational deliberations of the ego are geared towards achieving instinctually driven goals and, therefore, to forming a representation of the world through which the instinctual demands of the id can be controlled and co-ordinated. Cultural control over the instincts works through a 'reality principle', and this underpins the conformity of individuals to the demands of civilization. People learn that their instincts cannot be immediately and fully satisfied, and so they also learn to renounce and restrain them so that they can be satisfied - at least in part – over the longer term. The effects of parental socialization within the family reinforce conscious control by the ego. It is through this socialization that a superego is formed as external demands are 'introjected' as a moral conscience. The superego is, then, the sediment of a person's past experiences. The moral controls imposed by the superego may run counter to the potentialities for instinctual gratification that are possible under present conditions.

Civilization, therefore, tends to involve the cultural domination of the ego and the superego over biological needs and instincts. Where Marcuse differs from Freud is that he pointed to the possibilities that conscious actions have for eliminating extraneous and unnecessary barriers to gratification. The impact of culture on human needs is not fixed and completely determined, and, under appropriate conditions, it can be a means of liberation and instinctual expression. Through conscious action and the application of reason, Marcuse argued, it is possible to create social conditions that maximize opportunities for instinctual gratification. Culture and technical civilization, then, have the potential to channel instincts in both negative and positive ways. They can deny and suppress them totally, replacing them with false needs and desires that can be satisfied only from within the existing form of society; or they can create the conditions under which, as far as possible, individuals can exercise a true freedom in the expression and satisfaction of their instincts.

Marcuse's diagnosis of contemporary conditions in the advanced capitalist societies is that the rationalization of culture has, through processes of socialization and ideological incorporation, established a conformist character type that is unable to challenge structures of domination and is, indeed, unaware of the extent of its own domination. The institutionalization of the 'performance principle', as the specific form taken by the reality principle, leads people to adopt a calculative and acquisitive orientation towards their work, emphasizing its alienated form (Marcuse, 1956: 45). Indeed, they come to accept this technological domination as normal and natural. At the same time, however, the performance principle enhances productivity and rational control, thus creating the preconditions for an alternative, and non-repressive, reality principle. Recognition of this liberating potential is what gives Marcuse's theory its critical dimension. It has the power to explain the social forms that are associated with the cultivation of false needs and the denial of instincts, and it is thereby able to show the conditions under which people can liberate themselves

from those social forms by building alternatives that allow a more authentic expression and satisfaction of their needs.

Personal differences between Marcuse and his former colleagues (rooted in minor jealousies about his independence of thought) meant that Marcuse's work was not published under the auspices of the Institute. Nevertheless, *Eros and Civilization* and his later books, were almost the only significant works of the 1950s and 1960s that embodied the substantive ideals of critical theory and that articulated any deepening of the Marxist humanist account of culture.

The Legacy of Marxist Humanism

While the critical theorists were first developing their ideas, other Marxists were also setting out related ideas, though none of these achieved the impact enjoyed by those of the Frankfurt theorists. Henri Lefebvre's work *Dialectical Materialism* (Lefebvre, 1934–35) was poised somewhere between Lukács and Horkheimer. It was based largely on Marx's early manuscripts, which Lefebvre had translated for publication in France. Lefebvre's work was rejected by the Communist Party orthodoxy, and he remained a marginal figure. It was not until much later that his application of these ideas to everyday life and urban structures began to have a wider influence (Lefebvre, 1968; 1973). Franz Jakubowski, from Danzig, studied under a former member of the Frankfurt Institute and drew on Marx's early manuscripts when writing his thesis on the idea of base and superstructure (Jakubowski, 1936). Although this thesis was published in 1936, the Nazis imprisoned Jakubowski and his book had no real impact at the time.¹⁵

In Italy, Gramsci was working on a related set of ideas. A Communist activist in the 1920s, Gramsci had been sentenced to prison for 20 years in 1926. Though this cut him off from any active political participation, it did give him an unsought opportunity to develop his own theoretical ideas. Drawing, in particular, on Labriola's 'philosophy of praxis', Gramsci used the Hegelian ideas of Croce to develop an account of the cultural and political hegemony that he saw as an integral aspect of ruling class power and of the part played by intellectuals in the formation of a proletarian counter-hegemony. The surviving manuscripts from this period, now known as the 'Prison Notebooks' (Gramsci, 1929–35), were incomplete, unedited, and unpublished when Gramsci died in his prison clinic. As a result, his ideas began to have a significant influence only after others had established the framework of Marxist humanism.

The Marxist humanism that developed in the works of Lukács and the critical theorists themselves provided a remarkably powerful approach to cultural analysis. Many of their central tenets, therefore, have been incorporated into the mainstream of cultural sociology and have often found a place in work that is neither Marxist humanist nor even Marxist. It is a sign of their success that their key concepts, along with the more recently discovered ideas of Gramsci, have figured in the works of structural Marxists, postmodernists, symbolic interactionists, and many others. They have, for example, been central to influential arguments in cultural studies

concerning cultural hegemony in contemporary society (e.g., Hall et al., 1978; Clark et al., 1979) The corollary of this intellectual success, however, is the virtual exhaustion of Marxist humanism itself as a distinctive paradigm for cultural analysis. The deaths of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse brought an obvious end to their work, though the former two had long since ceased to make or attempt any novel contributions to a critical theory of culture.

Despite this diffusion of ideas and the dissipation of the paradigm, some have continued to try to develop a distinctively Marxist humanist approach. Even among these writers, however, the most powerful and influential ideas have come from those who have moved beyond Marxist humanism and have integrated the concerns of Lukács and the Frankfurt School with wider theoretical arguments.

The most direct inheritor of the Frankfurt tradition of critical theory is Jürgen Habermas, one-time teaching assistant to Adorno in the 1950s. His early work (Habermas, 1962; 1965; see also Schmidt, 1962) is in the direct line of Frankfurt theory, but he broke away from this during the late 1960s (Habermas, 1968; 1971). His work now draws heavily on functionalism, systems theory, linguistic philosophy, and symbolic interactionism (Habermas, 1981a; 1981b) and, for all its analytical power, can no longer be regarded as distinctively Marxist humanist. Indeed, many have argued that it should not even be regarded as distinctively Marxist. This theoretical work has, however, helped to generate the very important works of writers such as Wellmer (1971), Offe (1970), and Eder (1993).

The most notable follower of Lukács was Lucien Goldmann, who studied under the Austro-Marxist Max Adler and discovered the work of Lukács in the 1930s. Many of his central concepts were taken from *History and Class Consciousness* and Lukács's later work on the novel (Lukacs, 1937), but Goldmann also took ideas from Piaget's structuralism. He set out some early methodological reflections on class consciousness and the role of the intellectual (Goldmann, 1952) and he traced the development and transformation of bourgeois class consciousness in French literature during the seventeenth century (Goldmann, 1956; 1964).¹⁶

Lukács also influenced a significant group of Hungarian writers. These included Istvan Meszaros (1970; 1989; see also Meszaros 1971b and 1971a), Ferenc Feher (1983), and Agnes Heller (1974; 1983). Of these, the most important is Heller, who has developed her work in a very similar direction to the way in which Habermas developed the critical theory of Horkheimer and Adorno. She has, in particular, drawn on a neo-Parsonian systems theory that borrows extensively from Niklas Luhmann, and has gone well beyond Marxist humanism to look at what she calls the dynamic of modernity (Heller 1982; 1984; 1990).

In Poland, Marxist humanist philosophical ideas were developed by Leszek Kolakowski (1968; and see Kolakowski 1978) and Adam Schaff (1963). Kolakowski particularly stressed the importance of individual and collective action in history and the moral responsibility that individuals have for their actions. Influenced by theses ideas, Zygmunt Bauman (1991b; 1991a; 2001) developed a powerful and independent form of social analysis that now has similarities with the work of Habermas and Heller and, like them, is not distinctively Marxist in character.¹⁷

Karl Kosik in Czechoslovakia set out similar views to Kolakowski and Schaff (Kosik, 1976), but the most vibrant tradition of Marxist humanist philosophy was that of the 'Praxis' group in Yugoslavia. From 1964 to their suppression in 1975, and heavily influenced by the arguments of Erich Fromm (1965), they developed ideas from the young Marx, especially in relation to alienation and freedom (Markoviæ and Petrovic, 1979). Most important among these was Mikhael Markoviæ (1974; Markoviæ and Cohen, 1975). Markoviæ wrote specifically on culture, though his main contribution was to restate the arguments of Galbraith (1967) rather than make any specifically novel Marxist contribution. Goluboviæ (1972), however, did set out a general view of culture that explored the relationship between 'elite' and 'mass' culture and applied this to the situation of intellectuals in 'actually existing socialism'.

Marxist humanism, then, is no longer sustained as a strong research tradition, and it is doubtful whether it can, any longer, form the basis of a viable research programme. It proved highly successful at a time when the main currents of Marxism gave little attention to cultural matters and sociology was, for the most part, failing to produce comprehensive explanations of the social organization of culture. Having successfully put cultural analysis on the agenda, its ideas were rapidly adopted by others and put to use in alternative research programmes. It is now difficult to see how the sociology of culture could be anything other than a central part of sociological analysis, but it is equally difficult to see how a Marxist humanism could, any longer, provide the sole intellectual basis for this.

Notes

- 1 Bloch's first book (Bloch, 1918) was on music and art, drawing on Simmel's ideas but seeing these artistic forms from the standpoint of the utopian (the 'not yet'). In the 1920s, he became a Marxist, supporting the Soviet Union and Stalinism.
- 2 *Soul and Forms* consists of essays written in Budapest between 1907 and 1910. They were first published in book form in 1910 and were expanded in 1911.
- 3 Central to Lukács' ideas on reification were the arguments of Simmel in his analysis of money (Simmel 1900).
- 4 Lukács prepared a response to some of his orthodox critics (Lukács 1925) but he left it unpublished and seems never to have referred to it again. Not until the 1990s, long after his death, was the manuscript found in the CPSU archive in Moscow, having narrowly escaped destruction in 1941. It was published for the first time in 1996 and was translated into English in 2000.
- 5 Korsch lost his professorship with the rise of the Nazis, moving to Denmark and then to England and the United States. He remained in the US until his death in 1961.
- 6 Following the Russian revolution, the Marx archives were centralized in Moscow, where David Ryazanov at the Marx-Engels Institute began a systematic publication of the collected works (the so-called *M.E.G.A.*). For a time, this became the focus of a reconsideration of Marx's ideas. The Institute of Social Research worked closely with Ryazanov during the 1920s, and Lukács worked on the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, 1844) in Moscow to ready them for their publication, for the first time, in 1932. Karl Löwith's review of the manuscripts immediately argued that they vindicated Lukács's book and his use of Hegelian ideas. Henri Lefebvre translated these manuscripts into French in 1933. Developments in Russia, however, brought this to a virtual end: Ryazanov was purged by

- Stalin in 1931, and even the relatively orthodox Bukharin was tried and executed in 1938. The eventual publication of the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1858) in 1939–41 helped to show the crucial link between Marx's early work and his mature economic theory.
- 7 It is likely that the manuscript of this book was completed during the 1960s. The English translation is a partial translation of the Hungarian text, which includes further sections on reproduction, ideology, and alienation. An autobiography was discovered and published after his death (Lukács, 1971b).
- 8 Useful discussions of the history of the Institute and the development of critical theory can be found in Jay (1973) and Held (1980).
- 9 Similar ideas to Grossman's were later set out in the United States by Paul Sweezy (1942).
- 10 A useful account of the development of Adorno's work can be found in Buck-Morss (1977).
- 11 Adorno began to use the term 'negative dialectics' in the 1950s to describe this grasping of contradictions. The position was fully articulated in his book of that title (Adorno, 1966).
- 12 Adorno first set out these ideas in a paper of 1938 (Adorno, 1938), subsequently developing it in the later part of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.
- 13 In a later paper, Adorno notes that he introduced the term 'culture industry' in preference to 'mass culture' precisely in order to emphasize that popular culture did not 'arise spontaneously from the masses themselves' (Adorno, 1964: 85).
- 14 When Fromm left the Institute, his plans for the publication of his book on the German working class were abandoned. The book was published posthumously in 1980, and translated into English in 1984.
- 15 After his family secured his release from prison, he moved to the United States and lived under the name Frank Fisher until he died in 1971.
- 16 A general statement of his ideas can be found in the posthumous volume on *Cultural Creation* (Goldmann, 1970).
- 17 Bauman's earlier ideas on culture can be found in his Culture as Praxis (Bauman, 1973).
- 18 I do not here consider the Marxist humanism of Dunayevskaya (1973), a Marxist who moved to the United States in 1920 and worked as secretary to Trotsky. Although inspired by Marx's early manuscripts and Lenin's philosophical notebooks, she is a humanist writer in a different tradition from those considered in this chapter.

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